Jakarta Lexical Database:

A collaborative project coordinated by the Jakarta Field Station of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Department of Linguistics

The Jakarta Lexical Database, or JLD, aims to gather into a single database a collection of meaning-word pairs from as many languages of Indonesia (and closely related languages) as possible. Much more than a simple Swadesh list, the JLD consists of over 1400 abstract meanings, which are based on the general set of terms developed for the LWT (see below) which itself was based on the Intercontinental Dictionary Series. For the JLD the list has been specifically adapted to the Indonesian situation.

Beyond its documentary function, the gathering of such a database will allow for direct comparison between many of the languages in Indonesia, contributing substantially to questions of patterns of borrowing, genealogical relatedness, contact and areal phenomena, and other questions of typology.

The JLD grew out of the Loanword Typology (LWT) project coordinated from the MPI EVA in Leipzig. The aim of that project was to collect data from a core sample of 41 languages to answer the question: How likely is it that a word with a given lexical meaning will be borrowed from one language into another language? Further information and the resulting LWT database are available online at: http://wold.livingsources.org/

The JLD is a collaborative project, and we invite all interested researchers to participate and contribute to the database. All participants will have full access to all aspects of the database. Currently there are projects collecting data on Malay, Mentawai, and Minang dialects/languages in Sumatra, Malay and Dayak languages in Kalimantan, Sumabawan in NTT, Sangihe in Sulawesi, Javanese and Malay dialects in Java, as well as a number of languages in Papua.

The technical database has been carefully developed over the course of several years after collaboration with a number of scholars working on various languages around the world.

Special features of the JLD include:

- Allowing many meanings to one word correspondences

- Allowing one meaning to many words correspondences

- The ability to specify the reason a target language does not have a unique lexical item corresponding to a particular JLD meaning