

Impact Seed Fund (ISF) 2026

Southeast Asia Guidelines

Regions: Countries in Southeast Asia

Topics:
Rainforest, Transparency & Governance, Oceans



Photo by Pham Van The, Vietnam, 2025



Photo by Ahmad Hidayat, Malaysia, 2025

About Impact Seed Fund (ISF)

The Pulitzer Center Impact Seed Fund (ISF) supports educational, research, and academic community engagement initiatives focused on issues highlighted in journalism supported by the Pulitzer Center.

The Impact Seed Fund (ISF) is a microscale grant to support education and research activities with the aim to enrich the perspectives and knowledge within the university community—specifically students and educators. Central to the program is the intentional use of Pulitzer Center-supported journalism on Climate and Environment as a key resource and reflection in classrooms and beyond. The ISF facilitates a deeper understanding of complex issues by connecting empirical knowledge, learning activities, and field-based reporting, and encourages the exploration of constructive solutions that address the impacts of human activity on rainforests, oceans, and the climate crisis.

We aim to support projects that inspire shifts in perspective, narrative, and action, and build more informed and empathetic communities. By leveraging Pulitzer Center-supported reporting, ISF aims to:

- Raise awareness and critical thinking among students and the academic community about complex issues related to rainforests, oceans, and the climate crisis, including their impacts on vulnerable communities. This encourages the academic community to explore innovative solutions to address these impacts.
- Facilitating students and lecturers to take action and encourage change in protecting the environment and the rights of those most affected by environmental damage.



Photo by Pham Van The, Vietnam, 2025

The ISF is designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of faculty and communities, enabling applicants to create activities related to pressing climate and environmental issues that are relevant to the local context.

Launched in 2022 in Indonesia, ISF has expanded its reach to Latin America, Africa, and other regions.

Journalism at the heart of the proposed project: With support from the Pulitzer Center, journalists around the world have produced groundbreaking reporting that explores underreported systemic issues affecting rainforests and oceans, as well as their links to climate change, labor, and vulnerable communities. With in-depth analysis, high-quality visuals, and data-driven insights, this reporting transforms complex issues into compelling and relevant narratives, making it an excellent educational and communication tool for ISF-funded projects. **All proposals must utilize at least one piece of journalism produced by a Pulitzer Center-supported journalist and explain how that reporting will be relevant to the proposed project.**





Objectives

We believe in the power of knowledge—the role of researchers and faculty in addressing multidisciplinary issues on social and environmental topics. Therefore, the ISF is designed to provide seed funding to faculty and researchers in various regions to raise awareness of important issues in their communities worldwide and contribute to desired positive change. The ISF provides micro-scale support for:

1. Integrating Journalism into Teaching and Research

Supports the integration and critical reflection of insights from Pulitzer Center-supported journalistic stories, including creative materials such as documentary films, photographs, podcasts, infographics, and data visualizations, into curricula, teaching syllabus course materials or lesson plans, student engagement, research design, and scholarly publications.

2. Informing Research , Scientific Panel, and Public Dialogues

Use insights from Pulitzer Center-supported stories - including findings, datasets, and methodologies - as evidence to inform academic research, comparative studies, scientific dialogues, and decision making processes.

3. Strengthen Cross-Sector Collaboration

Use Pulitzer Center-supported journalism to foster and expand sustained collaboration among universities, journalists, Indigenous and affected communities, and local institutions. Ground these partnerships in shared priorities to advance meaningful dialogue, facilitate exchange of ideas across knowledge systems, and support locally relevant responsive solution

“Raise awareness and critical thinking among students and the academic community about complex issues related to rainforests, oceans, and the climate crisis, including their impacts on vulnerable communities. This encourages the academic community to explore innovative solutions to address these impacts.”

Who can apply?

- ➔ Applicants must be university lecturers or researchers affiliated with an academic institution.
- ➔ Applicants can propose projects in consortium with lecturers from one or more universities.

Requirements

- Proposals must engage and utilize at least **one story** by a Pulitzer Center-supported journalist. Please refer to the guidelines annex 1 for a curated list of available coverage for Southeast Asia. If applicants wish to explore coverage independently, please follow the instructions below:
 - For the **Rainforest topic**: Applicants need to explore the stories of [Rainforest Investigations Network](#) and [Rainforest Reporting Initiative](#).
 - For **Ocean topic**: Applicants need to explore stories from [Ocean Reporting Network](#).
 - For the topic of **Transparency and Governance**: [Transparency and Governance | Pulitzer Center](#).
 - *Examples include collaboration with Pulitzer Center network journalists in the design of activities after a proposal is approved; utilization of key data/information from journalists' story in proposal outcomes or activities.*
- The activity must have the intended impact on audiences in the academic community (students or lecturers/researchers) and civil society that aligns with one or both of the following outcomes:
 1. Improve the awareness and critical thinking of students and educators about complex issues related to tropical forests, the ocean, and the climate crisis, including their impacts on vulnerable communities, and encourage the exploration of solutions and innovations to address these impacts.
 2. Equip students and educators to take action and drive changes to foster protection of the social and environment discourse as well as the rights of those most affected by socio-environmental destruction.
- Ideally, projects will collaborate with the most impacted communities; for example, co-designing ideas with indigenous communities, community leaders, or local organizations that work directly with vulnerable communities; collaboration with small universities in the local area.
- The project must demonstrate a strong Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion approach. [DEI statement](#) from the Pulitzer Center for more information.

Connecting Journalism with the Academic World and Educational Programs

The use of journalism has been a good practice to support academic and learning activities. Many news reports and materials are utilized as non-scholarly literature, or *grey literature*,¹ which is often crucial as a catalyst for academic discussions and contextual case studies. Non-scholarly literature, in this case journalistic stories, have substantial value in enriching analysis, providing empirical context, and opening up critical questions.

ISF wants to support initiatives where examples of the use of journalism and coverage in the projects we support often connect journalism with educational activities in the following approaches:

- 1** Highlighting key insights of the stories as a basis for formulating research questions or class discussion topics.
 - 2** Analyzing the structural dimensions of the key issues raised in journalistic stories (actors, policies, power relations, socio-ecological impacts).
 - 3** Cultivate critical reflection towards issues highlighted in the stories with empirical theories to produce knowledge-based recommendations. Encourage students to carry out critical reflection on issues raised in journalistic coverage.
 - 4** Develop academic or public output based on journalism and scientific analysis.
 - 5** Linking key insights to journalistic coverage of interdisciplinary subjects/topics, so that one coverage can be read using different scientific perspectives such as law, anthropology, environment, development studies, economics, etc.
- “With these approaches, journalism serves not only as a source of information, but as a catalyst for critical learning and the production of socially relevant knowledge.”*

¹University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library, “Grey Literature,” University of Illinois Library Guides , explains that grey literature includes materials that fall outside the traditional academic or commercial publication system and generally do not undergo peer review, including media, sources, documents, data, etc. However, this literature is often utilized in research to provide empirical data, policy context, and field perspectives that complement indexed scholarly publications. Accessed February 21, 2026, <https://guides.library.illinois.edu/c.php?g=1310347&p=9630537> .



Grants Size

ISF Southeast Asia grants range from USD \$3,000 to \$4,000. We expect projects to be implemented within six months of approval.

What ISF Typically Funds

- Collaborative projects with journalists supported by the Pulitzer Center or multidisciplinary faculty groups.
- Collaborative projects with the most impacted local communities (CSOs, Indigenous Peoples), examples of activities include field surveys, knowledge exchange activities, immersive learning for students, biodiversity expeditions, and citizen journalism training.
- Integration of Pulitzer Center-supported journalism elements into teaching materials, new learning modules, courses or syllabi, campus debates, hackathons on social issues, student-led debates, and dialogues
- Support for multi-stakeholder dialogue, focus group discussions with relevant policy makers, webinar series, seminars.
- Production and distribution of Pulitzer center-supported stories- inspired visual content to support learning aids (short videos, documentaries, podcasts)
- Small exhibitions on campus, such as a photo exhibition or film screening featuring issues raised in the coverage at the Pulitzer Center.
- Journalism workshop for student press clubs
- Communication activities to raise public awareness regarding issues and topics raised in coverage supported by the Pulitzer Center.
- Support for research activities: rapid studies, white papers, policy recommendations.
- Support for seminars, symposia, and scholarly activities that foster collaboration and synergy among researchers on issues raised in Pulitzer Center-supported reporting.



How to Apply

- ➔ All applicants must submit proposals through the [Submittable platform](#).
- ➔ For applicants from Southeast Asia who need to submit applications in local languages, please be sure to submit applications via the appropriate link:
 - [English](#)
 - [Bahasa Indonesia](#)

Documents and Information to Prepare:

- Name and other contact details
- Project title
- Explanation of the proposed project
- Elaboration of the use of journalistic coverage supported by the Pulitzer Center
- Target audience
- Explanation of expected impacts
- Strategy or methodology to ensure project success
- Proposed budget
- Budget details, including related outcomes or activities, along with units and prices
- Details of the project implementation timeline
- Consent from local communities if the project involves them
- Initial content production plan (if any), including references and content distribution strategy
- Project leader CV, including three professional references

Make sure all documents and information are prepared completely before submitting the application.



ISF 2025 Recipients

We are proud to share [the recipients of ISF funding in 2025](#), which we hope will provide insight into the impactful ISF projects have had on their communities.

Important Dates:

- **Proposal Submission Deadline**
May 3, 2026
- **Selection Process**
May 4-22, 2026
- **Announcement**
May 28, 2026
- **Contract Process**
June 1-5, 2026
- **Project Implementation**
June 8 - December 7, 2026
- **Reporting**
January 11, 2027

CONTACT

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ANNEX - LIST OF STORIES

OCEAN

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Thailand	Payuun: Saving Thailand's Last Dugongs	https://pultzcenter.org/projects/payuun-saving-thailands-last-dugongs	Mailee Osten-Tan; Nicolas Axelrod	In 2024, 41 dead dugongs (or payuun in Thai) washed up on Thai shores. Experts predict that there are less than 120 left in the country. Why? Thailand's coastal seagrass patches - the dugongs' main food source - are vanishing fast, and Thailand is the first country in the world where a definitive link between climate change, seagrass, and dugong death is being made. Limited seagrass is also impacting dugongs' migratory patterns. Before late 2024, dugongs were almost never seen in unprotected areas such as Phuket. For months, Theerasak "Pop" Saksritawee, an amateur conservationist, has been monitoring one dugong in particular who has chosen to settle temporarily in Tanken Bay. Pop has fondly named him "Miracle". Through a short documentary film and accompanying feature article, filmmakers Mailee Osten-Tan and Nicolas Axelrod follow Pop as he supports a government working group of scientists to understand what is happening to Thai seagrass and whether it is still possible to save Thailand's last dugongs.	Video, Article	2026
	Thailand's Favorite Fish Is Vanishing; Our Appetite is To Blame	https://pultzcenter.org/projects/thailands-favorite-fish-vanishing-our-appetite-blame	Aidan Jones	"Pla Tu" (mackerel) is Thailand's favorite fish; a once plentiful source of protein for millions who seek out the freshest, fattiest fish for hot oily curries, a cheap meal smoked and flaked into fried rice. But the nation's favorite fish is running out, thanks to trawlers scraping the shallows where the fish uniquely breed in the Gulf of Thailand. At dawn outside a temple on the Mae Khlong River, fishermen return from the Gulf with their catch each morning, complaining it's diminishing. Yet 11 tonnes of fish were caught on average each day in the Gulf of Thailand in 2022. up from 8 tonnes the year before.	Short Documentary Video, Pictures	2023

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Indonesia	Shrimp Estate: Missed Targets, Losses for Small Farmers, and Poorly Managed Waste Systems	https://jaring.id/pr_oyek-shrimp-estate-bubk-kebumen/	Abdus Somad	Indonesia’s flagship Shrimp Estate project in Kebumen has displaced local shrimp farmers and failed to meet its promised targets, leaving small producers without compensation, unable to compete with estate-produced shrimp, and facing severe income losses. A collaborative investigation by Jaring.id, Tempo, and Bloomberg Businessweek found the project plagued by poor planning, damaged infrastructure, funding shortfalls, and inadequate wastewater management, with water tests showing elevated pollution risks. Despite being promoted as a model for modern, sustainable aquaculture, the project has stalled amid governance uncertainty and environmental concerns, even as the government pushes ahead with plans for larger shrimp farming developments elsewhere.		2026
	Traditional Conservation Models in Wondama Bay, West Papua	https://pulitsercenter.org/projects/traditional-conservation-models-wondama-bay-west-papua	Dominggus Mampioper; Engelberth Wally; Victor Mambor; Alberth Yomo; Leonard Ohee	In this project, Jubi, a local news outlet in West Papua, Indonesia, will explore the marine ecosystem around Teluk Wondama and the contribution of local Indigenous communities through sasi (a traditional conservation model) in relation to the marine ecosystem, blue carbon, and the blue economy. Journalists will examine the Indigenous communities’ smart practices in implementing sasi and the challenges they face in protecting their marine environment. Additionally, this project will explore the role of environmental organizations and the government in safeguarding Teluk Cenderawasih National Park, which is one of Indonesia’s richest and most diverse marine ecosystems.	Article	2025

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Indonesia	The Dark Side of the Natuna and Arafura Seas	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/dark-side-natuna-and-arafura-seas	Abdus Somad, Yosea Arga Pramudita	Indonesia, one of the world's top fishery producers, is facing accusations of illegal fishing by major companies that exceed quotas without consequences. Satellite images show vessels from Indonesia, Hong Kong, Australia, and China fishing in Papua New Guinea's waters and the Arafura Sea, while Vietnamese, Chinese, and Thai vessels operate illegally in the Natuna Sea. Among them, Antesena 827 and Naga Mas Perkasa, linked to PT Pusaka Bejina Resource—despite its revoked license—are still fishing and reportedly docking at a port owned by businessman Tommy Winata. Other companies, including PT Bandar Nelayan, PT Dua Putra Perkasa Pratama, and PT Insan Gemilang Pualam, linked to politicians, are also involved, raising concerns over who truly benefits from these illegal activities.	Pictures, Infographics	2024
	Wave of Change: The Fate of Indonesia's Workers Amid Marine Heatwaves and Extractivism	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/wave-change-fate-indonesia-workers-amid-marine-heatwaves-and-extractivism	Adi Renaldi, Asad Asnawi	Indonesia ranks among the top producers and suppliers of fisheries products worldwide. But Indonesia is facing challenges ahead, from marine heatwaves due to the climate crisis to over-fishing. This project aims to show how marine heatwaves and the climate crisis impact fishery industries and the workers.	Pictures	2025

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Indonesia	The Abandoned Homes of Indonesia's Tsunami Survivors	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/abandoned-homes-indonesia-s-tsunami-survivors	Leila Goldstein	After the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which killed nearly 250,000 people, massive international aid funded permanent housing for survivors in Aceh, Indonesia. However, at least half of these homes have since been abandoned, as trauma, broken social ties, and limited economic and educational opportunities drove residents away. This project explores why, nearly 20 years later, many tsunami settlements stand empty.	Article	2024
Philippines	The Ocean's Invisible Pollutants	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/oceans-invisible-pollutants	Aryn Baker	We've seen the photos: the Pacific garbage patch, turtles choking on straws, oil spills visible from space. But it is the invisible forms of ocean pollution—microscopic plastic particles, sound, toxic forever chemicals, and insidious viruses and bacteria that hitchhike along the world's shipping lanes—that most threaten marine life, with consequences for human health. And the most pernicious form of plastic pollution isn't found in the ocean at all. It is located in the corridors of power in global capitals, as the fossil fuel industry, threatened by the rise of renewable energies, seeks to reinvent itself with increased plastic production.	Map, Infographic, Graphic, Short Video, Short Documentary Video	2023
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Transparency and Governance

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Transparency and Governance

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Indonesia	Ecocide of the Tin Islands: Corruption, Environmental Collapse, and Community	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/ecocide-tin-islands-corruption-environmental-collapse-and-community	Nopri Ismi; Finlan Adhitya Aldan	Centuries of tin mining have caused severe environmental destruction in Indonesia's Bangka Belitung Islands, one of the world's largest tin-producing regions. The industry depends heavily on tens of thousands of artisanal miners working without permits or safety protections, whose illegal tin is mixed into the global supply chain. Recent corruption crackdowns have exposed deep inequalities in this system, leaving miners and rural communities without livelihoods while their land and seas are left polluted and barren. This project examines the crisis through the lens of ecocide, linking local social collapse to global demand—particularly from international markets such as China—that continues to drive environmental and human devastation.	Short Documentary Video, Pictures	2026
	Carbon Trading and Its Impact on Indigenous Peoples and Forests	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/carbon-trading-and-its-impact-indigenous-peoples-and-forests	Adi Renaldi	The Joko Widodo administration in Indonesia passed the Presidential Decree No. 98 in 2021 on Carbon Economic Value Management, which grants private companies exclusive rights to manage carbon trading schemes. Since then, multinational companies have bought carbon credits through such projects across the country, yet questions about inclusivity and fairness persist. During COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, Indonesia reiterated its commitment in reducing emissions to achieve net zero by 2060 or sooner, positioning carbon trading as a cornerstone strategy. However, experts and activists argue that privatization-driven approaches risk perpetuating conflicts with local communities due to overlapping regulations, insufficient recognition of Indigenous rights, and a lack of transparency and accountability.	Article	2026

Transparency and Governance

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Indonesia	Beyond Climate: Java's North Coast Sinking Faster Amid Industrial Projects	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/beyond-climate-javas-north-coast-sinking-faster-amid-industrial-projects	Furqon Ulya Himawan	Java's North Coast is rapidly sinking due to land subsidence and rising sea levels, intensifying tidal floods that could submerge many villages by mid-century – possibly even sooner than predicted. Despite being promoted as “green” development, large industrial projects such as Special Economic Zones and National Strategic Projects are accused of causing ecocide through widespread environmental destruction. The consequences are already severe: worsening floods, coastal erosion, and the loss of livelihoods for fishermen and farmers across East, Central, and West Java. This project investigates how global-driven industrial development is accelerating the Pantura crisis and highlights growing calls to halt these projects to protect vulnerable communities from further harm.	Articles, Maps	2025
	Displacement of the O'Hongana Manyawa Tribe in Halmahera	https://pulitzercenter.org/id/projects/penyingkiran-suku-ohongana-manyawa-di-halmahera	Achmad Rizki Muazam; Irfan Maulana	The O'Hongana Manyawa, an Indigenous tribe on Indonesia's Halmahera Island, are being displaced by large-scale nickel mining that has destroyed their forests, homes, and food sources. This reporting project investigates their struggle to survive amid the growing exploitation of their ancestral lands.	Article, Documentary	2025
	Corruption, Influence Trading, and Deforestation	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/corruption-influence-trading-and-deforestation	Margareth Aritonang	Prabowo Subianto won Indonesia's presidency after years of political setbacks, including military dismissal over human rights allegations and a period of self-exile. His victory has raised concerns about democratic backsliding, making scrutiny of his business interests and influence networks key to understanding the nature of his future government.	Article	2024

Transparency and Governance

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Vietnam/Mekong	Fast and Dubious: How Electric Cars Are Tiring the Mekong	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/fast-and-dubious-how-electric-cars-are-tiring-mekong	Vo Kieu Bao Uyen; Kannikar Petchkaew; Meng Kroypunlok; Konlaphat Siri; Paritta Wangkiat; Alan Parkhouse; Ye Yuan; Cheng-Ting (Tim) Wu; Thanh Hue; Supasin Kreecharoen; George Graham; Trang Bui	Electric vehicles are rapidly reshaping transport across Southeast Asia, but the global shift to cleaner energy carries hidden costs: heavier EVs wear out tires faster, driving rising demand for natural rubber. The Mekong region—producing about half of the world’s rubber—has seen rapid plantation expansion since the early 2000s, often replacing forests with monocultures despite falling prices. This has led to biodiversity loss, weakened carbon sinks, increased flooding risks, and widespread land dispossession affecting Indigenous and rural communities. As governments, companies, and civil society push for better traceability and accountability, this Mekong Eye investigation, in collaboration with regional partners, the Earth Journalism Network, and the Pulitzer Center, reveals how problematic rubber still enters global EV tire supply chains and explores efforts to make “green” cars genuinely sustainable.	Article	2026
Myanmar	Suffering Amid Natural Resource Plunder	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/suffering-amid-natural-resource-plunder	Esther J	For nearly a decade, Chinese-linked mining companies have operated large-scale copper mines in Myanmar’s Sagaing Region, fueling long-standing conflicts with local communities. Tensions intensified after the 2021 military coup, as workers joined anti-coup protests and armed conflict spread to the area. Since 2022, the junta has used mining infrastructure for military purposes,	Articles	2026

Transparency and Governance

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Myanmar				carried out raids and arson in nearby villages, and provided security for the company, trapping communities and forcing repeated displacement. After mining resumed in 2024, regular military convoys and clearance operations—often involving shelling and gunfire—have left residents fleeing their homes again and again, caught between the military and resistance forces, with no lasting safety or stability.		
Laos	Smoking for the State	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/smoking-state	Jason McLure	Tobacco kills more than 8 million people each year, and while multinational corporations are often blamed, governments themselves play a major role in the global cigarette industry. Many states own significant shares in tobacco companies—some as majority stakeholders—creating a direct financial interest in cigarette sales even as public health agencies urge citizens to quit. This investigation by The Examination, in collaboration with Der Spiegel and Initium, explores how these conflicts of interest influence tobacco policies in countries where governments are deeply invested in the industry.	Article	2023

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Cambodia	Conflicted Conservation for Cambodia's Indigenous Peoples	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/conflicted-conservation-cambodias-indigenous-peoples	Jack Brook, Choulay Mech	Cambodia's Indigenous communities have legal rights to collective land ownership, but in practice, government policies and exclusionary conservation efforts have hindered their ability to secure communal forests. Many communities face land disputes, restrictive law enforcement, and a growing debt crisis fueled by World Bank-funded microfinance, which pressures them to seek private land titles instead of communal ownership. As Indigenous lands are increasingly used as collateral for risky loans, collective conservation efforts weaken, accelerating land loss and deforestation in provinces like Monduliri, Ratanakiri, and Kratie. This investigation will uncover how conflicting development agendas and restrictive policies undermine Indigenous land security while also highlighting grassroots efforts to preserve cultural and environmental heritage.	Pictures, Graphics, Map	2024
	Unwilling To Be Silenced, a Cambodian Environmental Activist Readies for Prison	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/unwilling-be-silenced-cambodian-environmental-activist-readies-prison	Andy Ball, Marta Kasztelan	Cambodian environmental activist Ly Chandaravuth, a 24-year-old law student and member of Mother Nature Cambodia, was arrested while testing river pollution in Phnom Penh and charged with plotting against the government. Facing up to a decade in prison, he has endured state surveillance and growing repression against activists exposing environmental destruction and corruption.	Documentary Video,	2024

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Cambodia				Despite the risks, Chandaravuth continues his investigations into illegal logging and rainforest destruction while preparing for possible incarceration. His group recently won the Right Livelihood Award, but uncertainty looms over whether he and his colleagues can travel to Sweden to accept it without facing government retaliation.		
	Cambodian Forests Under Threats	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/cambodian-forests-under-threats	Anton Delgado	As a Rainforest Investigations Network Fellow, Anton Delgado is continuing his investigation into how macaques from Cambodia are being illegally traded. He is further expanding his previous coverage into environmental violations on the border with Vietnam and Laos and the role of Cambodia's biodiversity preservation policy.	Pictures, Map	2023
	When a Flooded Forest Is Drowning	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/when-flooded-forest-drowning	Marta Kasztelan, Andy Ball	This reporting project highlights the cumulative impacts of upstream Mekong River dams in China and Laos on Cambodia's Stung Treng flooded forest. Designated as a Ramsar site because of its exceptional biodiversity and uniqueness, it is home to endangered bird and fish species. But the forest is dying, and its demise will affect fisheries in all of Cambodia as it offers critical food supplies and a breeding site for migratory fish.	Pictures, Map	2023

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Cambodia				Located in northeastern Cambodia, the sprawling Stung Treng flooded forest once could dry out and replenish once the monsoon rains stopped. The cyclical release of water from upstream dams during the dry season—allegedly without consultation with downstream nations—has rendered that impossible and will likely lead to the complete eradication of the region's biodiversity.		
Indonesia	Deforestasi, Pertanian, Pertambangan, dan Pembangunan Memicu Wabah Malaria	https://pulitzercenter.org/id/projects/deforestasi-pertanian-pertambangan-dan-pembangunan-memicu-wabah-malaria	Eko Rusdianto	Since construction of Indonesia's new capital, Nusantara (IKN), began in 2022, more than 256,000 hectares of forest have been cleared, increasing the risk of malaria transmission as deforestation and population movement expand mosquito habitats. Outdoor workers and incoming migrants may accelerate the spread of Plasmodium knowlesi, a monkey-borne malaria already documented in neighboring Malaysia, which shares the same ecological zone as East Kalimantan. With Kalimantan accounting for nearly 60% of Indonesia's total forest loss—East Kalimantan the hardest hit—the project raises serious public health concerns.	Article	2026

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	
Indonesia	Illegal Oil Palm Land Bleaching in Forest Areas in Indonesia	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/illegal-oil-palm-land-bleaching-forest-areas-indonesia	Aditya Budiman	This collaborative investigation by several Indonesian media outlets will examine illegal oil palm land bleaching in forest areas across Riau, West Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, and Jakarta. Through in-depth field reporting, investigations, and data-driven visual storytelling, the project aims to uncover the key actors behind the policy, identify who benefits from it, and document the scale of forest damage caused by illegal oil palm plantations.	Article	2024
	Illegal Gold Mining in Kerinci Seblat National Park	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/illegal-gold-mining-kerinci-seblat-national-park	Suwandi Wendy	<p>This project reveals the actors of illegal gold mining: local businessmen in Merangin Regency and Merangin Regency DPRD members who are financiers of illegal gold mining.</p> <p>Villagers who have been controlled by illegal gold mining actors in Kerinci Seblat National Park have acted anarchically. They blocked the national road, the only access to Kerinci-Merangin, to undermine law enforcement. The police were forced to release a number of illegal gold miners who were arrested because the community's roadblocks had caused congestion and cut off access to land transportation.</p>	Pictures, Map	2024

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	
Indonesia	The Dilemma of Indigenous Forest Status	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/dilemma-indigenous-forest-status	Irma Tambunan, Erika Kurnia, Sucipto Cipto, Dionisius Reynaldo Triwibowo (Aldo)	<p>The recognition of customary forests in Indonesia still has many problems. As of December 2022, the Indigenous Territory Registration Agency has registered 1,167 maps of Indigenous territories with an area of 21.3 million hectares covering Indigenous territories in 29 provinces and 142 districts/cities. The Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) noted that throughout 2022 the government had only succeeded in establishing 105 customary forests with an area of 148,488 hectares.</p> <p>However, Indigenous people also feel that their rights and requests have not been fully fulfilled because an area of 2,400 hectares of Indigenous territories is instead used by the government for a number of social forestry schemes, including village forests, community forests, community plantation forests, and partnerships.</p>	Pictures, Map, Short Documentary Video, Infographic	2023
	Protecting the Forest and Water Resources of Small Islands	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/protecting-forest-and-water-resources-small-islands	Palce Amalo	Three small islands in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), namely Semau, Rote and Timor, have springs that never dry up throughout the year. The springs are Uiasa on Semau, Lelain and Oemau on Rote, and Adang, Kabola, and Nostalgia on Alor Island.	Pictures, Short Documentary Video, Infographic	2023

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	
Indonesia				The preservation of forests on these three islands has helped to maintain groundwater stocks so that the need for clean water for drinking, sanitation, and irrigation can be met. Information on the condition of forests and water sources on these three small islands was obtained from research and interviews with geology experts from Nusa Cendana University Kupang, the rector of Tribuana University Alor, and village officials.		
	Degradation of Mangrove Forests in Indonesia	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/degradation-mangrove-forests-indonesia	Tonggo Simangunsong, Dewantoro, Haryadi Klik, Suryadi M Nur	<p>This project is an in-depth report on the triggers, impacts, and solutions to mangrove degradation in Indonesia, using the provinces of West Kalimantan, South Sumatra, and Riau as case studies.</p> <p>Riau represents the province with the largest mangrove forest on the island of Sumatra, and the province of North Sumatra has extensive damage with complex problems ranging from land tenure for oil palm plantations and fish ponds. The third province, West Kalimantan, has the largest mangrove forest in Indonesia.</p>	Pictures, Map, Short Documentary Video	2023

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	
Indonesia	National Food Estate Program Destroying Indonesia's Small Islands	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/national-food-estate-program-destroying-indonesias-small-islands	Ahmad Arif, Saiful Rijal Yunus, Fransiskus Pati Herin, Yola Sastra	<p>Indonesia is an archipelagic country blessed with a diversity of biological resources, including food. For thousands of years, the islands have enjoyed a food culture that's adaptive to the local environment.</p> <p>However, the extraction of natural resources and centralized food policies have hurt this local food system. As a result, people on small islands are increasingly dependent on food shipments from outside, which has led to a decline in food security along with the destruction of the local ecosystem.</p>	Pictures, Infographic, Graphic	2023
	Illegal Logging Practices in the Southern Part of West Sumatra	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/illegal-logging-practices-southern-part-west-sumatra	Vinolia Achmad, Mona Triana	<p>Kerinci Seblat National Park (TNKS) along with Gunung Leuser National Park (GLNP) and Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park (TNBBS) were designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 2004. However, due to the high threat to the integrity of the national park areas, IUCN-UNESCO recommended TNKS, TNGI, and TNBBS be included in the World Heritage in Danger list in 2011.</p> <p>The decline in forest cover in this area, especially TNKS, is thought to be due to massive illegal activities in the form of illegal logging. In West Sumatra, this illegal activity is acute in the TNKS area in Pesisir Selatan Regency. As a result, the southernmost district of West Sumatra is subject to flooding.</p>	Pictures, Short Documentary Video	2023

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	
Indonesia	Palm Oil in Senunsur Sembulu	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/palm-oil-senunsur-sembulu	Dini Pramita, Abdus Somad, Alyaa Alhadjri	<p>Senunsur Sembulu II Protected Forest Area is located in East Belitung Regency, Bangka Belitung Islands. This protected forest area is a natural habitat for three important endemic animals, namely the binturong (<i>Arctictis binturong</i>), and pangolin (<i>Manis javanica</i>). It is also the remaining habitat for the Bangka tarsier or mentilin (<i>Cephalopachus bancanus</i>). These three endemic animals are designated as protected animals in the Indonesia's Minister of Environment and Forestry Regulation No. P.20/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/6/2018.</p> <p>All three are also endangered and on the radar of The International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN Red List). Based on the latest IUCN assessment, February 6, 2016, the binturong is categorized as vulnerable due to its dwindling population in the wild. The Bangka tarsier is in the same position with a population of 19-20 individuals per square kilometer as of the last observation on 22 November 2015. Meanwhile, over the past 21 years, the rate of decline in the population of mackerel has continued to fall by 80 percent.</p>	Pictures, Infographic, Map, Videographic, Illustration, Graphic	2023

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Indonesia	Indonesia's Indigenous Customary Forest	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/indonesia-indigenous-customary-forest	Peter Yeung	<p>Indonesia is home to millions of hectares of forest, 12% of the world's mammals, and a dizzying array of Indigenous peoples. However, as the nation of 280 million develops, that forest—which plays a crucial role in keeping the earth's ecosystem in balance—is quickly being destroyed through mining, logging, plantations and infrastructure building.</p> <p>But at the start of 2017, more than 13,000 hectares of customary land was handed over to nine Indigenous communities across the country, recognizing their longstanding good stewardship and management of forests. This scheme could provide a sustainable solution to the country's future development.</p>	Pictures, Graphic	2023
Thailand	Our World Heritage in Danger?: A Close Look Into Thailand's Natural World Heritage Sites and Challenges	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/our-world-heritage-danger-close-look-thailands-natural-world-heritage-sites-and-challenges	Piyaporn Wongruang, Pattaraporn Sritongtae	Having been designated as Natural World Heritage Sites, Thailand's most valued forests are highly expected from the public that they can retain their ecological values that meet global recognition and the context of the new Global Biodiversity Framework.	Pictures, Infographic, Film Document ary	2024

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Thailand				<p>However, the three sites—Thungyai-Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuaries, Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex, and Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex—have been facing pressure from highly charged threats, from sophisticated poaching to unsound state development, to a decades-long land rights conflict, prompting their world heritage statuses and conservation work to be critically challenged.</p>		
	The Complexity of Thailand's Northern Wildfire Crisis	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/complexity-thailands-northern-wildfire-crisis	Molecule Jongwilai, Patchar Duangklad, Pitshaya Chonato, Pimpatipan Angkharuengrattana, Ploythida Ketkaew, Paris Jitpentom	<p>The wildfire is one of the most severe environmental issues Thailand has faced, especially in the northern region. Many specialists have suggested that this crisis is a main contributor to the haze pollution issue, including the high concentration levels of PM2.5. It has been acknowledged that every type of wildfire and burning in agricultural areas mostly situated next to the forest is a critical problem that needs to be handled or prevented from happening.</p> <p>There are numerous factors that influence wildfires. This leads to significant questions: What are the actual problems causing the haze pollution? Which regulations or policies can handle this complicated issue effectively?</p>	Infographic, Pictures, Map, Short Documentary Video	2024

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Thailand	Panama Canal of the East? Thailand's Bold Plans to Bypass the Strait of Malacca	Panama Canal of the East? Thailand's Bold Plans to Bypass the Strait of Malacca Pulitzer Center	Luke Duggleby	Thailand is planning a \$36 billion "land bridge" across its southern peninsula to link the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea, aiming to shorten global shipping routes and elevate the country's role in international trade. Launched in 2024, the project could significantly reshape regional geopolitics but also threatens local communities and sensitive ecosystems, including mangrove forests. This project by Luke Duggleby and Nicha Wachpanich examines what such large-scale development means for people and the environment, and the costs they may be forced to bear.	Articles	2024
	A Fragile Coexistence	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/fragile-coexistence	Luke Duggleby, Maria Stöhr	<p>During the latter half of 2022, over 10 people were killed by wild elephants in provinces just hours east of Bangkok. Mostly villagers in the wrong place at the wrong time, these deaths tell of what has become Thailand's worst human-elephant conflict.</p> <p>With the highest concentration of wild elephants per square kilometre of natural forest in the country, the area known as Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) has become an unlikely battleground between farmers trying to protect their livelihoods and wild elephants who can't resist the food they grow.</p>	Pictures, Map	2023

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Malaysia	Panama Canal of the East? Thailand's Bold Plans to Bypass the Strait of Malacca	Panama Canal of the East? Thailand's Bold Plans to Bypass the Strait of Malacca Pulitzer Center	Luke Duggleby	Thailand is planning a \$36 billion "land bridge" across its southern peninsula to link the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea, aiming to shorten global shipping routes and elevate the country's role in international trade. Launched in 2024, the project could significantly reshape regional geopolitics but also threatens local communities and sensitive ecosystems, including mangrove forests. This project by Luke Duggleby and Nicha Wachpanich examines what such large-scale development means for people and the environment, and the costs they may be forced to bear.	Articles	2024
	EUDR's Effect on Smallholding Oil Palm in Malaysia	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/eudr-s-effect-smallholding-oil-palm-malaysia	James Whitlow Delano	By the end of 2024, the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) will require palm oil producers to provide GPS coordinates proving their crops did not contribute to deforestation since 2020, or they will be barred from exporting to the EU. This regulation threatens Malaysia's palm oil industry, where 40% of production comes from smallholders, prompting sustainability group Wild Asia to assist farmers in meeting compliance standards.	Pictures, Map	2024

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Malaysia				The Malaysiakini news portal visited the lake in June 2022, where it learned from Tasik Chini locals that they no longer will be able to depend on it as a water source due to alleged heavy contamination. It has come to the extent that villagers face water shortage problems despite living right beside a massive lake basin.		
	Sabah's Mangrove Defenders	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/sabahs-mangrove-defenders	Emily Ding, Yih Wen Chen	<p>Southeast Asia is home to a third and most of the world's mangroves; it is also the region that has experienced the most extensive mangrove loss.</p> <p>In Malaysia, which has nearly 5 percent of the world's total mangroves, about 60 percent are located in Sabah, mostly along its east coast. Most mangroves in Sabah are formally protected as forest reserves, though there remain difficulties of enforcement in more remote areas. Moreover, some mangroves, such as on Sabah's west coast, are unprotected. A 2020 study shows that the annual average rate of mangrove loss in Sabah—0.58% or 1,705 hectares a year—between 2000 and 2015 is higher than global average estimates of 0.16% to 0.39%. This is especially worrying amid our climate crisis, as mangroves can store up to five times more carbon than other forest ecosystems.</p>	Pictures, Footage Video, Short Documentary Video, Map	2023

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Malaysia	Forest Clearing and Floods at Baling, Kedah Malaysia	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/forest-clearing-and-floods-baling-kedah-malaysia	Si Err Yap, Mukhriz Hazim	<p>On July 4, 2022, three people died and more than 3,000 people were displaced when sludge, debris and flood waters buried several villages near Baling, Kedah, in the north of Peninsular Malaysia. On September 6, 2022, water came gushing down Gunung Inas to flood the village again after a 30-minute heavy downpour, forcing more than 100 residents to evacuate. Faced with a third round of flooding in two months, residents of Kampung Iboi near Baling are now asking how much longer they need to live in fear each time it rains.</p> <p>Crucially, they said the series of flooding started when works started on a mega durian plantation in a water catchment area in the mountainous Gunung Inas Forest Reserve.</p>	Short Documentary Video, Pictures, Footage Video, Map	2023
	Malaysia's Deforestation Ecosystem	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/malaysias-deforestation-ecosystem	Low Choon Chyuan	In this project, journalist Low Choon Chyuan, of the independent portal Malaysiakini, uses public domain data, satellite images, and government reports to show the elaborate financial system that supports large-scale deforestation projects. He also examines the stakeholders who gain from such a system, how the network was established, and the social, economic, and environmental costs.	Pictures, Map, Infographics, Graphics, Short Video	2023

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Malaysia	Red Rivers and Death: Natives' Fight Against Iron Mining in Deep Rainforest	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/red-rivers-and-death-natives-fight-against-iron-mining-deep-rainforest	Aidila Razak, S Vinothaa	In 2012, Malaysiakini reported on severe water pollution from an iron ore mine in Kampung Kelaik, Kelantan, which turned the river red and contaminated the village's water supply. The situation worsened over the years, culminating in the tragic death of a village elder, prompting the community to take legal action against the government and 10 firms for encroaching on their land.	Pictures, Short Video, Graphics, Infographics, Map, Documentary Video	2024
	Pahang Deforestation Aided by RM52m Financing From Bank Islam	https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/pahang-deforestation-aided-rm52m-financing-bank-islam	Low Choon Chyuan	In this project, journalist Low Choon Chyuan, of the independent portal Malaysiakini, uses public domain data, satellite images, and government reports to show the elaborate financial system that supports large-scale deforestation projects. He also examines the stakeholders who gain from such a system, how the network was established, and the social, economic, and environmental costs.	Map, Pictures, Graphic, Infographics	2024
	Undrinkable: The Story of Tasik Chini Pollution	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/undrinkable-story-tasik-chini-pollution	Hariz Mohd, Aznael Ishak	Tasik Chini is one of Unesco's Biosphere Reserves (BR), and the second largest natural freshwater lake in Peninsular Malaysia. However, since it was designated as reserve in 2009, the lake reportedly started to endure pollution as the byproduct of deforestation, mining, and plantation activities.	Short Documentary Video, Pictures, Table	2023

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Vietnam	The Construction of a Waste Treatment Plant in Vietnam's Con Dao Forest	The Construction of a Waste Treatment Plant in Vietnam's Con Dao Forest Pulitzer Center	Le Quynh	Vietnam faces growing deforestation risks as authorities approve forest clearance for waste facilities and resort developments in protected areas such as Con Dao and Phu Quoc National Parks. Looser regulations under revised land and forestry laws now allow easier conversion of natural forests for development with only provincial approval, raising concerns as most of Vietnam's forest cover remains degraded and low quality despite overall increases.	Articles	2025
	Lâm Đồng Plans To Remove Hectares From Forest Master Plan	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/lam-dong-plans-remove-hectares-forest-master-plan	Le Quynh	Lâm Đồng, one of Vietnam's most forested provinces with 54.6% forest cover, is experiencing a steady decline in forested areas due to government decisions to remove land from protection. Landslides, flooding, and land subsidence are worsening as authorities revise forest management plans, allocating tens of thousands of hectares for economic development. Over the past 18 years, nearly 107,000 hectares of forested land have been removed or are planned for removal, raising concerns about environmental degradation and the displacement of ethnic minority communities. This investigation examines the justifications behind these policy decisions and their broader impact on ecosystems and local livelihoods.	Pictures, Map, Graphics	2024

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Vietnam	The Human Stories Behind the Mekong's Ecological Collapse	https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/projects/human-stories-behind-mekongs-ecological-collapse	Nhung Nguyen	<p>Vietnam's southern plain, one of the most significant wetlands on earth, has been almost drained. According to the WWF, the Greater Mekong subregion risks losing over a third of its remaining forest within the next two decades.</p> <p>The area has been transformed into an agriculture and aquaculture hub that is now feeding a growing population of 100 million people while producing 13 percent of the world's rice.</p>	Pictures, Short Video, Graphics, Infographics, Map, Documentary Video	2023
	Vietnam's Forests Have Been Cleared To Supply the World's Timber Industry	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/vietnams-forests-have-been-cleared-supply-worlds-timber-industry	Bao-Uyen Vo-Kieu	<p>Vietnam is ranked the fifth-largest country in the world, second in Asia, and the largest in Southeast Asia in furniture exports. Vietnamese furniture has been directly exported to 120 countries and territories.</p> <p>However, behind this impressive figure is that series of natural forests that have been cut down and quickly. These forest land areas have been occupied for growing short-term timber trees.</p>	Pictures, Map, Footage video, Graphic	2024
Laos	China's Billion-Dollar Craze for Durian Is Transforming Laos Forests	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/chinas-billion-dollar-craze-durian-transforming-laos-forests	Zhaoyin Feng, Beimeng Fu	<p>China's surging demand for durian has led to large-scale investments in Laos, with Chinese firms like Jiarun Agriculture securing thousands of hectares of land in Attapeu's primary rainforests for durian plantations. Fueled by the Belt and Road Initiative's Laos-China Railway, this expansion raises concerns over deforestation, biodiversity loss, and its economic and social impact on local communities.</p>	Map, Pictures, Graphic	2024

Rainforest

	Project Title	Project Link	Grantees	Project Synopsis	Media	Year
Laos	Fruits of Spoil: Laos' Forests Disappearing As Fruit Farms Flourish	https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/fruits-spoil-laos-forests-disappearing-fruit-farms-flourish		<p>The booming demand for bananas and durians in China has fueled large-scale agricultural investments in Southeast Asia, with Laos emerging as a key player by providing land and labor. Chinese and Vietnamese investors have capitalized on the country's low land-lease costs and fertile soil, establishing vast plantations that now threaten Laos' forests.</p> <p>Satellite imagery and investigative reports reveal that many plantations, owned by Chinese and Vietnamese companies, are expanding into deforested areas near critical biodiversity zones like Dong Hua Sao and Xe Pian. This rapid land conversion, initially driven by banana cultivation and now durian farming, has intensified deforestation, raising concerns over environmental sustainability.</p>	Pictures, Maps, Graphic, Presentation	2023

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