

Expanding Ciliwung not solution to flooding

An official from the Ciliwung and Cisadane Rivers Control Office has said that the plan to dredge Ciliwung to solve Jakarta's flood problems may end to no avail without sufficient green spaces to support the river. Pudji Rahardjo, an official from the office, said that the office's plan to expand the river to 35-meter-wide to prevent flooding starting next year would flop if the number of water catchment areas stayed at its current level of 9 to 10 percent out of Jakarta's total area.

"A city should have 30 percent green space. Even if we expand the river, floods will be inevitable and we won't be able to cope with climate change. There will also be higher rainfall without sufficient water catchment areas," Pudji explained on Friday as quoted by [tribunnews.com](#). Pudji said that the river, which is the capital's main waterway, will be expanded to accommodate 493 cubic meters per second of water. The river is currently 5 to 8-meter-wide and can currently only accommodate 50 cubic meters of water per second.

Ciliwung River is one out of 13 rivers flowing in the capital. The river flows from its source in Bogor, West Java, to the Jakarta Bay. When the river overflows, it affects many residents as it runs through the city's busy and residential areas. Despite its impacts, the river has never been dredged like other rivers.

The office's spokesman, Putu Wiryawan, told [kompas.com](#) on Thursday that the river was never expanded because the riverbanks were occupied by residents. "Dredging the river is on our to-do list, but it's hard to carry out the task as the banks are occupied by houses. And, it's hard to bring heavy equipment through such densely populated areas," Putu said.

Putu said that his office could actualize the plan only after the city administration relocates residents living in the area. Governor Joko "Jokowi" Widodo said last week that he would persuade squatters along the Ciliwung River to relocate by offering them new homes at two apartment blocks in East and South Jakarta to enable the river dredging.

The administration is preparing Pasar Rumput market in South Jakarta and an administration office complex in Jatinegara, East Jakarta, for the apartments. One of the apartment towers will contain 5,000 apartments and the other 1,000 apartments.

The revitalization is part of an overall Rp 1.8 trillion (US\$190 million) project to build dikes and dredge 11 canals and four reservoirs in five years, which is being financed primarily by a loan from the World Bank.

The Regional Disaster Mitigation Agency has listed 62 flood-prone areas across Jakarta. Kampung Melayu, Bidara Cina, Cililitan, Cawang in East Jakarta and Bukit Duri in South Jakarta are some of the areas that have been affected by the overflowing Ciliwung River.

Hary T. Djatmiko, head of the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency's (BMKG) information unit, told [tempo.co](#) on Friday that Jakarta would likely see significant rainfall in the coming months. **(aml)**