

*) This English version is an interpretation of the original Indonesian version. If there are any differences in words or sentences, please refer to the Indonesian version.

Statement of Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI)
23 October 2025

Reject the Batang CCGT Project: A False Energy Transition, A Real Threat to Communities and Coastal Ecosystems

Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI) firmly rejects the proposed development of the Batang Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) power plant, initiated under the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC). This rejection is not merely a response to a single project, but a broader resistance against a development paradigm that consistently disregards community rights, damages ecosystems, and perpetuates fossil fuel dependency under the guise of energy transition.

In August 2024, during the 2nd AZEC Ministerial Meeting, Electric Power Development Co.,Ltd. (J-POWER), PT Adaro Power, and ITOCHU Corporation announced a feasibility study to develop a CCGT power plant in Central Java. Although the exact location was not explicitly stated, project profiles indicate that the Batang CCGT will be constructed adjacent to the existing Batang Coal-Fired Power Plant (CFPP) in Batang Regency, Central Java.

The Batang CCGT is not an isolated project. The companies conducting the feasibility study—J-POWER PT Adaro Power, and ITOCHU Corporation—are the same entities behind the Batang CFPP, developed through PT Bhimasena Power Indonesia. Since 2011, their planning and operations have excluded meaningful community participation, failed to comprehensively mitigate social and environmental impacts, and caused significant damage to ecologically and economically vital areas.

The construction of the Batang CFPP sacrificed 226 hectares of land, primarily rice fields and plantations that sustained local farmers. Fisherfolk in Roban Timur, who once needed only 30 minutes to reach fishing grounds and got sufficient catch to support their families, now have to endure 3–4 hour journeys with higher fuel consumption and declining yields. The Preketek coral reef, once a habitat for diverse marine life, has been transformed into an industrial jetty. Dredging mud from jetty construction was dumped into surrounding waters, smothering fish habitats and damaging ecosystems. This mud frequently entangles fishing nets, causing damage or rendering them unusable, further burdening local livelihoods.

Coastal abrasion has worsened due to altered sea currents caused by the jetty, which directs flow toward the shore. Coastal vegetation such as *Terminalia catappa* and *Casuarina equisetifolia* has disappeared due to erosion and tree clearing at the PLTU site. Sea water is also polluted due to coal spills from barges during loading and unloading and from coal spray water that is dumped into the sea. Air pollution from coal combustion has increased health risks, while agricultural land was seized without fair participatory processes. If the same companies are allowed to develop new projects, the pattern of neglect and destruction is likely to repeat.

The Batang CCGT is now being promoted as part of an energy transition. However, experiences from similar projects, such as the Jawa-1 LNG-to-Power in Cilamaya, demonstrate that CCGT is neither clean nor just. Land conversion, disruption of fishing zones, marine degradation, and accident risks from gas pipeline installation are real impacts already felt by communities. Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU) operations and regasification water discharge may lower sea temperatures and disrupt fishing zones. If the CCGT uses onshore pipelines from nearby gas fields, risks of explosion, fire, and pollution are also present. Incidents such as the gas pipeline explosion in Peninsular Malaysia in April 2025 highlight the serious and undeniable safety risks to residents.

Furthermore, we reject the narrative promoted by AZEC that positions gas as a “transition energy.” This narrative is misleading and normatively dangerous, as it obscures the fact that gas is a fossil fuel that emits greenhouse gases and is not a real renewable energy source. Framing gas as a “bridge” legitimizes technical and financial support for new infrastructure that prolongs fossil fuel dependency. Such greenwashing practices delay a just and rapid energy transformation and divert funding away from renewable energy toward projects that reinforce fossil fuel reliance.

Fossil gas—often euphemistically called “natural gas” by the fossil fuel industry—is a hydrocarbon derived from fossil sources, with methane as its primary component, a greenhouse gas with far greater global warming potential than carbon dioxide. Despite being marketed as cleaner energy, fossil gas still emits CO₂ and methane, exacerbating the climate crisis. Indonesia’s increasing reliance on fossil gas risks becoming a new trap in the energy transition, as methane emissions throughout the supply chain—from extraction to combustion—demonstrate that gas is not climate-friendly.

We also highlight that the planning of the Batang CCGT has excluded meaningful participation of affected communities. Decision-making has been opaque, lacking equitable public consultation. Negative impacts on fisherfolk livelihoods, mangrove degradation, and coastal ecosystem disruption have never been an important consideration. Meanwhile, economic benefits are disproportionately enjoyed by major investors and political elites. In the context of environmental justice, the exclusion of public participation is not merely a procedural flaw but a structural violation that undermines the project’s social legitimacy and increases the risk of conflict and long-term social costs.

We strongly oppose the financing of the Batang CCGT project through international funding mechanisms under AZEC. The risk of “financial lock-in” is real, where funds intended for renewable energy are diverted to gas projects that preserve fossil assets. This trajectory entangles national and regional development in pathways that hinder climate targets. Therefore, we demand full transparency regarding projects, agreements, and partnerships claimed to support decarbonization.

We call on the central and regional governments to halt the Batang CCGT development plan and to evaluate all projects under the AZEC framework. We urge investors and international financial institutions not to fund the Batang CCGT project, which perpetuates fossil fuel use under the guise of transition. We call on civil society to strengthen solidarity and resistance against projects that threaten living spaces and the climate future.

A just energy transition cannot be built on destruction, rights violations, and fossil fuel dependency. We demand a transformation of the energy system that prioritizes people, the environment, and future generations. Batang is not an experimental field. The coast is not a dumping ground. Transition is not an excuse for destruction.

We reject the Batang CCGT. We reject AZEC's false solutions. We demand a just, equitable, and sustainable energy transition—now.

Signatories:

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