

Friends of Andalas

A Platform for Nature-Based Recovery Initiative in Aceh, North Sumatera, and South Sumatera: A Call to Action

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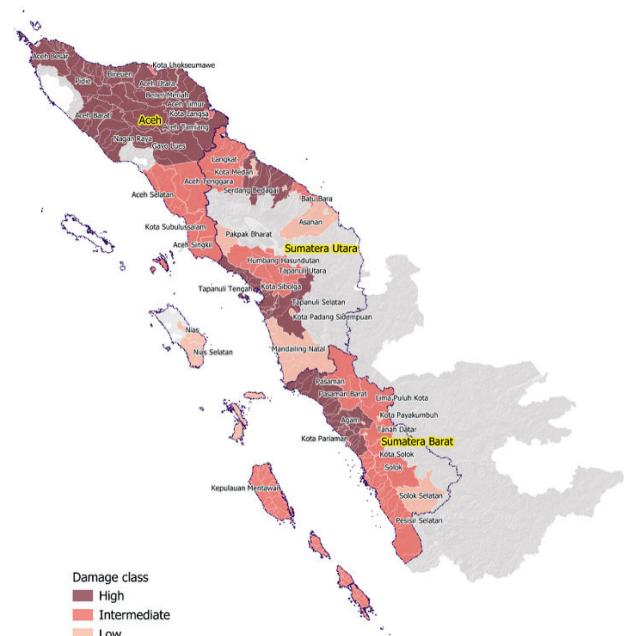
The Disaster That Has Been

In late November 2025, an unusually intense spell of rainfall — amplified by a rare near-equatorial tropical cyclone event — hit northern Sumatera and triggered widespread river flooding and landslides across Aceh, North Sumatera, and West Sumatera. What began as extreme weather rapidly became a cascading landscape disaster: steep headwaters shed water, debris, and sediment into mid-slope corridors, then overwhelmed lowland rivers and floodplains where settlements, roads, and productive lands are concentrated.

The impacts were catastrophic. By late December 2025, national disaster reporting indicated more than a thousand fatalities, hundreds missing, and hundreds of thousands displaced across the three provinces, with housing damage on a massive scale and extensive losses to public infrastructure, farms and plantations, and community assets. The reconstruction needs were estimated in the tens of trillions of rupiah, reflecting not only physical rebuilding, but the sheer logistics of restoring access, services, and livelihoods across dispersed, waterlogged, and landslide-affected terrain.

The disaster also exposed a structural driver that cannot be addressed by “rebuilding” alone: decades of land-use change and weak watershed governance have degraded the ecological infrastructure that moderates runoff, stabilizes slopes, and buffers floods. In other words, climate-amplified rainfall hit landscapes already engineered for failure. The central lesson is

political as much as technical — who gains from risky land conversion, and who pays when hazards arrive — and it points toward a recovery approach that is explicitly watershed-to-coast: protect remaining water towers, rehabilitate river and mid-slope corridors, restore critical hydrological control surfaces such as peat and mangroves, and re-plan settlement and infrastructure exposure around enforceable risk rules.



Province	High	Medium	Low
Aceh	Aceh Barat, Aceh Besar, Aceh Tamiang, Aceh Tengah, Aceh Timur, Aceh Utara, Bener Meriah, Bireuen, Gayo Lues, Nagan Raya, Pidie, Pidie Jaya	Aceh Selatan, Aceh Singkil, Aceh Tenggara, Kota Langsa, Kota Lhokseumawe, Kota Subulussalam	-
North Sumatera	Deli Serdang, Tapanuli Selatan, Tapanuli Tengah, Serdang Bedagai	Batu Bara, Humbang Hasundutan, Kota Sibolga, Langkat, Tapanuli Utara	Asahan, Kota Binjai, Kota Medan, Kota Padang Sidempuan, Kota Tebing Tinggi, Mandailing Natal, Nias, Nias Selatan, Pakpak Bharat
West Sumatera	Agam, Padang Pariaman, Pasaman Barat,	Kepulauan Mentawai, Kota Padang, Kota Pariaman, Kota Solok, Lima Puluh Kota, Pasaman, Pesisir Selatan, Solok, Tanah Datar	Kota Bukittinggi, Kota Padang Panjang, Kota Payakumbuh, Solok Selatan



Context and Rationale

Friends of Andalas is a **multi-sector coalition initiative** convened by The Landscape Group to accelerate mid- and long-term recovery in Aceh, North Sumatera, and West Sumatera. Across the three provinces, the floods and landslides were not only a humanitarian crisis; they were a governance and delivery test. Extreme rainfall met structurally degraded watersheds, exposed settlements and infrastructure concentrated along river corridors and coastal plains, and revealed how quickly risk compounds when land-use change, weak enforcement, and fragmented investment collide.

The recovery challenge, therefore, is not simply to rebuild. It is to reduce risk while restoring livelihoods, and to do so in a way that strengthens the ecological and institutional foundations that determine future outcomes. Yet the recovery landscape is typically crowded and disjointed: many actors, many good intentions, and too few mechanisms that translate priorities into sequenced, safeguards-ready, financeable packages. Financing is often mismatched to risk and time horizons; projects remain isolated rather than mutually reinforcing; and learning is not captured fast enough to improve decisions while recovery is still underway.

Friends of Andalas responds to this gap by turning a watershed-to-coast recovery agenda into a coordinated pipeline of priority packages – and by using blended finance to mobilize the right mix of philanthropic support, public finance, concessional capital, and private investment. The initiative is designed to complement (not compete with) government plans and existing partner mechanisms. It is not a new implementing agency and it is not a standalone fund. Its role is to align actors around a shared pipeline, prepare credible packages to financing-ready standard, catalyze resources toward outcomes that matter, and ensure learning improves delivery over time.

Purpose and Objective

The purpose of Friends of Andalas is to reduce disaster risk while restoring livelihoods by strengthening the ecological and socio-economic foundations of recovery across priority landscapes in Aceh, North Sumatera, and West Sumatera. Its objective is to create a trusted coordination table and a high-integrity delivery pipeline that enables partners to move faster from commitments to implementation – with clear sequencing, safeguard readiness, and measurable outcomes.

In Full Support of the Task Force Established by the Presidential Decree No. 1/2026

Friends of Andalas is a multi-sector coalition convened by The Landscape Group to help accelerate recovery in Aceh, North Sumatera, and West Sumatera. It is deliberately positioned outside government – not as an implementing agency or a parallel authority – but as a platform that brings together philanthropy, development partners, civil society, academia, and responsible private sector actors to align priorities, strengthen delivery readiness, and mobilize fit-for-purpose financing. Its role is to translate shared recovery objectives into coherent, safeguards-ready packages and to support coordination across actors so that efforts reinforce one another rather than fragment into isolated projects.

At the same time, Friends of Andalas is designed to work alongside and in support of the Government of Indonesia's recovery agenda, including through engagement with the Task Force established under Presidential Decree No. 1/2026. The coalition's intent is to complement the Task Force's mandate by providing an external coordination table, a project-preparation and pipeline function, and a learning and evidence system that helps partners move from commitments to implementation while staying aligned with official plans, institutional pathways, and accountability requirements. In doing so, Friends of Andalas aims to strengthen—not substitute—the government's leadership, while improving the pace, coherence, and integrity of recovery outcomes.

Call to Action

Friends of Andalas invites partners to join as founding members through participating in the Steering Circle, working groups, and participants. Contribution to a shared preparation budget is welcomed by not a condition.

That's what friends are for ...



What Friends of Andalas Does

Friends of Andalas operates as a convening-and-delivery platform with four connected functions, each responding to a specific weakness commonly seen in post-disaster recovery.

- **First, it convenes.** It brings together donors, philanthropies, responsible private sector actors, civil society, universities, and technical institutions to align on priority landscapes, shared standards, and a common evidence base — while maintaining practical alignment with provincial and national recovery directions. The emphasis is on turning parallel initiatives into a coherent division of labor, with a shared view of priorities and sequencing.
- **Second, it prepares.** It runs a light project-preparation function to bridge the gap between good ideas and implementable, finance-ready packages. This includes pre-feasibility, safeguards readiness, community engagement and consent processes, permitting pathways, basic engineering and ecological design concepts, and structured monitoring, reporting, and verification so outcomes can be credibly tracked from the start. The intent is to reduce the transaction costs that often stall recovery investments at the most critical moment.
- **Third, it catalyzes.** It matches each package to a fit-for-purpose capital stack. Philanthropy and grants are used for public goods and unlocking costs. Concessional finance is used where affordability and tenor constraints matter. Commercial capital is brought in selectively and only when cash flows are genuinely credible. This discipline protects recovery from the familiar failure mode of forcing “investment” into interventions that should be funded as public goods.
- **Fourth, it informs.** Friends of Andalas functions as an analytic and knowledge-management platform that strengthens recovery decisions in real time. It continuously synthesizes evidence on what is working, where implementation is failing, and why — across landscapes, sectors, and intervention types. It translates those lessons into practical guidance that partners can apply immediately, tightening design and sequencing as conditions evolve. This learning function is operational, not academic: it produces short learning briefs and decision notes, maintains a live “lessons register” tied to the pipeline, and supports partners to adjust approaches based on emerging field evidence. Over time, it builds a shared understanding of which combinations of conservation, rehabilitation, restoration, risk reduction, and livelihood recovery produce the most reliable outcomes in different watershed and coastal contexts.

Focus and Portfolio Logic

Friends of Andalas organizes recovery into integrated packages rather than scattered projects, anchored in landscape realities and risk drivers. The portfolio prioritizes interventions that restore ecological function while reducing risk and protecting livelihoods.

The program focus includes: (1) ecological infrastructure for risk reduction, including conservation of remaining water towers, rehabilitation of mid-slope disturbance belts and river corridors, and restoration of peat and mangroves as hydrological control surfaces and coastal-risk infrastructure; (2) resilient settlements and early warning modernization, including risk-informed spatial planning, calibrated engineering, and end-to-end early warning linked to local protocols; and (3) recovery and upgrading of productive systems without expanding the risk frontier, so that agriculture, plantations, fisheries, and logistics recover while shifting toward deforestation-free, risk-aware pathways.

Governance and Operating Arrangements

Friends of Andalas is hosted by The Landscape Group, which serves as Secretariat and provides day-to-day coordination, pipeline management, convening support, and knowledge products. A small Steering Circle (eight to twelve institutions) sets strategic direction and endorses the annual pipeline. An independent Technical and Safeguards Panel provides quality assurance on hydrology, ecology, disaster-risk reduction, social safeguards, and integrity of claims. Provincial focal points in Aceh, North Sumatera, and West Sumatera anchor the work in local institutions, implementation constraints, and community realities.

Blended Finance Approach

Friends of Andalas uses blended finance as an organizing discipline rather than a slogan. Philanthropy and grants finance the enabling layer — community facilitation and consent, safeguards, baseline data, monitoring systems, early warning modernization, and conservation actions with limited or no direct revenue model. Concessional capital supports resilience investments that require long tenors and affordability. Commercial financing is reserved for components with credible cash flows, such as value-chain upgrades and service-based delivery models with reliable counterparties. The initiative's credibility depends on being explicit about what is investable, what is not, and what must be funded as a public good.

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