

<https://jakartaglobe.id/business/public-works-ministry-teams-up-with-army-to-complete-trans-papua-highway/>



A section of the Trans-Papua Highway under construction. (Photo courtesy of the Public Works Ministry)

By : Amal Ganesha | on 8:24 PM November 28, 2017

Jakarta. The Ministry of Public Works and Housing has teamed up with the Indonesian Military's Army Corps of Engineers to complete construction of the 4,330-kilometer Trans-Papua Highway by 2019.

To overcome difficulties caused by Papua's mountainous terrain, the government decided to call in the Engineering Corps to clear the land while the Public Works Ministry will take care of the construction process.

"[Land for the] Trans-Papua [Highway] is cleared by the Army Corps of Engineers and then the Public Works Ministry does the rest. This partnership has accelerated problem solving,"

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo said in a statement on Monday (27/11).

The project, started in 2013 but postponed by former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's administration, was mainly undertaken to reduce logistical costs in the region. President Jokowi has said on several occasions that Papuans, who for years had to pay up to 10 times more for fuel than people in the western part of the country, should be treated equally.

"This is for social justice; this is for equal access," Jokowi said, referring to disparities between food and fuel prices in Papua and the rest of the country, which he deems intolerable.

A 594-kilometer section of the road between Sorong and Manokwari in West Papua has been completed and according to Jokowi, residents are already starting to benefit from lower prices for goods.

For example, the price of cement has dropped to Rp 500,000 (\$37) per bag from Rp 2 million previously, while gasoline now costs Rp 6,000 per liter compared with Rp 60,000 previously.

"Trans-Papua is not only for transportation, it is also intended to improve access to isolated areas, which will result in lower prices," Public Works Minister Basuki Hadimuljono said.

The Rp 3.8 trillion project is also expected to create new economic opportunities through increased tourism.