

Social safeguards

Because the project will implement activities in areas with Indigenous Peoples, you will need to prepare a Social Assessment, to demonstrate how the project will comply with CEPF's Safeguard Policy on Indigenous Peoples.

This document should:

- . (i) identify Indigenous Peoples in the project area;*
- . (ii) assess expected project impacts (both positive and negative) on them;*
- . (iii) describe how free, prior and informed consultations have been carried out with affected communities during design of the project (i.e. prior to submission of the Lol);*
- . (iv) outline measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits;*
- . (v) explain how these measures will be monitored; and*
- . (vi) detail a grievance mechanism.*

Social Assessment Report

The Canal Studio Association was legally established in 2011 by members of the local Santo community. Canal Studio is named after the Segond Canal – the body of water on which Luganville town is situated – and the public access rehearsal studio which the Association manages. Canal Studio is an incorporated charitable association in Vanuatu, operating on the island of Espiritu Santo. Canal Studio began with the establishment of a physical studio space in Luganville, Santo in 2006. In Santo, Chairman of Canal Studio, David Nalo, emphasised the importance of the studio as 'the heart and soul of the music, arts, youth and cultural movement in Santo'. This studio and the people it brought together were also crucial for the instigation of the Lukaotem Gud Santo Festival. The vision of Canal Studio is to help create a harmonious, clean & safe environment in Santo by using traditional culture and music as a tool for communication and education.

Canal Studio works towards achieving its goal by:

- Improving environmental awareness and activities among the people of Santo
- Organising an annual festival called Lukaotem Gud Santo Festival (LGSF) which promotes the vision;
- Creating income-generating opportunities for local Ni Vanuatu;
- Uniting the many different cultures residing in Santo in a harmonious and respectful manner by presenting their traditional cultural expression at the festival.
- Finding new approaches to re-integrating the respect of *kastom* values into our society
- Scouting and identifying new or existing cultural activities.
- Encouraging the revival of disappearing *kastom* activities including traditional ecological resource management strategies.
- Assisting in the development and promotion of our *kastom*

inheritance.

- Working with all communities and groups in reference to the above from music to lifestyle.

In Vanuatu music plays an important role in custom, religion and enjoyment through artistic expression. To send a message to the community through a large-scale music festival in Luganville with an environmental theme will be a highly effective way of reaching a very large audience in a small amount of time. The festival name “Lukaotem Gud Santo” translates to “Take Care of Santo” and is designed to inspire the people of Santo to look after their island for the benefit of all who live there. As Canal Studio is an indigenous organization, with indigenous membership of both the Board and normal members, we are well placed to work with local community groups. Canal Studio firmly believes in appropriate and considerate approaches to working with all communities, and always acknowledges the immense knowledge and resilience of each unique community. Therefore, before proposing to work with communities to support the ‘development’ of their traditions and practices, Canal Studio spends countless time within communities to get to know the people, and their land, values and practices, and to be clear on how they could potentially work together for the benefit of all. Furthermore, the Canal Studio program outlined here revolves around the identification and requests made by the communities themselves for Canal Studio to support their activities and dreams.

1. Brief overview of the indigenous communities affected by the project,

- Here we identify Indigenous Peoples in the project area;

In this project we are working primarily with rural villages in the North-West area of the island of Espiritu Santo, - especially Hokua, Penaoru, and Pesena – a collection of villages which straddle the Santo Mountain Chain.

During the project, we worked with the indigenous communities of Hokua, Penaoru and Pesena, all located in the Santo Mountain Chain. Additionally, we worked with indigenous communities and people based in Luganville, Santo’s main town.

2. Project activities as they relate to the local communities,

- In this section we describe how free, prior and informed consultations have been carried out with affected communities during design of the project (i.e. prior to submission of the Lol);

Canal Studio, TEKS and LGSF always respond to the needs and desires of communities rather than imposing ideas or projects upon them, therefore, we are well informed and experienced with using free prior and informed consent and consultations (FPIC). Throughout all our activities, and in regards to the production of multimedia content for broadcast, we follow a careful process to ensure that FPIC is obtained. Indigenous traditional custodians of traditional cultural expressions and ecological knowledge will retain all intellectual property rights in relation to their performative traditions. Any documentation, use or promotion of Indigenous traditional expressions in relation to the project across all media will require culturally appropriate consent and approval processes from Indigenous custodians.

During the design of this project, we have shared information and conducted community consultations with each of the villages of Hokua, Penaoru and Pesena, and also with the festival committee in Luganville, to ensure clear understanding and

agreement on the activities. Through our ongoing communication via TEKS with these communities and their key representatives, we have been able to develop the activities based on their needs and requests to support the conservation and management of their eco-cultural resources, practices and knowledge. Once the SSB project begins, we will be able to obtain oral or written evidence of broad-based consent from community members and Indigenous custodians, as well as undertake a series of kastom ceremonies and exchanges between the community and SSB project team. We will also ensure that FPIC is renegotiated as any changes arise throughout the project, and that any risks associated with the project are communicated and discussed with the communities.

At the beginning of the project, TEKS withdrew from Canal Studio and therefore was no longer involved in the project. This meant that we didn't have the existing contacts and relationship with the selected communities in Santo Mountain Chain, and so we had to renegotiate this. We also no longer had the link between this project and the proposed arts festival, and so this activity was canceled. In our two trips to the communities, we re-established the contacts and relationships, and during this time we conducted FPIC processes before implementing any discussions or workshops with the community. These were digitally recorded. Despite this being hurried, we found it greatly beneficial to undertake consultations and develop our partnership with whole communities in person rather than as previously experienced over the phone with only one representative.

Before any audio-visual documentation was conducted, we obtained the consent of local people, and we respected those who did not want to share their knowledge or stories for recording.

3. How project implementation will address the particular circumstances of Indigenous Peoples

This section describes how we assess the expected project impacts (both positive and negative) on them;

It is critical for traditional wisdom to be supported in both rural and urban environments, not as isolated areas but interconnected due to patterns of mobility, exchange and relationships. For example, by firstly supporting the structures that generate kastom performance groups in rural villages and communities to develop and maintain their traditional practices, these groups can then be brought into urban areas to share displays of cultural expression and also transfer traditional knowledge to urban communities, especially urban youth, in a format that privileges the expression of rural voices. The SSB project will enable this through two primary means: engaging with rural communities as they organise Mini-Arts Festivals (MAFs) to promote kastom performances and practices and facilitating the integration of traditional ecological knowledge and management practices into these performances; and, encouraging and facilitating live performance of kastom groups in urban areas at major festivals and events with associated discussions, forums, and workshops to unpack the interconnectivity of the elements of bio-cultural diversity. These primary activities are simultaneously consolidated and amplified through a key aspect of the project: multimedia production and broadcasting.

Promoting and preserving cultural practices is important to maintain the cultural heritage of Vanuatu, and continuously passing on this traditional indigenous knowledge to present and future generations. This program develops the cultural industries, as a primary and vital tool to address the issue of cultural heritage loss and devaluation.

Furthermore, the SSB Project leverages and strengthens the Vanuatu Cultural Centre's Fieldworker framework that engages across diverse communities in Vanuatu considering it important to be able to share and discuss traditional wisdom between islands and at the national level. By elevating this dialogue through broadcast media, the SSB Project will support the idea of 'a nation having a conversation with itself'.

This program directly benefits the three host communities through the maintenance of their cultural practices and the conservation of their environments, and the preparation of kastom groups for larger performances in the hope that they will be exposed to opportunities to tour at regional and international scales, such as the Leweton Cultural Group have experienced through Further Arts connections with major cultural operators, agents and managers in Australia.

Communities will also strengthen their ability to promote intergenerational understanding, and shared knowledge and cultural diversity between different island groups. In particular, young people throughout Vanuatu will be inspired through modern technologies and festivals to follow the road of their traditional cultural identity, and may better understand how to manage this as an integral part of the modernising landscape. At the industry level, we desire to improve stakeholders' understanding of the relationship between kastom, tourism and art, acknowledging culture as a powerful vehicle for positive and sustainable development, and for promoting a healthy collective consciousness between people, and with their land.

We assessed the project impact through community feedback and evaluation of activities. The positive impacts demonstrated through our assessment include improved education and awareness of biodiversity issues and threats, and the link between traditional cultural expressions and conservation. Through recording and screening (in Luganville) some of the rural communities' practices and knowledge, this promoted intergenerational learning and increased interest in bio-cultural knowledge and wisdom for urban youth in particular, but also for stakeholders and at the institutional level. There was no negative impact on the communities involved, however it was unfortunate that Santo Mountain Chain communities could not travel to Luganville for the festival and final presentations to equally benefit from an exchange with the urban community.

4. How they will participate and be consulted during implementation.

- We outline measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits;
- We explain how these measures will be monitored; and
- We detail a grievance mechanism.

The SSB Project Team firmly believe in appropriate and considerate approaches to working with all communities, and always acknowledges the immense knowledge and resilience of each unique community. Therefore, before proposing to work with communities to support the 'development' of their traditions and practices, the SSB Project Team spends countless time within communities to get to know the people, and their land, values and practices, and to be clear on how they could potentially work together for the benefit of all. Furthermore, the SSB project program outlined here revolves around the identification and requests made by the communities themselves for Canal Studio and Further Arts to support their activities and dreams.

Canal Studio always responds to the needs and desires of communities rather than

imposing ideas or projects upon them, therefore, the SSB Project Team is well informed and experienced with using Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Throughout all Canal Studio and Further Arts activities, and in regards to the production of multimedia content for broadcast, TEKS follows a careful process to ensure that FPIC is obtained. Indigenous traditional custodians of traditional cultural expressions will retain all intellectual property rights in relation to their performative traditions. Any documentation, use or promotion of Indigenous traditional expressions in relation to the project across all media will require culturally appropriate consent and approval processes from Indigenous custodians. Specifically, this involves consistent communication with the respective festival and/or community committee to ensure clear understanding and agreement on the activity prior to it beginning, and continuously throughout; oral or written evidence of consent from community members and Indigenous custodians; and, a series of kastom ceremonies and exchanges between the community and the SSB Project Team. The SSB Project is grounded in a paradigm of promoting and preserving biocultural diversity that interweaves indigenous ni-Vanuatu people with their physical environment, and diverse cultures and languages. By developing the cultural and creative industries in Vanuatu in ways that respect and privilege traditional culture and kastom, communities are able to advance and celebrate their practices alongside modernising landscapes and ideas. Furthermore, the opportunity to support a local indigenous-led movement in re-presenting and enriching traditional cultural practices becomes essential for collaborative and effective efforts between different island communities and the broader national and regional context.

Grievance Mechanism - Indigenous Peoples in the communities of Hokua, Penaoru, and Pesena – and other villages, which straddle the Santo Mountain Chain (or indeed other local communities and stakeholders) may raise a grievance about any issues that arise out of the proposed project activities. These communities have been informed about this possibility and contact information of Canal Studio, Further Arts, the Ministry, and CEPF have been made available.

Throughout the project we adhered to local socio-cultural and custom practices to gain entrance to communities and be permitted to engage with local people. Such practices included presenting gifts (such as woven mats or food items) to the chief or leaders of the community in a kind of ceremony. We were always welcomed into the community, and at times was asked to justify the purpose of their visit and interaction with community members. We ensured that it did not impose upon the community and encouraged the community to direct discussion and share only what they felt comfortable sharing.

This process was monitored by the project team during its visit and reported back to the committee of Canal Studio Association on return to Luganville. We also provided information to the community on how they could raise grievances and gave them opportunities to ask questions and express any concerns they had. When we received a query concerning their participation in an activity, we respected their opinion and followed local protocols where required. For example, as communities either could not or chose not to participate in the final activities based in Luganville, we accepted this and did not attempt to persuade or force them to further participate.