

FIJIANS FOR FIJIAN FORESTS

Supporting Community-driven
Protected Area Establishment in Fiji



BIODIVERSITY
CONSERVATION
LESSONS LEARNED
TECHNICAL SERIES

14

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14

Fijians for Fijian Forests – Supporting Community-driven Protected Area Establishment in Fiji

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The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

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ABOUT THE BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION LESSONS LEARNED TECHNICAL SERIES

This document is part of a technical report series on conservation projects funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) and the Conservation International Pacific Islands Program (CI-Pacific). The main purpose of this series is to disseminate project findings and successes to a broader audience of conservation professionals in the Pacific, along with interested members of the public and students. The reports are being prepared on an ad-hoc basis as projects are completed and written up.

In most cases the reports are composed of two parts, the first part is a detailed technical report on the project which gives details on the methodology used, the results and any recommendations. The second part is a brief project completion report written for the donor and focused on conservation impacts and lessons learned.

The CEPF fund in the Polynesia-Micronesia region was launched in September 2008 and will be active until 2013. It is being managed as a partnership between CI Pacific and CEPF. The purpose of the fund is to engage and build the capacity of non-governmental organizations to achieve terrestrial biodiversity conservation. The total grant envelope is approximately US\$6 million, and focuses on three main elements: the prevention, control and eradication of invasive species in key biodiversity areas (KBAs); strengthening the conservation status and management of a prioritized set of 60 KBAs and building the awareness and participation of local leaders and community members in the implementation of threatened species recovery plans.

Since the launch of the fund, a number of calls for proposals have been completed for 14 eligible Pacific Island Countries and Territories (Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Fiji, Niue, Cook Islands, Palau, FSM, Marshall Islands, Tokelau Islands, French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, Eastern Island, Pitcairn and Tokelau). By late 2012 more than 90 projects in 13 countries and territories were being funded.

The Polynesia-Micronesia Biodiversity Hotspot is one of the most threatened of Earth's 34 biodiversity hotspots, with only 21 percent of the region's original vegetation remaining in pristine condition. The Hotspot faces a large number of severe threats including invasive species, alteration or destruction of native habitat and over exploitation of natural resources. The limited land area exacerbates these threats and to date there have been more recorded bird extinctions in this Hotspot than any other. In the future climate change is likely to become a major threat especially for low lying islands and atolls which could disappear completely.

For more information on the funding criteria and how to apply for a CEPF grant please visit:

- www.cepf.net/where_we_work/regions/asia_pacific/polynesia_micronesia/Pages/default.aspx
- www.cepf.net

For more information on Conservation International's work in the Pacific please visit:

- www.conservation.org/explore/asia-pacific/pacific_islands/pages/overview.aspx

or e-mail us at cipacific@conservation.org

Location of the project in the Polynesia-Micronesia Biodiversity Hotspot





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FIJIANS FOR FIJIAN FORESTS – SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PROTECTED AREA ESTABLISHMENT IN FIJI

Lessons Learned

Project Design Process

Aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings.

An important lesson learnt was the identification of products/deliverables during the project design and proposal writing stage. Working with communities is quite challenging and requires a lot of engagement and communication and one must always take into account that community views and reaction about the project may not always remain the same but can often change. Careful selection of deliverables must be done to ensure that projects are not over-ambitious.

In this project, the total number of SSG representatives for Natewa Tunuloa was expected to increase (target of 25) and this was based on the current membership rate and level of support from the communities. However during the project, few proposals surfaced from industrial stakeholders to carry out developments (including logging) on land bordering the IBA. This required careful dialogue with the landowners and the industrial stakeholders, with the support of the Forestry Department. Because there were a lot of deliberations, more time and effort was put into this consultation process. Thus, although the target was not achieved, what was important is that BirdLife and the SSG had communicated well with the communities and highlighted the established community-managed PA as a model to generate income. At the end of the project, the SSG target membership of 25 was not achieved, but more communities agreed to protect their forests.

Project Implementation

Aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings.

Constant dialogue and continuous engagement with communities was crucial to building on the already established relationships and trust between BirdLife and communities at the two sites. Participatory forums were encouraged, locally elected representatives formed SSGs and therefore communities gained a sense of ownership of the project.

Almost all communities depend on forests for livelihood and a balance had to be sought between the protection of the forests and their livelihoods and well-being. Again, this required good communication and dialogue and it was vital that communities were made aware of the tangible benefits of conserving their forests. The document on “Legal Mechanisms for the Establishment and Management of Terrestrial Protected Areas in Fiji” was presented to communities, and with input from government departments, communities were able to agree on the type of protected area they would like. BirdLife was able to take this and propose it to the national Protected Area forum which will then decide its (long-term) endorsement under a new PA legislation for Fiji. At the same time communities have implemented forest-based income generating projects that are benefiting them.

Lessons Learned *cont.*

Other lessons learned

relevant to the conservation community

Working with communities is challenging but unique. Project activities may not all be implemented during the target period due to a variety of reasons, and sometimes project activities have to be altered to ensure that communities understand the conservation message. Project staff need to be both flexible and stern with the implementation of activities, keeping in mind that all activities need to be completed by the end of the project. Activities that are beyond project control are activities such as village meetings, consultations, workshops etc, those that are dependent on communities. Activities that project staff can actually control are any form of development activities and assistance. Project staff need to be uncompromising about completion of development and construction activities at the agreed time. Sometimes communities get too comfortable receiving “hand-outs” and this needs to be addressed at the beginning of the project; communities need to be clear about their commitment over labor costs and in-kind contribution. Having a local conservation group (for e.g. the Site Support Group) is an advantage as they can be very facilitating in getting this message across.





Project Rationale

The Fiji Islands contain some of the richest natural communities of all the Pacific oceanic islands. The archipelago is known for its high levels of endemism: at least 900 vascular plant species are endemic, and it is a hotspot for endemic palms, amphibians, skinks, geckos, iguanas, bats and birds. Twenty-seven bird species occur only in Fiji, 26 of which are land/forest birds. Fiji's forests are critical for the conservation of its endemic biodiversity, but about half of the forests have already been lost through clearance for agriculture, unsustainable logging, and fires. As a result, many of Fiji's endemic species are threatened, including at least 8 of Fiji's palm species (EN and CR); Fiji Flying-fox (CR); Crested Iguana (CR); Banded Iguana (EN); Fijian Burrowing Snake (VU); Tree Frog (NT); Ground Frog (EN); and 11 of the endemic 26 land birds (varying from NT to CR). In total, about 90 Fijian species are currently on the IUCN Red List, but this number could be much higher as data on plants and invertebrates are still largely lacking. Fiji's forests also contribute substantially to the quality of life of the rural people, providing timber and non-timber products and environmental services such as soil conservation, water catchment, and carbon sinks. They also have important traditional social and cultural values. Over 80% of Fiji's land and forests are owned by family clans, called mataqalis, for whom these forests are their main source of livelihood.

The island of Kadavu has the highest number of endemic birds per land area in the world and hosts two Important Bird Areas (IBAs), including Mt Nabukelevu whose montane forest is of critical importance for five globally threatened bird species. The Natewa IBA provides forest habitat to two globally threatened bird species including the locally endemic subspecies of Silktail. Both IBAs are included in the 60 Priority Sites for Site-Level Investment by CEPF in the Polynesia-Micronesia EP, and both are Sites of National Significance as identified in the Fiji National Environment Strategy. However, neither site is formally protected and both are under serious threat from, most critically, agricultural encroachment (Nabukelevu) and logging (Natewa).

BirdLife has initiated conservation activities (funded by the UK Darwin Initiative) at both IBAs, working with their local communities to identify problems, define potential solutions and develop appropriate skills. This has led to the establishment of two local conservation groups, known as Site Support Groups (SSGs), comprising representatives of land-owning mataqalis who wish to sustainably manage/conservate their natural (forest) resources.

In Nabukelevu this group is still very young (established in 2007) but eager and committed to establish a community-based protected area at their IBA. The total land area to be reserved at 300m elevation is approximately 350ha. A small grant recently obtained from GEF will allow reforestation down to 250m or even 200m elevation which will increase the forested and the to-be-protected land area significantly.

In Natewa, the SSG has existed since 2005 and consists of forest-owning mataqalis who have declined offers by timber companies to sell their forests for logging purposes and decided to work together with BirdLife to protect their forest instead. The Natewa peninsula has been under a logging concession and the majority of the forest has been signed over to logging leases; these forest blocks represent the last stands of forest not at immediate risk of being logged. Recently (February 2009) a workshop was held in Navetau Village on the Natewa peninsula, attended by over 30 local people, during which 11 mataqali agreed to sustainably manage over 6000ha of land for ten years.

An in-depth review of options for terrestrial protected area designation was carried out in 2007 and allows forest-owning mataqalis at both sites to decide what type of 'legal recognition' they should aim for. Based on this decision, locally-driven, sustainable resource management plans can be developed for both sites. For Natewa, this process is already in its final stages; in Nabukelevu the process is about to commence.

This CEPF project has come at exactly the right time for the communities in Nabukelevu and Natewa to build on the foundations laid in the Darwin-funded project, to continue to formalise protected area status of their forests, and to use their new skills to implement their resource management plans. These plans include seeking opportunities for sustainable, forest-based income generation which is becoming increasingly urgent to show the benefits of protecting the forests. This project will sustain the progress made by the communities involved so far to conserve their forests, and will also work as a feasible model for other mataqalis to follow. Many forest-owning mataqalis are still under severe pressure (both from within and from outside their communities) to convert their forests into agricultural land (Nabukelevu) or to sell their forests for quick bucks to logging companies (Natewa). If this project would not be implemented, both sites could be critically damaged in the very near future.

Natewa Tunuloa



Communities learning how to properly plant pineapples & vertiver grass in model farms.

1. Basic information

COUNTRY: Fiji

SITE NAME, IBA NUMBER(S): Natewa Tunuloa, FJ03

PROVINCE/DISTRICT, LOCATION: The Natewa Tunuloa Peninsula is located at 16°36'S, 179°49'E on the south-eastern side of Vanua Levu bordering the largest bay in Fiji, the Natewa Bay and the Somosomo strait. Natewa and Tunuloa are two Districts under the jurisdiction of the Cakaudrove Province

SITE AREA (HA) - FOREST CONSERVED AND/OR RESTORED:

The IBA covers an area of approximately 17, 600 ha with an altitude of 832m. 6625 ha is conserved under an MOU with landowning clans for community-managed PA (6585.2488 ha in map)

2. Biodiversity and current status

Natewa Tunuloa IBA contains most of the large remaining forest tracts on the peninsula, in fact it covers the largest tracts of old-growth forest. The IBA is mostly lowland tropical rainforest which extends along the central ridge of the peninsula, including many steep slopes with montane forest. The IBA contains the largest remaining stands of unlogged forest but also includes adjacent areas of logged forest making one large contiguous forest within the IBA. Bordering the IBA is degraded forest most of which have been heavily logged in recent years and forests which have been converted to mahogany plantations and agriculture. The dense forest is found only when one treads past planted land and vegetation. A baseline survey conducted by BIFP showed that eight herpetofauna species were found in the IBA (none of the endemics). Literature on Natewa reveals only two species of hawkmoths; however survey results found five species collected from the IBA, four of which are new records for Natewa.

BIRDS: GLOBALLY THREATENED SPECIES

- *Friendly ground-dove (VU)*
- *Silktaill (NT)*

RESTRICTED-RANGE SPECIES

- *21 spp (out of 21 on the Peninsula & 24 on Vanua Levu including all 3 Vanua Levu & Taveuni endemics (Golden dove, Red shining parrot & silktaill)*

CURRENT LEGAL STATUS

Natewa Tunuloa Peninsula is a Site of National Significance listed in the Fiji National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and is a priority biodiversity hotspot. It is also mentioned in the National Regional Tourism Strategy as an area that has potential to provide regional community benefits and to diversify tourism products in Vanua Levu. The IBA has no legal designation and/or protection,

however, the IBA has been formally recognised as a “priority area in need of formal protection” under the national Protected Area Committee (the PAC forum, of which BirdLife is a member of, is responsible for the development of the Protected Area legislation for Fiji).

CURRENT SITE GOVERNANCE

The IBA is currently managed by the respective landowning clans, who are represented on the Site Support Group (SSG). There are 15 villages (not including settlements) surrounding the IBA and whose clans own land within the IBA. All members of the SSG are nominated and endorsed by the communities following a consultation process and gender equality is always encouraged. However, not all clans within the IBA are represented on the SSG, only clans that have land ownership of the community-declared PA. In the meantime, awareness programs and community consultations will continue and in the process all villages & clans are expected to nominate members into the SSG. The SSG committee includes the chairman, a secretary, a treasurer and 3 other members although SSG membership is not limited to any given number. Currently, there are 14 members on the SSG.

The SSG has a Terms of Reference with a specific goal to conserve and sustainably manage the forests for the benefit of landowning communities and for the wider population of Fiji. The roles & responsibilities of the SSG include, but are not limited to:

- ensuring that unsustainable activities to degrade natural resources, loss of forest area or quality are not carried out/allowed; activities such as, but not limited to burning of grass, logging, grazing, using the land as grantee for securing loans or mortgage.
- promote the community-declared protected forest area as a conservation-friendly forest management initiative, and for encouraging land owners from other clans and villages within the IBA to set aside similar areas for protection and wise management
- promote conservation education and awareness- raising among land owners, schools, environment clubs and community organisations
- develop an attraction for birdwatchers, eco-tourists and other activities providing a sustainable source of revenue and other conservation oriented activities for the landowning communities
- implement the Community-Declared Protected Area Management Plan
- undertake monitoring of the IBA and report accordingly

CURRENT CONSERVATION APPROACH AND VERY BRIEF HISTORY LEADING TO THIS

Community meetings and consultations were undertaken at the site, following its identification as an IBA, this resulted in the establishment of the Natewa Tunuloa SSG. The SSG is named *Sisi Initiative* after the *sisi* (Fijian name for the endemic silktail, a subspecies of which is found only in the Peninsula). Since ownership of the IBA is divided between two districts, communities make certain that there is fair representation on the SSG.

Some clans within the IBA already had some forests logged for commercial purposes while some clans were still in the process of negotiating with logging companies. During the community consultation process, BIFP worked in close collaboration with the Fiji Department of Forestry who agreed to cease the issue of logging licenses within the IBA. This has proved most successful to date.

A Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) workshop held for the communities gave BIFP important information on the status of the communities and how dependent they were on their forests and its resources. Following this, five landowning clans agreed to protect their forests from destructive practices, including commercial logging and an agreement was signed by the heads of the five clans and BirdLife, witnessed by the Provincial Council in July 2006 for a period of 3 years. This was a huge achievement given that the area covered over 27% of the entire IBA.

In October 2008, the SSG together with BIFP facilitated a community consultation workshop, with representatives from the Provincial Office, Native Lands Trust Board, National Trust of Fiji, Departments of Forestry and Agriculture. This was a most useful workshop, as communities agreed to identify ways in which they could protect the IBA and generate discussions on how they could sustainably use and manage their resources. Following this, a one week consultation was conducted in January 2009 at each of the six villages identified to have landowning clans with contiguous patches of forests in the IBA. The one-on-one meetings with each of the villages was to ensure that all villagers and members of the community were properly informed of the importance of conserving their forests and using resources wisely and to involve everyone in the decision making process.

In February 2009, all the 11 landowning clans living in these 6 villages signed a MOU to protect their forests, and thereafter contributed to the drafting of a resource management plan. The community-managed PA now covers a total of 6625 hectares of the IBA.

The communities have since then been implementing the resource plans which include the development and management of environment-friendly projects to sustain their livelihoods. Additionally, the SSG have undergone several workshops and training in IBA monitoring, small business management and fundraising and are now implementing their first GEF-Small Grants Programme project, with support and management advice from BIFP.

3. Threats

URGENCY OF ACTION

Immediate threats to the Natewa Tunuloa IBA were identified as logging, human-induced fires and over-grazing all of which were affecting the habitats of the birdlife and wider biodiversity in the IBA. There was also a decrease in available land for farming & agriculture. Communities agreed there was an urgent need to address this.

WHAT ARE THE DRIVERS OF FOREST LOSS?

Communities are often under great pressure to derive income through logging. Urban and agricultural encroachment and invasive alien species pose the greatest threats to these forests, often all at the same time. Logging operations disturb forest blocks while logging roads increase access by agriculture pests and alien plants and animals.

4. Approach prior to CEPF funding

The challenges to conserving Fiji's forest resources remain substantial: the causes of deforestation are deep-seated with low local capacity to manage forests and lack of institutional capacity and enforcement to exercise proper protection and management.

On the hopeful side, many communities would like to manage their forests in sustainable ways, often aware that forest management is related to water quality, fresh water and marine fisheries, the availability of sustainable forest products including fruits and vegetables and flood risk management. This drive by the communities has also come about through the realisation that much of their livelihoods are dependent on natural resources. However, communities often lack the information and skills that are needed to influence their decisions on how to sustainably use their resources. This is often coupled with the lack of financial resources which contributes a lot to the effectiveness of village campaigns to have a better life.

A great deal of BirdLife International Fiji Programme's work depends on people's behaviour and decisions & its successes and failures can be measured by the degree to which it contributes to the well-being of people and the environment. As a consequence, BIFP implements community-based resource conservation and management at its project sites. This model has been quite successful resulting in the development of SSGs; community managed protected areas and community-driven initiatives including the establishment of sustainable livelihood opportunities that are compatible with forest and island conservation.

HISTORY AND CAPACITY

The *Sisi Initiative* SSG has developed well over the years and BIFP continues to provide technical advice and overarching supervision over its activities in the IBA. Although the SSG continues to face daily challenges from communities in the IBA, it is probably one of the most developed SSGs in Fiji.

Currently the SSG monitors all livelihood projects in the six villages of the community-managed PA; this includes bee-keeping, a poultry farm, a bakery and handicraft project. Each village representative on the SSG is responsible for reporting on the respective projects from the individual villages. The SSG has also been instrumental in the policing of the IBA and working closely with government departments (Forestry and Agriculture) to keep tab on any activities within the IBA from external stakeholders. The SSG is keen on continuing awareness to other villages within the IBA so there is an increase in SSG membership, and an increase in the protected forests.

The SSG has undergone a series of training programs in bird identification, IBA monitoring, fundraising and small business management and are utilising those skills in the day to day management of livelihood projects and its own affairs. A fundraising and proposal writing workshop held for all SSGs, in July 2010 saw the success of a proposal that was put together by members of the *Sisi Initiative* SSG.

COMMENT ON GOVERNMENT WILLINGNESS TO ADDRESS DRIVERS OF DEFORESTATION

The Government, through the Ministries of Forestry, Environment, Primary Industries and *I Taukei Affairs* have continuously supported the work that BirdLife International is doing in Fiji. The Cakaudrove Provincial Council has been engaged in all the work carried out in the IBA and has facilitated most of the meetings and workshops. The *Roko Tui* (Provincial head) has officiated at various workshops and training events held at the site.

Government bodies, including the Ministry of Primary Industry (through the Department of Forestry) and agencies like the *I Taukei* Land Trust Board were involved during the management planning process and development of the community-managed protected area. It was important to engage all these stakeholders so communities were given access to information on laws & legislations pertaining to land issues, government policies on forestry areas and guidance on community-managed areas. The Department of Agriculture (MPI) has worked in close collaboration with BIFP to address the problem of unsustainable agricultural practices and deforestation and have since put in place a mechanism, through the establishment of model farms and nurseries, to promote forest conservation at the same time to support people's livelihoods. The Department has also facilitated poultry training and will continue to monitor the project, providing technical advice and support to the community.

Forest restoration programs and developing initiatives for the wellbeing of the local people will continue to be undertaken by BIFP and other NGOs in collaboration with local communities. Such initiatives are clearly stipulated in Government's development plans to address poverty and improve the livelihoods of the rural economy. For communities in the Natewa Tunuloa IBA, this is even more specific, with the new Government "Look North Policy" which aims to improve all types of development in the Northern division.

Additionally, Fiji has just seen the launching of the Fiji REDD-Plus Policy (March 2011) after the Fiji Cabinet endorsed the Fiji National REDD-plus Policy in a cabinet seating in December 2010. The policy, the first for the Pacific region, puts Fiji at the forefront of forest conservation and sustainable forest management for financial incentives (to resource owners), as opposed to obtaining financial gains from agriculture and land development. The consultation processes which lead to the eventual adoption of the policy required technical advice and contribution from NGOs including BirdLife International.

IS THERE SUFFICIENT CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAMMES WITH HIGH TECHNICAL CONTENT AND TRANSACTION COSTS, AND TO ENGAGE IN POLICY DEBATE AND ADVOCACY TO ENSURE REPLICATION?

The SSG is implementing a 2-year GEF-Small Grants Programme project which aims to establish two native tree & sandalwood nurseries and an ecotourism project in the IBA. The SSG is coordinating and implementing all efforts on the ground with BIFP providing administrative and financial support. This project will support forest restoration in Natewa Tunuloa IBA and will develop ecotourism as a means to improving livelihoods and to promote the community-declared PA as a replicable model to other communities Fiji. BIFP will continue to support the SSG in this capacity and already there is evidence of replication in other villages. Additionally, BIFP is working in close collaboration with the potential BirdLife Partner, NatureFiji-MareqetiViti (NFMV) to engage in the work the SSG have implemented so far, in the hopes that NFMV will provide the necessary support and technical advice to the SSG.

The development of Protected Area legislation for Fiji through the National Protected Area Forum will provide a new dimension to the face of community-managed PAs such as the Natewa Tunuloa community-declared PA. Both BIFP and NFMV are represented on the PA forum and therefore have the capacity to engage in advocacy and policy decision making. The PA forum will develop a PA legislation that will enable community conserved areas to be legally recognized. BIFP and NFMV will aim to ensure that mechanisms are in place to sustain community-managed PAs, will showcase the benefits of the PA process to the communities and so will increase the likelihood that community managed protected areas will be replicated at other sites.

5. New Conservation and Governance Approach

OVERALL APPROACH PROPOSED

Site Support Groups are one of the most successful ways to safeguard IBAs and a cost effective and progressive approach to conserving biodiversity. SSGs are community-based groups consisting of local volunteers who have an interest in protecting their own environment. BirdLife International uses the concept of SSGs as a way of involving local people and resource owners and they work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to promote the conservation of IBAs and develop sustainable environment-friendly initiatives for communities living in and around these IBAs. Activities of SSG are diverse, depending on the ecological and socio-economic context at particular sites (BirdLife International, 2007).

Working with SSGs in Fiji has enabled BIFP to have a deeper understanding of communities' reliance on ecosystem services and how this has had to be considered on the establishment of a PA. Prior to the establishment of the *Sisi Initiative* SSG, communities were inexperienced and unaware of immediate steps that could be taken to manage existing use of natural resources. This led to the continuous logging of their native forests and destruction of forest resources, although communities knew of the significance of their endemic bird. Participatory approaches were adopted by BIFP and, together with the SSG, were able to gauge the needs of the people. Continuous consultations have been the ultimate key to arriving at a common goal and the SSG has played a key role in leading and advising the communities. This is the core of community consultation; ensuring that all members of the community are involved in discussions and can contribute equally, irrespective of gender, age, religious background or status in the community.

Whilst establishing a reserved area and conserving an IBA is important for the protection of birds and biodiversity, it is equally important to realize the needs and interests of the local communities so they are not perceived as being adversely affected by the conservation interest of an outside NGO. Furthermore, the communities need to be fully involved in the activities and have the same conservation goal so as to ensure sustainability. Following consultations, communities agreed to develop a management plan which sets the guideline for the management of the community PA and the sustainable use of the resources within. The plan includes the development of sustainable forest-based income generating projects including the alternative production of non-timber forest products and sustainable agricultural projects. These projects have been researched and were seen to be most feasible in the area; nevertheless the SSG will continue to monitor these projects together with the responsible Government bodies. Such small-scale projects will lessen the pressure on forest resources, help improve the quality of life for the local people and will enhance community involvement and participation in the protection of their community PA.

PROJECT DECISION-MAKING/GOVERNANCE

Although the SSG guides conservation actions on the ground, any decisions pertaining to the use of land and land resources are ultimately that of the landowning clans. In Fiji, the land tenure system is a very sensitive issue and responsibility and ownership lies entirely with the landowning clans. The SSGs are established in such a way that members are representative of each clan and each of those members are nominated and endorsed by the community. Therefore, the SSG is still liable to report to each village and clan on its activities. This eases way of communication and

information-sharing between respective clans and the SSG and decision-making ultimately lays within the clan and clan leaders. This strategy has been seen to be very effective. The community-managed PA remains under the governance of the respective landowning clans and all activities occurring within the PA and the IBA are being monitored and reported by the SSG.

LEGAL STATUS: NATIONAL AND LOCAL LAWS, AND 'FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT' OF COMMUNITIES

At present, Fiji does not have a Protected Area Legislation nor does it have a National Protected Areas system, instead there are national policy documents and government inventories that are shared amongst various Government departments which provide legal mechanisms for the establishment and management of PAs. Nevertheless, the Fiji NBSAP has a register of sites of national significance with appropriate form of management, one of which includes Natewa Tunuloa.

The establishment of the community-declared PA in Natewa Tunuloa took into account the landowning clans' rights, since they are dependent on land and forests for livelihoods. All members of the community were consulted and participated in the decision making process (the clan leaders wouldn't have approved if members of the clan hadn't agreed to protect their forests). A consultation workshop saw the endorsement of this community-managed PA and all relevant external stakeholders were available to provide the communities with access to information on laws and legislations pertaining to land issues, government policies on forestry areas and guidance on community-managed areas. Ultimately, communities were provided the necessary information prior to sealing the agreement to establish a community-managed PA. The communities themselves set the priorities, limitations and action plans for the management of this community-declared PA & IBA (this is in their management plan).

BIFP is now working closely with the National Protected Area forum to develop a PA legislation (a first for Fiji) which will be aligned to the IUCN PA categories, but will take into account the local context, i.e. community conserved areas that have been traditionally designated, making sure that they are responsive to the needs & rights of the landowners.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

All issues pertaining to land and the use of land resources lay entirely with the landowners i.e. the clans. If clan members are unable to resolve matters on their own, disputes are handled amicably by the Provincial Council; BirdLife International plays no part in resolving disputes over tenure and land matters. Should the dispute be a conservation matter regarding the use/misuse of resources within the community-managed PA, BIFP will consult with the community and revert to the management plan (which is developed & endorsed by the communities themselves) to see how the matter can be resolved agreeably.

NET POSITIVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The SSG (in consultation with the communities) put together a strategy to ensure that small projects & enterprises are established to enhance livelihoods for themselves since they have put aside their forest for protection. This includes projects to improve agricultural productivity (to prevent further encroachment) and to identify & develop sustainable, forest-based livelihoods without compromising the natural resource base provided by these forests. These projects are being managed internally by the respective committees in the six villages, but monitored by the

SSG. Returns from the projects are shared at the discretion of the respective committees. On the other hand, the SSG has begun selling sarongs (produced by BIFP) and this new GEF-SGP project will see the sale of some sandalwood plants from the nursery, once they have been germinated and grown. The SSG will meet with the villages to decide on how the incentives from the nursery will be shared (a small percentage will also be given to the SSG).

OFFSITE STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS

BIFP have taken every precaution to consult each clan concerned, to mitigate against any social rivalry or conflicts between clans and/or villages, including any conflicts from offsite stakeholders. This has proved successful so far.

6. Detailed Knowledge of the Forest

The baseline bird survey of the forests of Natewa and Tunuloa were conducted in April 2004 and May 2005 (BirdLife International Field Report #24 and 41 respectively), the findings of which resulted in its identification as an Important Bird Area. A baseline floral and faunal survey was held in February 2006, and included studies of avifauna, herpetofauna, mammals and invertebrates (Baseline Floral & Faunal Survey of IBA Sites: February – April 2006. Unpublished Report to BIFP). Two government representatives from the Department of Landuse participated in this survey.

The first detailed bird monitoring of the IBA was held in September 2010 and data from the findings have been updated on the World Bird Database. This monitoring saw the re-visit of survey plots of 2006 and where plots were no longer visible, new baselines for future monitoring were established. A representative from the Department of Forestry participated in this survey.

A Participatory Land Use Planning Survey (PLUP) was also conducted by the Land Use department in September 2010, the survey report details the agricultural usage by the communities and how much extends to the forested areas. Government stakeholders including the Provincial Office, Agriculture, Landuse and the Forestry departments were informed about all surveys conducted in the IBA and communities were involved and participated in all surveys.

ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE FOREST

Fiji has a forest cover of over 1 million hectares covering approximately 56% of total land mass. However much of this forest, more than half of it is being lost through forest clearance largely attributed to agriculture and logging, as in the case of Natewa Tunuloa, which has large areas of degraded forests from logging, mahogany plantations and agriculture. The impacts of unsustainable logging on drinking water quality and the marine resources in Natewa Bay, as well as other environmental problems were the main cause of concern for the communities, and these problems also had a strong impact on the survival of birds and other biodiversity. The communities have developed environment-friendly projects to sustain their livelihoods, as this takes the pressure away from the unwise use of forest resources, and adds value to the lives of the communities. The establishment of model farms also reduces pressure of further clearance into the IBA for agricultural plantations. Reforestation has been undertaken as a key activity to add value to biodiversity and to the IBA as a whole. The communities, through the SSG are working together to enhance the conservation status of the IBA, at the same time maximise the development and promotion of their natural resources and environment (for example, through ecotourism) to generate revenue for the communities.

CARBON VALUE OF THE FOREST

With the adoption of the REDD-Plus Policy by the Fiji government, Natewa Tunuloa could make an ideal case study for the program – provided the communities are consulted foremost and all necessary stakeholders are involved in the process. The SSG will use this new GEF-SGP project to begin reforestation work in the IBA, in the hope that other communities will take on a reforestation program as well. Initiatives such as this could ideally enhance the potential to increase carbon stock.

SUSTAINABLE FINANCING POTENTIAL

The Government of Fiji has taken on an innovative approach to embrace environmental conservation in the country, something which has been lacking in previous years. It launched a revised Forest Policy adopting Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in 2007 and in 2008 Government adopted new legislations on Environmental Impact Assessments (2008) and a new Harvesting Code of Practice and a Forest Certification Standard, all of this are based on the SFM approach. A new approach addressed in the new-look Fiji Forest Policy is the concept of 'Permanent Forest Estates' (PFEs), which promotes healthy forests under sustainable management by, and providing for sustainable development for, Fijian landowners. PFEs are expected to provide a long-term income base for landowning clans if they retain well-managed, sustainably harvested forests. BirdLife potential partner in Fiji, NFMV undertook a PFE awareness project for government and carried out awareness to selected landowning clans with large areas of untouched forests in Fiji. Some of the clans are in the Natewa Tunuloa IBA, and during the awareness, these clans were quite keen on the concept. If adopted, it could increase the area of land that is under forest cover in the IBA and this would save a large percentage of the endemic biodiversity and provide a sustainable source of financing for the communities.

7. Next Steps

The development of the Natewa Tunuloa has progressed extremely well over the years, much of which is owed to the SSG. Strategic conservation measures are in place, and although there continues to be some challenges, community involvement through all phases of the work in the IBA have contributed to the growth of the SSG and development of the IBA. BIFP and NFMV will continue to support the expansion of a strong SSG and the next step is to focus on formalising the structure of the SSG which will include its registration under the appropriate government authority. Once registered, the SSG will have proper accounting and reporting procedures which will then enable them to source funds to sustain their activities as well as to establish new ones. This, together with the expansion of livelihoods should form the basis of sustainable financing for the SSG. However, in the meantime, projects are in place (and some are still being sought) to finance training activities for the SSGs, in terms of project and business management, conflict analysis, etc.

With the PA legislation in place, the community-declared PA will be formally endorsed as a legally recognised PA; this will strengthen the role of the SSG in terms of monitoring and collaboration with communities. The SSG will work closely with the Department of Forestry and the Provincial Council for the monitoring of the IBA and the execution of the management plan. The expansion of livelihood activities is mentioned in the management plan and is an area that the SSG will work closely with communities on, with support from the various government stakeholders. Communities can expand native tree reforestation into degraded areas in the IBA and boost

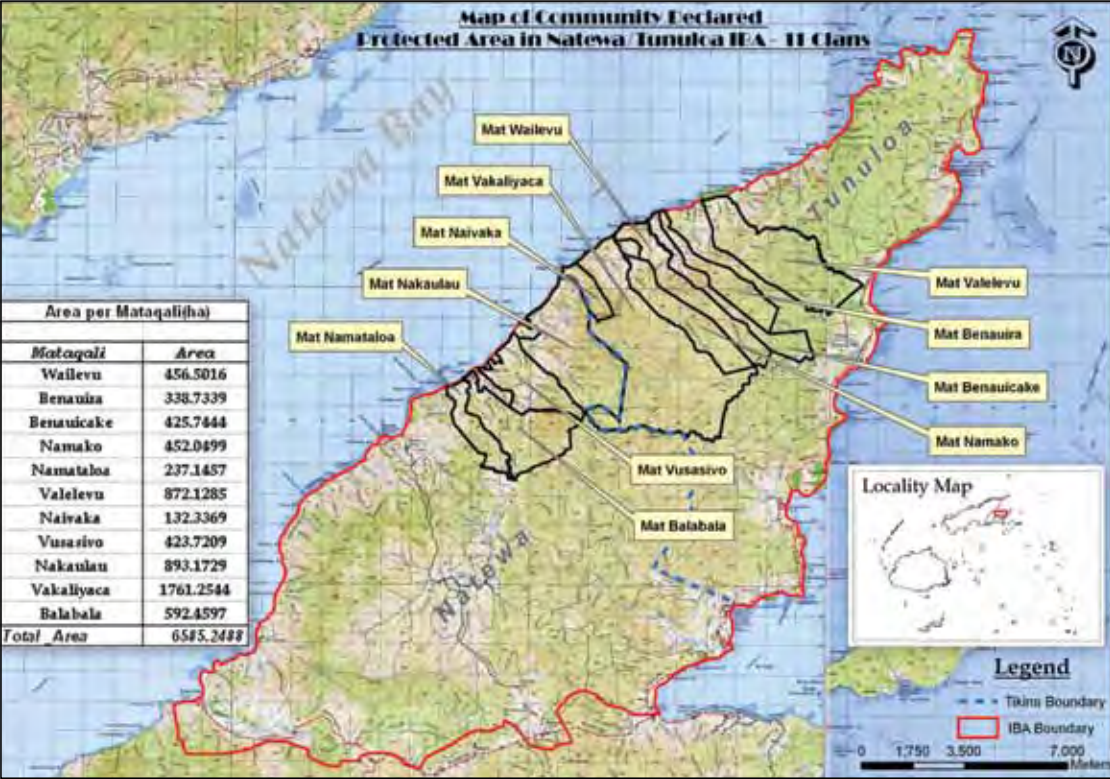
economic returns through the two sandalwood nurseries. Benefit sharing will be enhanced and the SSG will continue to promote linkage between conservation of the IBA (by reducing pressure on resources) and livelihoods.

Timeline

Below is a brief summary of achievements & progress that has developed in the IBA:

- Community Visits & Important Bird Area Survey April 2004-May 2005
- Stakeholders Meeting (Provincial Office, Dept of Forestry, etc) September 2005
- Establishment of a Site Support Group October 2005
- Baseline floral & faunal survey February 2006
- Participatory Rural Appraisal Workshop May 2006
- MOU for a community-declared protected forest with 5 clans July 2006
- SSG Bird Identification Training March 2007
- SSG Fundraising & Proposal Writing Training April 2007
- Community & Stakeholders Consultation Workshop October 2008
- 1-Week Community Consultations (for 6 villages) January 2009
- Recruitment of new members for the SSG & Terms of Reference adopted January 2009
- Declaration of Community-Declared PA & MOU signed with 11 clans February 2009
- Resource Management Planning Workshop February 2009
- SSG Bird Identification Training March 2009
- SSG 'Start Your Business' Training July 2009
- Sustainable Agriculture Training & Model Farm Establishment (Navetau Village) September-October 2009
- Bread and Pastry Making Training (Wailevu Village) October 2009
- SSG IBA Monitoring Training December 2009
- Beekeeping Training (Vosasio & Nadavaci Villages) April 2010
- SSG (Fiji) Fundraising & Biosecurity Workshop July 2010
- Handicraft & Jewellery Making Training (Muana Village) July 2010
- IBA Monitoring September 2010
- Participatory Land Use Planning Survey September 2010
- Poultry Farm Training (Naqaravutu Village) October 2010
- SSG Visit to Taveuni March 2011
- SSG GEF-SGP 'Start-Up' Workshop August 2011
- Ecotourism Feasibility & Scoping Study (Naqaravutu Village) September 2011
- Reforestation & Sandalwood Germination Training September 2011

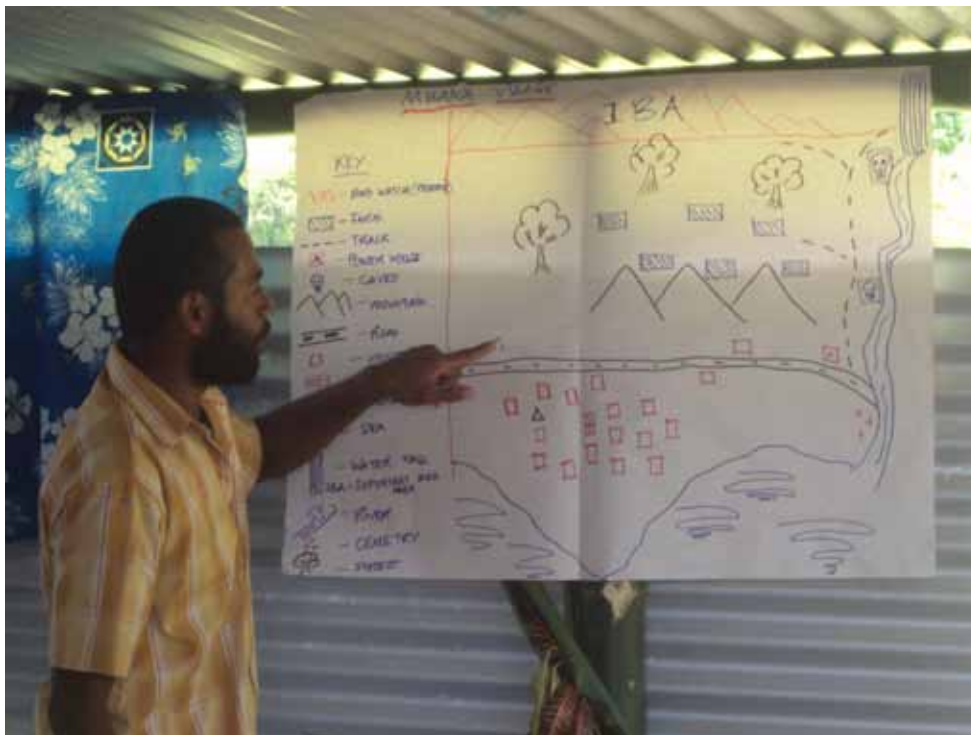
8. Gallery



Forested landscape (top) and map of the site.



Natewa Tunuloa IBA.



The IBA has a high ecotourism potential, according to an ecotourism feasibility & scoping study. During the consultation, community members had to draw village maps and present on them as they would to a tourist.



Reforestation is a core activity planned for the IBA; here community members are seen planting native trees around their village surroundings as an exercise. Further reforestation will be carried out in degraded areas in the IBA.



Members of the SSG assisting community members put finishing touches to their nursery. This nursery was subsequently destroyed during a cyclone in March 2010, so plans are in place to build 2 permanent nurseries in 2 villages.



The art of craft and hand-made baskets is a given gift for rural women. The concept makes use of available natural resources for the aim of generating income, to support village livelihoods. This handicraft project is being implemented and managed by the Womens Group of Muana village, in Tunuloa.



The Natewa Tunuloa IBA supports seven of the nine subspecies endemic to Vanua Levu, including the silktail pictured here (*Lamprolia victoriae kleinschmidti*).



Model farms are specially developed & planted to avoid soil erosion & to enhance water & nutrient retention.



SSG play an important role in facilitating workshops with communities.



Beekeeping has been identified as a suitable environment-friendly project to support community livelihood. Community members at two villages in the IBA have been trained in beekeeping, and have begun selling bottled honey.



Only female SSG member checking on the village beehive.



Sisi Initiative is implementing its 1st GEF-SGP project which aims to develop an ecotourism plan for the IBA.



Construction of nursery for yam & taro varieties before being transplanted to ground.



Sisi Initiative Members & community members working on a village nursery for vegetables.



SSG worked closely with local communities to develop a management plan for the Community PA.



Dept of Forestry official trains members of Sisi Initiative on germination of sandalwood.

Nabukelevu



View from the top of Mt Nabukelevu.



Mt Nabukelevu from afar.

1. Basic information

COUNTRY: Fiji

SITE NAME, IBA NUMBER(S): Nabukelevu, Kadavu FJ12

PROVINCE/DISTRICT, LOCATION: The Nabukelevu IBA is located at 19°7'S, 177°59'E on the western side of the island of Kadavu. The IBA itself is a district on its own (Nabukelevu District) under the provincial jurisdiction of Kadavu.

SITE AREA (HA) - FOREST CONSERVED AND/OR RESTORED:

The IBA covers an area of 2900 ha with an altitude of 805m. 1404.3696 ha is conserved under an MOU for community-managed PA (1535.488 ha in map)

2. Biodiversity and current status

Mount Nabukelevu is a spectacular isolated mountain rising steeply from the sea and is the highest mountain on Kadavu. It has the largest area of montane forest in west Kadavu and is usually covered in cloud and receives a high level of rainfall. The lower slopes have been largely cleared for agriculture but the top of the mountain remains untouched because of its rugged terrain and high rainfall. Nabukelevu holds the four bird species and eight subspecies endemic to Kadavu; it may still support nesting colonies of threatened seabirds and is the only known nesting site in Fiji for the Polynesian Storm-petrel and one of a handful of sites for the Collared Petrel. Breeding colonies of seabirds on the headland west of Daviqele village are thought to be Wedge-tailed Shearwaters not Collared Petrels. Nabukelevu is also believed to support several species of plants endemic to the mountain itself as the high montane plateau is unique within Kadavu. However, there is little known about its herpetofauna and other biodiversity.

BIRDS: GLOBALLY THREATENED SPECIES

- Polynesian Storm-petrel (VU)
- Kadavu Shining-parrot (VU)
- Collared Petrel (NT)
- Whistling Dove (NT)
- Kadavu Fantail (NT)

RESTRICTED-RANGE SPECIES

- 15 spp (out of 18 on Kadavu & 36 in Fiji)incl. all 4 Kadavu endemics (Kadavu Shining-parrot, Kadavu Fantail, Kadavu Honeyeater & Whistling Dove)

CONGREGATORY SEABIRD SPECIES

- Collared Petrel (likely to exceed the 1% global threshold of 10 breeding pairs?)

CURRENT LEGAL STATUS

Nabukelevu, Kadavu IBA is a Site of National Significance listed in the Fiji National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and is a priority biodiversity hotspot. Although there is no legal designation or protection of the IBA, Kadavu has a number of Marine Protected Areas listed in the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas (FLMMA) and is identified in the Fiji Tourism Development Plan as an area that Government needs to prioritise to develop a specific regional strategy based on the tourism industry as well as protected areas.

CURRENT SITE GOVERNANCE

The IBA is governed by the respective landowning clans that are present in the four villages surrounding the mount. Each clan is represented on the Site Support Group (SSG). All members of the SSG are nominated and endorsed by the community following a consultation process, gender equality is always encouraged. The SSG committee includes the chairman, a secretary, a treasurer and 3 other members although SSG membership is not limited to any given number. Currently, there are 14 members on the SSG with plans of expansion in the pipeline.

The Terms of Reference for the SSG have a very specific goal, which is “the conservation and sustainable management of the forests for the benefit of landowning communities and for the wider population of Fiji”. The roles & responsibilities of the SSG include:

- ensuring that unsustainable activities to degrade natural resources, loss of forest area or quality are not carried out/allowed; activities such as, but not limited to burning of grass, logging, grazing, using the land as grantee for securing loans or mortgage.
- promote the community-declared protected forest area as a conservation-friendly forest management initiative, and for encouraging land owners from other clans and villages within the IBA to set aside similar areas for protection and wise management
- promote conservation education and awareness- raising among land owners, schools, environment clubs and community organisations
- develop an attraction for birdwatchers, eco-tourists and other activities providing a sustainable source of revenue and other conservation oriented activities for the landowning communities
- implement the Community-Declared Protected Area Management Plan
- undertake monitoring of the IBA and report to BirdLife International accordingly

CURRENT CONSERVATION APPROACH, AND VERY BRIEF HISTORY LEADING TO THIS

The SSG in Nabukelevu was established in 2007 as the Nabukelevu Conservation Committee with 6 members, as part of a process to facilitate a project funded by the Global Environment Facility Fund (Small Grants Programme). The objective of the project was to introduce an integrated package of forest conservation, sustainable agriculture and land management delivering multiple benefits to communities surrounding the mount. Four villages lie at the bottom of the mountain and they depend on the natural resources around Nabukelevu for their wellbeing. Following the identification of Mount Nabukelevu as an IBA, on-the-ground awareness and meetings with the village heads were ongoing and the integrated forest conservation & sustainable agriculture project was a result of the consultation process. During the consultation, BirdLife International

Fiji Programme engaged stakeholders from Government (Land Use, Agriculture & Forestry) and other Non Government Organisations to facilitate discussions relating to the protection of natural resources. Communities expressed the need to address threats to their natural resources and biodiversity since it was having an impact on the water quality and availability as well as their livelihoods.

The Nabukelevu SSG has been quite influential in their role in the community, and in December 2008 agreed and endorsed a Terms of Reference. In February 2009, the SSG facilitated an agreement from two landowning clans to protect their land from further unsustainable practices. BIFP together with the SSG worked with the four villages to implement activities to address the threats highlighted by communities. Model farms were established, a nursery for sandalwood and native trees was established in one of the villages and a reforestation programme was started with the villages. A 1 week consultation with all four villages was conducted in March 2010 and an agreement was reached with 8 other landowning clans to protect their remaining forest from unsustainable agricultural practices. An MOU was signed between the 10 landowning clans and BI to conserve their forests and for the wise management of the land and soil resources. This agreement is due to last for the next 20 years. The Nabukelevu community-managed PA covers over 1500 hectares. This constitutes all the remaining forests surrounding Mount Nabukelevu. The SSG has now increased from 8 to 14 members with future plans of expansion.

3. Threats

URGENCY OF ACTION

Since Nabukelevu (Kadavu as a whole) is a highly agricultural community, the greatest threat highlighted by the communities and witnessed during field surveys was unsustainable agricultural practices and soil management, resulting in degradation of agricultural areas and further pressure to clear more forest. The communities depend heavily on root crop production (yam and taro) to provide income and along with kava; these products form the basis of village economies. Particular problems noted was the use of slopes of more than 15o resulting in rapid erosion, loss of agricultural productivity, siltation and degradation of water resources. Communities realised the urgent need to address this problem when these farming practices resulted in a drastic reduction in water quality and availability. Traditionally the mountain (Nabukelevu) is an important water catchment, providing the four villages surrounding it (Lomati, Daviqele, Qaliira and Nabukelevu-i-Ra) with clean drinking water. During the past decade, the quantity of water decreased substantially and all the villages suffered water shortage during prolonged dry periods. If the problem had not been addressed immediately, further soil erosion would have most likely caused siltation of the marine protected area (MPA) proximal to western Kadavu, cause extreme loss of agricultural areas for future generations and continued to severely affect water supply to the communities.

WHAT ARE THE DRIVERS OF FOREST LOSS?

An increase in demand for livelihoods in Kadavu is a consequence of the increasing population on Kadavu all of which adds to an increase in economic pressure on subsistence farmers to increase production. All of these factors contribute to agricultural encroachment which is believed to be the main cause of forest loss in Nabukelevu.

4. Approach prior to CEPF funding

The challenges to conserving Fiji's forest resources remain substantial: the causes of deforestation are deep-seated with low local capacity to manage forests and lack of institutional capacity and enforcement to exercise proper protection and management.

On the hopeful side, many communities would like to manage their forests in sustainable ways, often aware that forest management is related to water quality, fresh water and marine fisheries, the availability of sustainable forest products including fruits and vegetables and flood risk management. This drive by the communities has also come about through the realisation that much of their livelihoods are dependent on natural resources.

However, communities often lack the information and skills that are needed to influence their decisions on how to sustainably use their resources. This is often coupled with the lack of financial resources which contributes a lot to the effectiveness of village campaigns to have a better life.

A great deal of BirdLife International Fiji Programme's work depends on people's behaviour and decisions & its successes and failures can be measured by the degree to which it contributes to the well-being of people and the environment. As a consequence, BIFP implements community-based resource conservation and management at its project sites, including the Nabukelevu IBA. This model has been quite successful resulting in the development of SSGs; community managed protected areas and community-driven initiatives including the establishment of sustainable livelihood opportunities that are compatible with forest and island conservation.

HISTORY AND CAPACITY

Since the establishment of the SSG in 2007, awareness and consultations with the communities have been at the forefront of BIFP's work, and most of this has been facilitated by the SSG. The communities have built their trust in the SSG over the years which have resulted in the current amiable working relationship between BirdLife and the communities at Nabukelevu. Capacity building however continues to be a priority for the SSG as well as the local communities; therefore in the absence of a BirdLife partner in Fiji, BIFP will continue to build the capacity of the SSG to address issues in the community and in the IBA.

The SSG is implementing natural resource management skills and is monitoring the model farm and the sandalwood and native tree nursery. Model farm training has been conducted at other villages with model farms established thereafter, following on from the successes experienced by the SSG. The nursery is been managed and monitored by the SSG Chairman and the SSG have begun operating the sandalwood venture as a business to sustain their work and to contribute to the livelihood of the communities. Sandalwood germination and native tree germination is an ongoing process and children of Nabukelevu are now keen followers of the program with schools undertaking reforestation programs in their respective schools.

BIFP has worked in close partnership with the SSG to develop their capacity so they are able to manage their small agricultural projects in a way that can be sustained and so it is beneficial to both forest conservation and the livelihoods of the communities.

COMMENT ON GOVERNMENT WILLINGNESS TO ADDRESS DRIVERS OF DEFORESTATION

The Government, through the Ministries of Forestry, Environment, Primary Industries and *I Taukei Affairs* have continuously supported the work that BirdLife International is doing in Fiji.

The Provincial Council in Kadavu has been engaged in all BIFP's workshops and consultation meetings conducted with the communities, including the agreement by some landowning communities to protect their forests.

The Department of Agriculture (MPI) has worked in close collaboration with BIFP to address the problem of unsustainable agricultural practices and land degradation and have since put in place a mechanism, through the establishment of model farms and nurseries, to promote forest conservation at the same time to support people's livelihoods.

Forest restoration programs and developing initiatives for the wellbeing of the local people are just some projects undertaken by BIFP and other NGOs in collaboration with local communities. Such initiatives are clearly stipulated in Government's development plans to address poverty and improve the livelihoods of the rural economy.

A recent development in Fiji was the launching of the Fiji REDD-Plus Policy (March 2011) after the Fiji Cabinet endorsed the Fiji National REDD-plus Policy in a cabinet seating in December 2010. The policy, the first for the Pacific region, puts Fiji at the forefront of forest conservation and sustainable forest management for financial incentives (to resource owners), as opposed to obtaining financial gains from agriculture and land development. The consultation processes which lead to the eventual adoption of the policy required technical advice and contribution from NGOs including BirdLife International.

IS THERE SUFFICIENT CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAMMES WITH HIGH TECHNICAL CONTENT AND TRANSACTION COSTS, AND TO ENGAGE IN POLICY DEBATE AND ADVOCACY TO ENSURE REPLICATION?

The SSG is capable of implementing small projects to support forest restoration in Nabukelevu as a means to improving livelihoods and to promote the community-declared PA as a replicable model to other communities in Kadavu and Fiji. BIFP will continue to support the SSG in this capacity and already there is evidence of replication in other villages. Additionally, BIFP is working in close collaboration with the potential BirdLife Partner, NatureFiji-MareqetiViti (NFMV) to engage in the work the SSG have implemented so far in Nabukelevu, in the hopes that NFMV will provide the necessary support and technical advice to the SSG.

The development of Protected Area legislation for Fiji through the National Protected Area Forum will provide a new dimension to the face of community-managed PAs such as the Nabukelevu community-declared PA. Both BIFP and NFMV are represented on the PA forum and therefore have the capacity to engage in advocacy and policy decision making. The PA forum will develop a PA legislation that will enable community conserved areas to be legally recognized. BIFP and NFMV will aim to ensure that mechanisms are in place to sustain community-managed PAs, will showcase the benefits to the communities of the PA process and so will increase the likelihood that community managed protected areas will be replicated at other sites.

5. New Conservation and Governance Approach

OVERALL APPROACH PROPOSED

Site Support Groups are one of the most successful ways to safeguard IBAs and a cost effective and progressive approach to conserving biodiversity. SSGs are community-based groups consisting of local volunteers who have an interest in protecting their own environment. BirdLife International uses the concept of SSGs as a way of involving local people and resource owners and they work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to promote the conservation of IBAs and develop sustainable environment-friendly initiatives for communities living in and around these IBAs. Activities of SSG are diverse, depending on the ecological and socio-economic context at particular sites (BirdLife International, 2007).

Working with SSGs in Fiji has enabled BIFP to have a deeper understanding of communities' reliance on ecosystem services and how this has had to be considered on the establishment of a PA. Prior to the establishment of an SSG in Nabukelevu, communities were inexperienced and unaware of immediate steps that could be taken to manage existing use of natural resources. This, although the communities realized the detrimental impacts unsustainable practices were having on their water resources and livelihoods. Participatory approaches were adopted by BIFP and, together with the SSG, were able to gauge the needs of the people. Continuous consultations have been the ultimate key to arriving at a common goal and the SSG has played a key role in leading and advising the communities.

Whilst establishing a reserved area and conserving an IBA is important for the protection of birds and biodiversity, it is equally important to realize the needs and interests of the local communities so they are not perceived as being adversely affected by the conservation interest of an outside NGO. Furthermore, the communities need to be fully involved in the activities and have the same conservation goal so as to ensure sustainability. Following consultations, communities agreed to develop a management plan which sets the guideline for the management of the community PA and the sustainable use of the resources within. The plan includes the development of sustainable forest-based income generating projects including the alternative production of non-timber forest products and sustainable agricultural projects. These projects have been researched and were seen to be most feasible in the area; nevertheless the SSG will continue to monitor these projects together with the responsible Government bodies. Such small-scale projects will lessen the pressure on forest resources, help improve the quality of life for the local people and will enhance community involvement and participation in the protection of their community PA.

PROJECT DECISION-MAKING/GOVERNANCE

Although the SSG guides conservation actions on the ground at Nabukelevu, any decisions pertaining to the use of land and land resources is ultimately that of the landowning clans. The SSGs are established in such a way those members are representative of each clan and each of those members are nominated and endorsed by the community. Therefore, the SSG is still liable to report to each village and clan on its activities. This eases way of communication and information-sharing between respective clans and the SSG and decision-making ultimately lays within the clan and clan leaders. This strategy has been seen to be very effective. The community-managed PA remains under the governance of the respective landowning clans and all activities occurring within the PA and the IBA are being monitored and reported by the SSG.

LEGAL STATUS: NATIONAL AND LOCAL LAWS, AND “FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT” OF COMMUNITIES

At present, Fiji does not have a Protected Area Legislation nor does it have a National Protected Areas system, instead there are national policy documents and government inventories that are shared amongst various Government departments which provide legal mechanisms for the establishment and management of PAs. Nevertheless, the Fiji NBSAP has a register of sites of national significance with appropriate form of management, one of which includes Nabukelevu.

The establishment of the community-declared PA in Nabukelevu took into account the landowning clans' rights, since they are dependent on land and forests for livelihoods. All members of the community were consulted and participated in the decision making process (the clan leaders wouldn't have approved if members of the clan hadn't agreed to protect their forests). A consultation workshop saw the endorsement of this community-managed PA and all relevant external stakeholders were available to provide the communities with access to information on laws and legislations pertaining to land issues, government policies on forestry areas and guidance on community-managed areas. Ultimately, communities were provided the necessary information prior to sealing the agreement to establish a community-managed PA. The communities themselves set the priorities, limitations and action plans for the management of this community-declared PA & IBA (this is in their management plan).

BIFP is now working closely with the National Protected Area forum to develop a PA legislation (a first for Fiji) which will be aligned to the IUCN PA categories, but will take into account the local context, i.e. community conserved areas that have been traditionally designated, making sure that they are responsive to the needs & rights of the landowners.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

All issues pertaining to land and the use of land resources lay entirely with the landowners i.e. the clans. If clan members are unable to resolve matters on their own, disputes are handled amicably by the Provincial Council; BirdLife International plays no part in resolving disputes over tenure and land matters. Should the dispute be a conservation matter regarding the use/misuse of resources within the community-managed PA, BIFP will consult with the community and revert to the management plan (which is developed & endorsed by the communities themselves) to see how the matter can be resolved agreeably.

NET POSITIVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The SSG (in consultation with the communities) put together a strategy to ensure that small projects & enterprises are established to enhance livelihoods for themselves since they have put aside their forest for protection. This includes projects to improve agricultural productivity (to prevent further encroachment) and to identify & develop sustainable, forest-based livelihoods without compromising the natural resource base provided by these forests. These projects are being monitored and co-managed by the SSG and returns from the projects are shared amongst the communities. The SSG has begun selling some sandalwood plants from the nursery in Lomati village, and the village has established a committee who decide on how the incentives will be shared (a small percentage is also given to the SSG).

OFFSITE STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS

BIFP have taken every precaution to consult each clan concerned, to mitigate against any social rivalry or conflicts between clans and/or villages, including any conflicts from offsite stakeholders. This has proved successful so far.

6. Detailed Knowledge of the Forest

The baseline IBA survey was conducted in August 2004 (BirdLife International Field Report #29) and the first baseline monitoring of the Nabukelevu area was conducted between September and October 2010. BIFP involved all Government stakeholders including the Provincial Office, Agriculture and the Forestry departments. A Participatory Land Use Planning Survey was also conducted by the Land Use department during the IBA monitoring. The FLMMA network continues to conduct marine awareness workshops around the Nabukelevu and wider Kadavu area to increase awareness of marine conservation and to establish marine protected areas.

ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE FOREST

Fiji has a forest cover of over 1 million hectares covering approximately 56% of total land mass. However much of this forest, more than half of it is being lost through forest clearance largely attributed to agriculture, such as that in Nabukelevu which has large areas of degraded forests and land due to unsustainable agricultural practices. This has had a strong impact on the survival of birds and other biodiversity as well as the communities, through the pollution and limited supply of water resources and livelihoods. The SSG have initiated forest restoration projects as a means to counteract this since reforestation and afforestation have the potential to add value to both biodiversity and the lives of communities. The communities are already reaping the harvests of reforestation economically, with the sale of sandalwood plants and crops that have been planted using sustainable land management practices.

CARBON VALUE OF THE FOREST

With the Fiji government adopting the new REDD-Plus Policy, Nabukelevu could make an ideal case study for the program. The SSG will continue with the reforestation program in Nabukelevu and hope to replicate the project in other parts of Kadavu. Initiatives such as this could ideally enhance the potential to increase carbon stock.

SUSTAINABLE FINANCING POTENTIAL

The Government of Fiji has also, in their innovative approach to embracing conservation, launched a revised Forest Policy adopting Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). It has also adopted new legislations on Environmental Impact Assessments (2008) and a new Harvesting Code of Practice and a Forest Certification Standard, all of this are based on the SFM approach. A new approach addressed in the new-look Fiji Forest Policy is the concept of 'Permanent Forest Estates' (PFEs), which promotes healthy forests under sustainable management by, and providing for sustainable development for, Fijian landowners. PFEs are expected to provide a long-term income base for landowning clans if they retain well-managed, sustainably harvested forests. This concept, if adopted in Nabukelevu, could increase the area of land that is under forest cover, this would save a large percentage of the endemic biodiversity and provide a sustainable source of financing for the communities.

7. Next Steps

The development of the IBA in Nabukelevu has progressed well, particularly in terms of conservation measures in place and community involvement; this has contributed to the growth of the SSG. BIFP and NFMV will continue to support the expansion of a strong SSG and the next step is to focus on formalising the structure of the SSG which will include its registration under the appropriate government authority.

Once registered, the SSG will have proper accounting and reporting procedures which will then enable them to source funds to sustain their activities as well as to establish new ones. This, together with the expansion of livelihoods should form the basis of sustainable financing for the SSG.

With the PA legislation in place, the community-declared PA will be formally endorsed as a legally recognised PA; this will strengthen the role of the SSG in terms of monitoring and collaboration with communities. The SSG will work closely with the Department of Forestry and the Provincial Council for the monitoring of the IBA and the execution of the management plan. The expansion of livelihood activities is mentioned in the management plan and is an area that the SSG will work closely with communities on, with support from the various government stakeholders. Communities can expand native tree reforestation into degraded areas on the mount and increase safe and sustainable agricultural practices to boost good economic returns. Benefit sharing will be enhanced and the SSG will continue to promote linkage between conservation of the IBA (by reducing pressure on resources) and livelihoods.

Timeline

Below is a brief summary of achievements & progress that has developed in Nabukelevu IBA:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| ● Community Visits & Important Bird Area Survey | August 2004 |
| ● Integrated Yaubula Management Planning Workshop | September 2006 |
| ● IBA Conservation Workshop | November 2006 |
| ● Nabukelevu Conservation Workshop | March 2007 |
| ● Establishment of Site Support Group | December 2007 |
| ● Community Consultation Workshop | March 2008 |
| ● MOU with two clans for protection of forests | February 2009 |
| ● Natural Resource Management Workshop including sandalwood germination, forest restoration techniques and model farming training for SSG | May 2009 |
| ● SSG Bird Identification & IBA Monitoring Training | November 2009 |
| ● 1-week Community Consultation on Community-Declared Protected Area | February 2010 |
| ● MOU signed for Community-Declared Protected Area | April 2010 |
| ● Community-Declared PA Management Planning Workshop | April 2010 |
| ● SSG (Fiji) Fundraising & Biosecurity Training | July 2010 |
| ● SSG 'Start Your Business' Training | August 2010 |

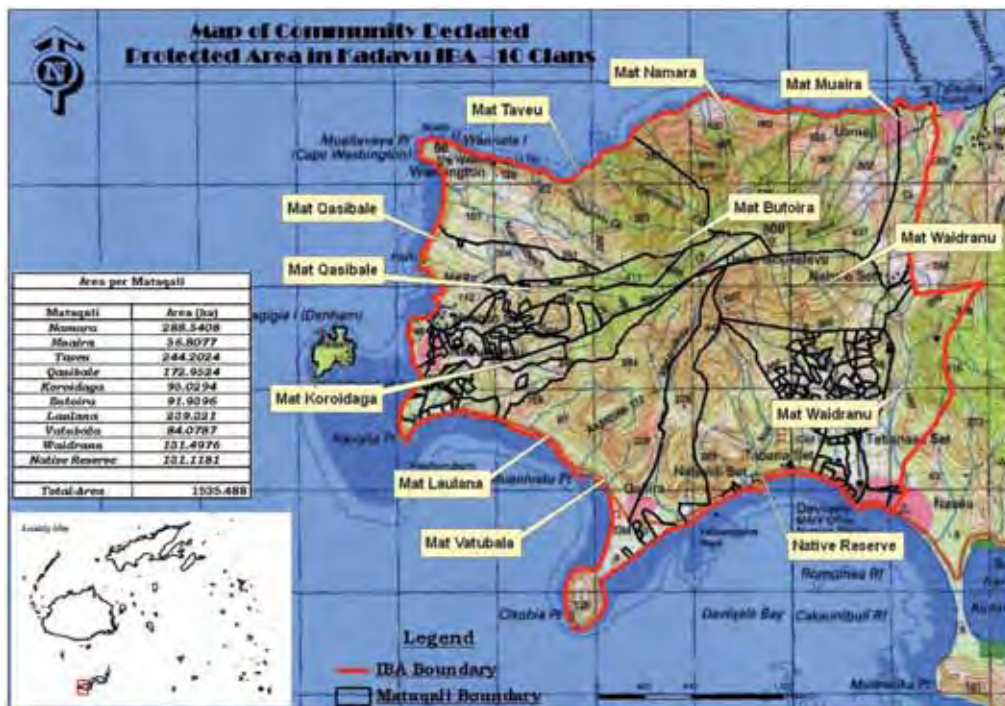
- IBA Monitoring
- Participatory Land Use Planning Survey
- Nabukelevu Kids Eco-Camp
- SSG Site Visit to Taveuni

September 2010
 September 2010
 February 2011
 March 2011

9. Gallery



The view from the summit of Mount Nabukelevu at 805 metres/2,641 feet.



Map of the site.



SSG Chairman, Jovesa Drau holds the Kadavu Golden whistler during an IBA monitoring of the Nabukelevu IBA.



SSG Chairman is responsible for monitoring and maintenance of the nursery. The nursery, at Lomati village, Nabukelevu is home to a variety of yams and taro tubers which are replanted in plantations; native trees which are germinated before used for reforestation in degraded areas and sandalwood seedlings which are also germinated before transplanted outdoors. The nursery is now generating income for the communities through the sale of sandalwood plants.



The establishment of model farms has been one successful way to stop soil erosion on the hilly slopes of Nabukelevu, Seen here is an example of contour farming, through the use of pineapple plantings and vetiver grass which helps traps soil nutrients and filters water during rainy seasons. Unsustainable agriculture has been the major problem in Nabukelevu and implementing improved agricultural practices such as this reduces pressure for further forest clearance.



Children of Nabukelevu have been involved in a “Kids for Conservation” project, which has seen the involvement of children of the 3 schools in the district in conservation activities, including tree-planting. The aim of this project is to ensure that the future generation of Kadavu are well resourced and taught to manage their resources wisely.



BIFP & the SSG have successfully facilitated an eco-camp for the children of Nabukelevu. Children always welcome and enjoy the idea of spending time outdoors, here they participate in a bird-spotting exercise and are also trained in the use of binos. Such exercises help build their skills and capacity at a young age.



Enhancing the skills and knowledge of the SSG is crucial to the development of the IBA, as they are 'movers' of conservation on the ground. Continuous bird identification training and time spent in the field is one way to improve their skills.



Communities at Nabukelevu, Kadavu during group discussion at their Natural Resource Management Workshop.



Participants listening during management planning workshop.



SSG rep handling a collared petrel during a night survey.



SSG Chairman, Jovesa Drau tending to the sandalwood nursery.



Nabukelevu SSG at a bird-identification training.



Early-morning birding for SSG members.



Chief of Nabukelevu-i-Ra during the 2011 tree-planting exercise.



SSG rep leading with the native tree planting exercise for the village.



Nabukelevu SSG Members with Govt Landuse officials working on the model farm.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION LESSONS LEARNED TECHNICAL SERIES

CEPF Large Grant Final Project Completion Report

Fijians for Fijian Forests – Supporting Community-driven Protected Area Establishment in Fiji

Organization Legal Name

BirdLife International

Project Title

Fijians for Fijian Forests – Supporting Community-driven Protected Area Establishment in Fiji

Date of Report

2011

Report Author and Contact Information

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BirdLife International Pacific Secretariat

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CEPF Region

Polynesia-Micronesia Hotspot

Strategic Direction 2

Strengthen the conservation status and management of 60 key biodiversity areas.

Grant Amount

\$155,346

Project Dates

June 1 2009 – May 30 2011



Implementation Partners for this Project

Please explain the level of involvement for each partner

This project was designed and implemented together with the following partners:

- **Fiji Government (national partner)** – Department of Forests (DoF) are involved at both project sites, participate in all community workshops, provide technical advice on sustainable forestry management, levels of forest protection and their limitations under the Fiji Forest Policy. DoF also provided some native tree seedlings to improve degraded forests in Nabukelevu. Other relevant Departments and the Native Land Trust Board provided technical advice on legal processes required for the formal recognition of the two protected areas. Department of Agriculture conducted community training on the poultry project, model farm and methods of sustainable land practices. Department of Co-operatives are involved in the livelihood component of the project, providing training on beekeeping and establishing a monitoring system for the livelihood projects.
- **Cakaudrove and Kadavu Provincial Councils** – provincial councils are an important partner to any community focused project in Fiji. The provincial councils were kept informed of all meetings and workshops conducted at the sites and all reports have been circulated to the respective offices. Executive heads of the councils, called the Roko Tuis participated by officiating at some of the community meetings and workshops.
- **NatureFiji-MareqetiViti (NFMV) and other BirdLife Pacific Partners (all national NGOs)** – NFMV is also working with Site Support Groups in Fiji (e.g. in Tomaniivi) and is working closely with BirdLife to learn from BirdLifes experiences in this field. Project activities and outputs will be shared with NFMV as well as with the BirdLife Partner organisations in Palau, Samoa, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, the Cook Islands, Australia and New Zealand. The community conservation work carried out by the BirdLife Fiji Programme is being used by the Pacific Partners as a model for community-based forest conservation and is already being replicated in New Caledonia.
- **Site Support Groups in Nabukelevu and Natewa (local partners)** – Both SSGs were the main vehicles for implementation of this project. SSGs are local conservation groups who work together with BirdLife, on a voluntary basis, to protect and sustainably use their natural resources. SSG representatives are democratically elected and comprised of representatives of each of the land-owning mataqalis at the two sites; they made all key decisions in this project, including facilitating meetings and workshops, presenting project activities and results to village and district meetings and assisting with village livelihood projects.
- Other partners include USP-IAS (biodiversity surveys), training institutes (including SPC), Fiji Protected Area Committee (legal endorsement of 2 community PAs).

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile

At the end of the project, two community-managed protected areas have been established and strengthened and are being managed by local conservation groups called Site Support Groups. The SSGs at the 2 project sites are all community representatives that were democratically elected, they have undergone training in IBA monitoring and management and fundraising. The SSGs provide support to the communities within the KBAs in the implementation of a community resource management plan.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal

Planned Long-term Impacts – 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):

The long-term objective of this project is the survival and perpetual conservation of the forests in Nabukelevu/Mt Washington and the Natewa/Tunuloa Important Bird Areas / CEPF priority sites 71 and 76, and the birds and other biodiversity they contain. In this way this project contributes to the strategic objectives of the CEPF Polynesia-Micronesia Biodiversity Hotspot Ecosystem Profile/ CEPF investment; to the implementation of the Fiji Government National Environment Strategy and NBSAP; and to the implementation of the BirdLife International Regional Pacific Programme 2009-2012, and the MoU between BirdLife and the Government of Fiji.

Actual Progress Toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between BirdLife International Fiji Programme and the two communities at Nabukelevu and Natewa Tunuloa IBAs for the protection of a portion of the IBAs for 20 and 10 years respectively. Both community-established PAs are identified as priority areas and have been endorsed as 'existing informal PAs in need of some form of recognition and protection' by the National Protected Area Committee/Forum. The national PAC has since submitted to cabinet a paper "Submission on Development of National Policy and Legislative Framework for Protected Areas" and this will clearly define the long-term protection and management of the two community-based PAs.

Planned Short-term Impacts – 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):

The short-term impacts of this project include the actual establishment of two community-based, community-monitored and community-managed protected areas where the local people living in and around these areas, organized in two strong Site Support Groups, benefit from sustainable agriculture and income-generating activities that are compatible with forest conservation.

Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

Two community-based protected areas have been established and are being managed and monitored by Site Support Groups living in and around the two IBAs. Landowning communities of the two community-based PAs are now implementing and benefiting from forest-based income-generating activities that are being managed by village women and youth groups and supported by the SSGs. Income-generating activities include beekeeping, handicraft, poultry and a bakery in Natewa Tunuloa IBA and pineapple and sustainable agricultural farming and a native tree nursery in Nabukelevu, Kadavu.

Please provide the following information where relevant

- *Hectares Protected:* 8029.3696 hectares
- *Species Conserved:* 7 species (globally threatened)
- *Corridors Created:* 0

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives

One major challenge faced during the project was getting some members of the communities to agree to protect their forests with no compensation in return, since some communities depend on forest resources for daily sustenance. Stakeholder engagement and communication was very important during this project and involving government departments was crucial in making this process less complicated. A management planning workshop was held to seek community views and input on the forest protection terms and alternative income-generating benefits. Communities were able to identify ways to better protect and manage natural resources and at the same time implement short-term conservation friendly initiatives to generate income.

A huge success of this project was the actual establishment of the community-managed PAs and its recognition with the newly established national Protected Area forum. This move will ensure that the two areas get some form of long-term protection and management. It will also enhance commitment from communities as there are already plans to promote eco-tourism within the IBAs and have birdwatching as a core activity. Another achievement was the development of the two SSGs. Although the SSG registration was delayed, this did not deter the SSGs from carrying out activities at the IBAs. SSGs were involved in the establishment of livelihood projects, IBA monitoring and policing of community-managed PAs and are now at a stage to propose and implement small projects. The Natewa Tunuloa SSG is now implementing a GEF-SGP funded project in partnership with BirdLife International Fiji Programme.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Following the establishment of the Natewa Tunuloa community-managed PA and the establishment of the livelihood projects in the six landowning villages, other villages around the IBA showed interest in joining the SSG and protecting their forests. This was quite unexpected since awareness had been carried out in these villages in the past, but there had been little feedback and interest from them. The SSG and PA landowning clans have agreed to discuss this further, before a recommendation is put to BirdLife and the relevant government authorities.

Project Components

Project Components: Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.

Component 1 Planned: Community-based protected areas at Nabukelevu and Natewa are established

Component 1 Actual at Completion: Community-based protected areas have been established at Nabukelevu and Natewa and both communities have agreed on having the areas designated as community conserved areas or community managed areas. This is being pursued with the national Protected Area forum. Management planning workshops have been conducted at both sites, out of which resource plans have been developed. The plans are in draft form (awaiting comments from

stakeholders), however SSGs and communities are already implementing conservation actions (derived from the plan) at the respective sites.

Component 2 Planned: Conservation status and knowledge of the two IBAs/KBAs is improved

Component 2 Actual at Completion: IBA monitoring was carried out from the 6-16 September 2010 in Natewa Tunuloa and 27 September – 6 October 2010 in Nabukelevu. The data has been uploaded on the WBDB and the data shows that there has been some improvement in the conservation status of both IBAs. There were also a greater number of birds recorded than in past research (2009). The SSG will now conduct the monitoring at regular intervals.

Component 3 Planned: Site Support Groups are able to continue activities after the project ends

Component 3 Actual at Completion: There has been a delay in the registration of the SSG due to unforeseen circumstances, but the SSG is pursuing this. All SSG committee members have applied for their TIN registration with the Fiji Revenue and Customs Authority, after which they can formally apply for registration as a community-based organisation. This has not hindered the activity of the SSGs; they are functioning effectively, the committee meets every month with each meeting reported on and all financial transactions recorded (income generated from SSG projects). Both SSGs have increased membership to 14 representatives each, a larger number than 2009. The SSGs monitor IBAs and the livelihood projects implemented by the various villages. Project activities and results will be sustained and can be carried forward after this project. In Nabukelevu, SSG projects are the nursery and the pineapple farm and the Natewa Tunuloa SSG (Sisi Initiative) are now recipients of their 1st grant from GEF-Small Grants Programme, to conduct an ecotourism assessment and to establish sandalwood and a native tree nursery (follow the Nabukelevu model).

Component 4 Planned: Project results and models are widely disseminated

Component 4 Actual at Completion: BirdLife community conservation 'model' has been described in two documents: 'Briefing Paper on the Natewa Tunuloa Community-Declared Protected Area' and a 'Community Engagement Plan, which has been derived from case studies of both sites. Project results and 'model' have been shared with local, national and regional targets at the: – Fiji Islands Conservation Forum August 2009 (national)

- BirdLife Pacific Partnership Meeting September 2009 (regional)
- Cakaudrove Provincial Council Meeting October 2009 (local)
- Kadavu Provincial Council Meeting May 2010 (local)
- Leadership Fiji Seminar September 2010 (national)

Project results have been highlighted by national media:

- FJ Sun, 21/10/09 (conservation in Natewa Tunuloa);
- FJ Times 19/05/10 (personal profile and work of BirdLife in communities);
- FJ Sun 21/05/10 (Nabukelevu Management Planning Workshop);
- FJ Times 22/05/10 (Nabukelevu Management Planning Workshop);
- FJ Sun 19/06/10 (birds & pollution);
- FJ Focus 12/06/10 (birds & pollution); and
- regional media in the Pacific Women's Information Network <http://lyris.spc.int/read/messages?id=69575>. (personal profile and work of BL in communities)

Project activities and outputs were featured on the BirdLife website:

- <http://www.birdlife.org/community/tag/fiji/> (20/05/10, 04/08/10, 13/07/11)
- http://www.birdlife.org/regional/pacific/fiji_programme.html (permanent feature)

Project results & outputs have been featured in four editions of the BirdLife Pacific e-bulletin:

- 1st edition Apr-Jun 2010 (Nabukelevu Management Planning Workshop);
- 2nd edition July-Sept 2010 (SSG Workshop);
- 3rd edition Oct-Dec 2010 (IBA Monitoring);
- 4th edition Jan-Mar 2011 (Nabukelevu reforestation)

Finally 2 site-specific posters has been produced & disseminated: Conserving Biodiversity & Improving Livelihoods in Natewa Tunuloa IBA and Maroroi Kadavu kei Na kena Yaubula.

In addition, references to the project have been made on several papers, publications & websites:

- UNEP/ICCA <http://www.iccaregistry.org/en/sites/4>
- CEPF http://www.cepf.net/resources/lessons_learned/Pages/BirdLife_Fiji.aspx
- BirdLife International (2010) Partners for sustainability: What BirdLife is doing for people and the planet. Cambridge, UK
- International Institute for Environment and Development (2011) Poverty, Biodiversity and Local Organisations: Lessons from BirdLife International. London, UK.
- BirdLife International (2011) An Introduction to Conservation and Human Rights. In publication.
- BirdLife International (2011) Local Empowerment: BirdLife's Participatory Approach. DRAFT.

Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

No.

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

- Briefing Paper on the Natewa Tunuloa Community-Declared PA
- Community Engagement Plan

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

An important lesson learnt was the identification of products/deliverables during the project design and proposal writing stage. Working with communities is quite challenging and requires a lot of engagement and communication and one must always take into account that community views and reaction about the project may not always remain the same but can often change. Careful selection of deliverables must be done to ensure that projects are not over-ambitious.

In this project, the total number of SSG representatives for Natewa Tunuloa was expected to increase (target of 25) and this was based on the current membership rate and level of support from the communities. However during the project, few proposals surfaced from industrial stakeholders to carry out developments (including logging) on land bordering the IBA. This required careful dialogue with the landowners and the industrial stakeholders, with the support of the Forestry Department. Because there were a lot of deliberations, more time and effort was put into this consultation process. Thus, although the target was not achieved, what was important is that BirdLife and the SSG had communicated well with the communities and highlighted the established community-managed PA as a model to generate income. At the end of the project, the SSG target membership of 25 was not achieved, but more communities agreed to protect their forests.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/ shortcomings)

Constant dialogue and continuous engagement with communities was crucial to building on the already established relationships and trust between BirdLife and communities at the two sites. Participatory forums were encouraged, locally elected representatives formed SSGs and therefore communities gained a sense of ownership of the project.

Almost all communities depend on forests for livelihood and a balance had to be sought between the protection of the forests and their livelihoods and well-being. Again, this required good communication and dialogue and it was vital that communities were made aware of the tangible benefits of conserving their forests. The document on “Legal Mechanisms for the Establishment and Management of Terrestrial Protected Areas in Fiji” was presented to communities, and with input from government departments, communities were able to agree on the type of protected area they would like. BirdLife was able to take this and propose it to the national Protected Area forum which will then decide its (long-term) endorsement under a new PA legislation for Fiji. At the same time communities have implemented forest-based income generating projects that are benefiting them.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

Working with communities is challenging but unique. Project activities may not all be implemented during the target period due to a variety of reasons, and sometimes project activities have to be altered to ensure that communities understand the conservation message. Project staff need to be both flexible and stern with the implementation of activities, keeping in mind that all activities need to be completed by the end of the project. Activities that are beyond project control are activities such as village meetings, consultations, workshops etc, those that are dependent on communities. Activities that project staff can actually control are any form of development activities and assistance. Project staff need to be uncompromising about completion of development and construction activities at the agreed time. Sometimes communities get too comfortable receiving “hand-outs” and this needs to be addressed at the beginning of the project; communities need to be clear about their commitment over labor costs and in-kind contribution. Having a local conservation group (for e.g. the Site Support Group) is an advantage as they can be very facilitating in getting this message across.

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of funding*	Amount	Notes
Darwin Initiative	B	\$9,069	Project ended June 2009. Supporting community-established PAs in Natewa Tunuloa & Mt Washington.
Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund	B	\$13,000	Project ended March 2011. Kids for Kadavu Project – a community driven schools programme
US Embassy Fiji	B	\$24,999	Project end July 2011. Forest protection in Fiji and the Pacific – for birds and people (supporting livelihood activities on Natewa Tunuloa & Mt Nabukelevu)
GEF	B	\$43,926	SGP (parallel, CEPF-related project in Nabukelevu/Mt Washington) 2 years end 2012.
Aage V Jensen Charity Foundation	B	\$18,114	Forest conservation project, focus on advocacy and awareness raising; co-funding will mainly cover travel, community meetings, communications and office costs. 3 years.
BirdLife International	A	\$79,532	Staff time (Programme Development Manager, Senior Technical Advisor above budget), additional support from BirdLife headquarters, supervision by Regional Director, use of vehicle, office equipment and office facilities, and participation in meetings (especially the BirdLife Pacific Partnership meetings).
Pacific Development Conservation Trust	B	\$17,071	Kids for Kadavu project – community-driven schools programme. Feb 2011-Feb 2012
GEF	B	\$48,000	SGP. Implemented & managed by Sisi Initiative (Natewa SSG) to support activities in IBA (ecotourism, nursery and reforestation activities). May 2011-June 2013
CEPF	B	\$194 350	Adopt lessons learned from this 'Fijians for Fijian Forests' and the community based PA approach to the conservation of IBAs/KBAs. Promoting this approach among BirdLife Partners and other NGOs in the Pacific. Jan 2011-Dec 2012.

*Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:

- A Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)
- B Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)
- C Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

The development of the two Site Support Groups have contributed a lot to the success and planned sustainability of the project, and hence the activities at the IBA. Field trips conducted for the SSGs, site exchange visits, biosecurity, IBA monitoring and fundraising training have all been part of the capacity-building exercise for the SSGs and this has enhanced their knowledge and skills. The SSGs are more aware of their roles and responsibilities and have taken pride and ownership over the project. In Natewa Tunuloa, the Sisi Initiative (SSG) will now implement and manage their first project of reforestation & ecotourism development, with funding from GEF-SGP. BirdLife International will support the SSGs by providing technical expertise and advice, particularly in terms of financial management.

Once the SSGs are registered, the greatest challenge will be to ensure that they continue to develop their skills, are empowered and supported by local organisations and government departments.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

None.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

Strong emphasis was placed on collaboration with government departments, particularly the respective Provincial Offices. The Provincial offices were notified of all site visits, meetings, trainings and workshops conducted and each report was handed back to them. This ensured total transparency and accountability and safeguarded project activities.

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our website, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF GLOBAL TARGETS

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant. Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

Community Characteristics	NAME OF COMMUNITY	
	Natewa Tunuloa	Mt Nabukelevu, Kadavu
Small landowners	X	X
Subsistence economy	X	X
Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	X	X
Pastoralists/nomadic peoples		
Recent migrants		
Urban communities		
Communities falling below poverty rate		
Other		
Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit		
Increased food security due to the adoption of sustainable fishing, hunting, or agricultural practices	X	X
More secure access to water resources	X	X
Improved tenure in land or other natural resource due to titling, reduction of colonization, etc.		
Reduced risk of natural disasters (fires, landslides, flooding, etc)	X	X
More secure sources of energy		
Increased access to public services, such as education, health, or credit		
Improved use of traditional knowledge for environmental management	X	X
More participatory decision-making due to strengthened civil society and governance.	X	X
Other		
Increased Income due to:		
Adoption of sustainable resources management practices (agricultural production, fishing, forestry);	X	X
Ecotourism revenues	X	
Park management activities		
Payment for environmental services		

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