

# Building confidence and networks for urban planning in Asia



Hendricus Andy Simarmata happily acknowledges that his involvement in START has been a key to his growth as a scientist and to his contributions to international work on global environmental change. Simarmata is Vice Chairman of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Indonesia and President of the Indonesian Association of Urban and Regional Planners.

“The START program helped me to understand global issues, to meet international experts, and to learn from other countries’ experiences. This has helped me to understand and define development needs for my own region.”

Having first engaged with START during a *Cities at Risk* training event on vulnerability assessment tools and methods (held in Bangkok in 2010), Simarmata later presented his evolving research at the 2011 START-organized Second International Conference on Cities at Risk: Building Adaptive Capacities for Managing Climate Change Risks in

Asian Coastal Cities (CAR II) in Taipei. Ideas generated at CARII subsequently led to a proposal to START from Jakarta, on which Simarmata was a lead proponent. The proposal was funded and supported collaborative research and urban planning by researchers, provincial government and at-risk communities in North Coastal Jakarta.

Simarmata admits that he felt unprepared to work on global environmental change impact prior to his involvement with START. Because of the experiences, skills and confidence that he has been afforded by START opportunities, however, he recently collaborated with other START alumni to develop a training module on integrating GEC and urban planning tools with disaster risk reduction measures. The group plans to use the module to transfer such skills to others in their field.

Simarmata adds, “My experiences with START have prompted me to write my doctoral research proposal. Thank you, START, for giving me valuable knowledge and an international network for my career development.”