

**KOLOMBANGARA ISLAND BIODIVERSITY
CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION**

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CEPF Social Assessment

Prepared by KIBCA for CEPF project: Building the Capacity of the Kolombangara Island Biodiversity Conservation Association: Strengthening Landholder Capacity and Conservation on Kolombangara Island, Western Province, Solomon Islands.

Project Site: Kolombangara Island, Western Province, Solomon Islands

Social safeguards

This project is implemented on areas customary owned by the indigenous people and including areas leased by Kolombangara Forest Product Limited, a forest Company operating on Kolombangara Island. However, these areas were customarily claimed by the indigenous people because it was not from them but rather been claimed by the Colonial Government. A social Assessment report has been prepared to meet CEPF'S Safeguard policy with regards to indigenous people.

1) Indigenous Peoples in the Project Area

Our Conservation project is situated on areas owned by the five tribal land holding groups namely Viuru, Kolbangara, Ngedoana and Nghalavasa tribe. Prior to the implementation of this project in 2008 these five main tribe including KFPL had been consulted and they have endorsed and confirmed their contribution of their land to this conservation program by signing a Community Conservation Partnership Agreement at Sarghobe in 2009. However, since then both KFPL and the indigenous people on Kolombangara have been regularly informed and involved in various decision making through regular KIBCA meetings, meetings with KFPL every two months and other meetings organized by our stakeholder on Kolombangara.

The CEPF have enable us to meet with our executive and to achieve this objective supporting us to make right decision by the indigenous people who own the resources.

2) Expected project inputs (both Positive and Negative Impacts) on the indigenous people

Positive

One of the positive impacts of this project is the ability of the indigenous being able to work together in the protection of our most remaining forest area on the Islands that host high biodiversity, cultural heritage, beautiful landscape hundreds of rivers which provides goods and services.

The other positive impact is that through this project we were able to create jobs that bring income to our local communities through payment of core staff, rangers, monitors, guides, and

landowners. Although villagers across our constituency live traditionally by subsistence farming, hunting, and using forest and marine resources, people need income typically for medical and school expenses, as well as manufactured materials such as clothes, fuel, soap, and batteries.

Another positive impact is on education, capacity building, and training. There is a very high participation rate in primary school in the Solomon Islands and so there is a demand for secondary schooling. We provide high school educational materials related to terrestrial biodiversity and conservation, and run a long-term scholarship program supporting up to 200 scholarships per year. Throughout this project, we will host capacity building workshops and training sessions to equip students, rangers, and monitors with techniques necessary for specific projects, but applicable to a range of other settings.

Finally, the other positive impact that our project sets a foundation that has been able to leverage alternative income generating projects for communities around the Island in terms of eco-tourism

Negative

One of the main challenges in any development is dealing with traditional land ownership conflicts. On Kolombangara Island 70% of land is Government owned while 30% is still owned customarily by the indigenous people. Although this project is situated in areas above 400m contour and is thought to be inaccessible by the indigenous people, these areas host some of the remaining prime forest that is potentially can be logged, encompassed by culturally sensitive areas and rich biodiversity. Traditionally because land resources are owned by the tribe any decision on any development has to be collective. This is sometimes not easy because we have different views, opinion, diverse levels of interest, demands or pressure, and these leads to a lot of conflicts.

3. Community Consultation

KIBCA is a true community-driven organization; our activities focus on community consultations about land tenure, resource management capacity development, investment in improving local governance, and working to translate indigenous aspirations into conservation practice and development plans. All KIBCA activities are conducted through participatory planning and implementation processes driven by indigenous decision-making frameworks. KIBCA has over 6 years of experience working closely with indigenous leaders, KFPL and communities in the region.

Since our major conservation project is situated on areas above the 400m contour, which covers Mt Rano, Mt Tapalamengutu and Mt Veve and is owned by KFPL and other five tribe, 8 Community consultation was done in 2008 prior to commencement of this project to get their consent. As the result of this in 2009 the community leaders and tribes signed a Community Conservation Agreement with KIBCA and our partners.

Our interest to protect our conservation project of 20 000ha through the country's highest level of protection, the protected areas act 2010 plus other projects that align with our objectives and mission requires us to consult the indigenous people through our AGM and other Community or tribal meetings, the KIBCA executive committee, KFPL and other Kolombangara Island stakeholder. The first protected area Consultation was done 2010 at the onma lodge on Nusatuva

Island. In December 2014 further consultation was done with the tribal members through our Annual general meeting at Ghatere Village. On June 2015 KIBCA conducted another AGM on which the Protected Area agenda was also re-tabled and the targeted timing to submit to the appropriate ministry, that is 2016, was endorsed. Similarly a meeting was conducted by Kolombangara land trust foundation on August 2015, to deal with the Government control land issues. A meeting was convened by Viuru, Ngedoana and Ngalavasa tribes and the agenda to protect the Conservation area as National Park was tabled and again endorsed by the three tribe. The same proposal was also submitted to the KFPL board in 2010 and also endorsed.

The CEPF funding have given us the opportunity to further consult with the local community on the importance of Conservation and further to enlist the area under the new protected area act.

4. Measures to Avoid Adverse Impacts and Provide Culturally Appropriate Benefits

The wish to conserve Kolombangara Island from logging and protect is as a National Park comes from community-driven decision-making processes by representative landowners and villages. Protected areas in the Solomon Islands are not imposed by government, but are driven by indigenous landowners. To mitigate possible adverse impacts of our planned activities we design our engagement through multi-representative partnerships that include landowning representatives, other local NGO partners, international NGOs, and local education institutions. In addition, all KIBCA personnel are indigenous to Kolombangara Island.

Therefore land settlement through clear and concise agreements is a pre-requisite to sustain any projects land ownership conflict and therefore land dispute on any project can spring up from various factors.

Land boundaries and tribal owners have been clearly identified by the Kolombangara council of chiefs in late 1900's. Therefore, these tribal owners need to be consulted in the process. According to our plan five consultation needs to be carried out around Kolombangara Island to consult each tribe including one Kolombangara elites meeting residing in the capital city of Honiara, who somehow have some influence to traditional land owners. Once the land owners were consulted and community inputs were gathered and compiled together with biodiversity information collected by our Scientific partners, a management plan will be finalized will be finalized, reviewed by the KIBCA executive committee, endorsed by the KIBCA AGM and five tribal owners and KFPL, it will then will finally be submitted to the Ministry of Environment.

In terms of ongoing research around the island a community consultation with specific land owners and communities before any research is carried out. The French museum is planning to carry out a fresh water survey around the island. We conducted community consultation meeting on the affected communities on the month October 2015 to get the communities consent or permission before the survey is carried out.

Measures taken to tailor the project within the context our culture had only been possible through the support provided by CEPF.

5. Monitoring

Social impact monitoring is built into the project design. The activities will involve designing a short survey to be conducted with a selection of community representatives chosen to adequately reflect community diversity. The questions will be based on the 'most significant change methodology' and address expected and unexpected positive and negative changes that have occurred in the community as a result of the project. Findings will be compiled into a brief report for reporting purposes and to allow the project design to be adapted if required.

This component had enabled us to see the impact of the project within the community level. Through this system we are able us to track whether or not this project is beneficial to both the environment and the people who owns them.

6. Grievance Mechanism

Indigenous peoples and other local communities and stakeholders may raise a grievance about an issue relating to the project. During workshops and meetings, communities will be informed about this possibility and contact information will be provided for the KIBCA Program Coordinator. KIBCA will respond to grievances in writing within 15 working days of receipt. Claims will be filed, included in project monitoring, and a copy of any grievance will be provided to the CEPF Secretariat.

Our organization has received many criticisms from community members and stakeholders in various communication channels. Be it facebook, email or during the meeting. In the past months we have been able to respond to these criticisms directly. So depending on which medium the criticism came through each criticism where addressed accordingly. However, most have been done through meetings.