



Policy Brief

Enhancing Public Awareness of Tengkawang as a Leading Product of West Kalimantan: A Comprehensive Approach Based on #RainforestValue

Executive Summary

Tengkawang (*Shorea spp.*) is a non-timber forest product (NTFP) designated as a flagship commodity of West Kalimantan under Governor Regulation No. 33/2022. Its processed form, illipe butter, holds high value in international markets, particularly in the natural food and cosmetics industries. However, public awareness of its economic potential, ecological importance, and cultural meaning remains low. Without broader public understanding, efforts to conserve tengkawang trees, strengthen local downstream processing, and build regional branding will be difficult to achieve.

Forestwise, a West Kalimantan-based company, has demonstrated that the #RainforestValue approach can increase added value while protecting forests. Through digital traceability, forest protection contracts, local downstream processing, and market incentives, Forestwise has engaged over 804 farmers (209 women) across 32 villages, collaborated with local NGOs in seven districts, and secured protection for more than 200,000 hectares of forest. This model can inspire national and provincial governments to encourage systematic, inclusive, and sustainable public awareness policies.

Background and Urgency

National policies now provide broader opportunities for diversifying forest-based enterprises beyond timber. Government Regulation No. 23/2021 on Forestry Implementation expands the legal use of NTFPs through the Forest Utilization Business Permit (PBPH) scheme.

Technical guidelines for NTFP processing and trade are further elaborated in Ministry of Environment and Forestry Regulation No. 8/2021, which promotes added-value processing and supply chain strengthening.

At the regional level, West Kalimantan Governor Regulation No. 33/2022 explicitly designates tengkawang as a strategic flagship NTFP, aligned with the province's ecological and cultural uniqueness. Governor Regulation No. 7/2024 provides mechanisms for collecting NTFPs, including tengkawang, outside state forest areas—opening broader opportunities for farmers and Indigenous communities to participate legally in the supply chain.

Despite strong regulatory frameworks, public perception remains a major barrier. Many people still see tengkawang as a low-value wild forest tree. Knowledge of its ecological functions, economic potential, and global market demand remains limited. Younger generations, especially in West Kalimantan, are losing cultural and emotional connection to tengkawang, even though it has long served as a traditional food ingredient, natural cosmetic, and symbol of local wisdom.

Meanwhile, global markets show trends highly aligned with tengkawang's potential. Demand for natural, organic, and traceable ingredients in food, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals is rising sharply. Consumer countries—especially in Europe, the U.S., and Japan—are seeking environmentally friendly, deforestation-free vegetable fats. Tengkawang meets all these criteria: natural, sustainable, culturally rooted, and nutritionally and technically unique.

Therefore, a strong public communication and education program is urgently needed. Without collective awareness, existing policies may not generate optimal impact. With effective communication, West Kalimantan can position tengkawang not only as a leading green economy commodity but also as a cultural identity icon, a symbol of tropical forest conservation, and a premium export product for Indonesia.

Problem Analysis

Low public awareness of tengkawang is driven by several structural factors:

1. **Limited public education**, resulting in weak dissemination of information on economic value, nutritional benefits, and ecological functions.
2. **Weak regional branding**, where commodities like palm oil and rubber dominate as provincial icons while tengkawang is not yet positioned as an equal flagship product.
3. **Poor access to market information**, making it difficult for the public to see business opportunities.
4. **Low youth engagement**, as tengkawang is not yet perceived as economically promising or relevant to modern lifestyles.

If unaddressed, these issues pose serious risks: declining interest in maintaining tengkawang trees, increasing land conversion and illegal logging, and the loss of a strategic opportunity for West Kalimantan to become Indonesia's hub for NTFP-based green economy development.

Strategies and Approaches

Improving public awareness requires a comprehensive, systematic, and collaborative approach built around four main pillars:

1. Public Education

- Integrate tengkawang knowledge into school curricula.
- Develop forestry extension modules highlighting ecological, economic, and cultural values.
- Conduct environmental literacy campaigns targeting youth and public spaces.

2. Branding and Communication

- Launch an official provincial program “Tengkawang, the Mascot of West Kalimantan.”
- Host annual tengkawang festivals featuring culture, cuisine, arts, and business.
- Produce consistent communication materials positioning tengkawang as a premium green export.

3. Economic Incentives

- Reduce licensing costs and simplify procedures for small-scale tengkawang businesses.
- Support certification (quality, food safety, organic, fair trade) to boost competitiveness.
- Provide access to green financing and export promotion platforms.
- Implement premium pricing for farmers and cooperatives adopting traceability and sustainability.

4. Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

- National ministries ensure macro-level regulatory support.
- Provincial and district governments/KPH implement site-based programs.
- Private sector (e.g., Forestwise) leads innovation and global market engagement.
- Cooperatives bridge farmers to markets.
- NGOs, media, and academia support research, outreach, and public communication.

Achievements and Recognition: Forestwise Good Practices

Forestwise has pioneered awareness building among farmers, villages, and international markets. Key achievements include:

- **Farmer engagement:** 804 farmers in the traceability system, including 209 women; 32 new villages onboarded.
- **Local partnerships** with NGOs across seven districts, strengthening trust and community capacity.
- **Forest protection contracts** covering over 200,000 hectares; long-term target: 500,000 hectares and 10,000 beneficiaries by 2030.
- **Local downstream processing** creating jobs, increasing farmer income, and generating significant added value.
- **Festivals and campaigns** jointly launched with the provincial government, receiving direct praise from the Governor.

These achievements show that public awareness can grow when incentives, communication, and market access align. Governments can adopt this experience as a model for public policy.

Policy Recommendations

1. National Government

- Integrate tengkawang into national NTFP campaigns and green product branding.
- Promote illipe butter at major international trade fairs.
- Develop a national traceability standard for NTFPs, similar to the timber SVLK.
- Enable access to national green financing schemes for farmers and cooperatives.

2. Provincial Government of West Kalimantan

- Lead public awareness campaigns (“Tengkawang for West Kalimantan”).
- Position tengkawang as a provincial branding icon and eco-cultural asset.
- Strengthen support for cooperatives and MSMEs through certification and export facilitation.

3. District Governments and Forest Management Units (KPH)

- Simplify technical permits and reduce bureaucratic burdens.
- Conduct village-level outreach to strengthen ecological and cultural awareness.
- Develop tengkawang cultural tourism villages that integrate education, promotion, and local economic development.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation

Success in improving public awareness requires measurable monitoring and evaluation using key indicators across social, economic, and ecological dimensions—ranging from changes in public knowledge (pre- and post-campaign surveys), the number of farmers and cooperatives in the traceability system, local downstream production volumes, protected tengkawang forest area, and participation of women and youth. Monitoring must be carried out collaboratively by provincial environmental authorities, district governments/KPH, private sector actors like Forestwise, local NGOs, and academia, through quarterly reports and annual evaluations that enable collective learning and continuous improvement.

Conclusion

Tengkawang is a strategic asset of West Kalimantan that unites economic, ecological, and cultural values. Strengthening public awareness is essential for elevating it as a regional flagship commodity and an Indonesian green economy icon. Forestwise, through #RainforestValue, has shown that forests can generate economic value while remaining intact. The challenge now is ensuring that government institutions adopt and scale this approach within official policy frameworks. With strong public campaigns, consistent policy support, and multi-stakeholder collaboration, tengkawang can become a symbol of regional pride and a protected forest heritage for future generations.

Forestwise Wild Keepers

Jalan Nenak Sungai Ringin
Desa Anggah Jaya
Sintang
Kalimantan barat

www.forestwise.earth
info@forestwise.earth
[@Forestwise.earth](https://www.instagram.com/Forestwise.earth)
[@Forestwise.id](https://www.instagram.com/Forestwise.id)

