

CEPF Social Assessment

Prepared by TCCDA for CEPF project: Strengthening the governance and project management capacity of the Tawatana Community Conservation and Development Association for biodiversity conservation.

Project Site: Tawatana, Makira Island, Solomon Islands

Social safeguards

A social Assessment report is prepared to meet CEPF'S Safeguard policy with regards to the involvement of indigenous communities in this project.

(i) identify Indigenous Peoples in the project area;

Tawatana is an isolated village on Makira Island in the Solomon Islands (please see map in appendix 1). There are 6 Matriarchal clans (tribes) in the Tawatana area and these are represented on the management committee of the TCCDA by the respective chiefs. The clans are:

- Araho
- Amaeo
- Mwara
- Bora
- Aoba
- Adaro

The project was designed and developed to be applied in Tawatana and as such it recognized the indigenous people of the Village and the traditional lands in this area. However, there was considerable interest from neighboring villages who also wanted to access support and capacity development to manage their traditionally owned lands and prevent unsustainable logging practices. Where possible (within the project scope) this was done to continue the work of the TCCDA in raising awareness of the environmental impacts of logging in the area.

The level of interest from neighboring villages was not anticipated and therefore the initial social impact assessment did not include the indigenous people from surrounding villages. In future, project delivery will either be restricted to the area anticipated, or the project designed will identify and include neighboring people.

(ii) assess expected project impacts (both positive and negative) on them;

This project is a capacity building project for a community conservation organisation that was developed by the local indigenous people to protect their customary owned lands and support sustainable development in an isolated part of the Solomon Islands. The training outlined in this project will occur in the Tawatana community with no impact on the traditionally owned lands of the village. The nature of this project means that there is minimal likelihood of negative impacts on the local indigenous people.

The project had broader positive impacts on people in neighboring villages but also had negative impacts on those people wishing to undertake logging in the area. This created some tension with some neighboring communities but this was managed through the process below and with the inclusion of the provincial government (see final report).

When there was disagreement in the village or between villages regarding the role of the TCCDA and the need to conserve the forest area, these disagreements were managed through the council of chiefs and village committee.

Additionally, TCCDA has active ranger volunteers who patrolled the conservation boundary and the rivers and streams, to make sure other communities were respecting our conservation work. This involved discussion between the village chiefs to seek local resolution and maintain local custom. When this needed to be advanced the provincial executive responded to our request to halt a logging company that landed in the neighboring community (Ubuna Village). The Provincial executive held

talks with TCCDA rangers before going to our neighboring village and halted the operation because they had not conducted the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and were breaching the Solomon Islands Waters and Rivers Act and the Makira Province Business License Ordinance 2006.

(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 LOI);

The TCCDA have come together along with other members of the community for 3 Organizational Plan workshops. There have been representatives of each of the local tribes at the meetings, with 5 clan chiefs and the village chief in attendance. A further prioritization workshop was held to determine what small project the TCCDA wished to address. Agreement was reached with good discussion around how people in the community would be involved and affected. For each meeting there was a notice put up 1 week prior on the community noticeboard as well as an announcement at the weekly community work and activity schedule announcements. Meetings were free, in public places and on Saturdays for maximum attendance.

Project design included the Tawatana community however the implementation phase (planning of the western province trip) sometimes did not include the community due to the difficulties of communication. In future representatives from neighboring villages could also be involved in project planning not just implementation.

(iv) outline measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits;

Having the clan chiefs (including the cultural chief and village chief) represented on the management committee provides a solid cross check of culturally appropriate priorities and benefits. The strong traditional structure within the Tawatana community ensures that all tribes are included in decisions affecting them and all activities and decisions are made by the indigenous people.

During the "Conservation Awareness" talks in Tawatana and neighboring villages, members of the committee, representing different tribes have presented information to the community with opportunities for discussion and questions. No adverse impacts are expected as activities will benefit the whole village, including aged and vulnerable (an identified cultural priority). Groups within Tawatana have previously discussed issues of managing projects and finances and the increase in population with its impacts on the environment. These are 2 areas IUCN funding will support with the support given to the fledgling TCCDA prioritizing environmentally sustainable development and conservation activities.

This approach was employed and proved to work well.

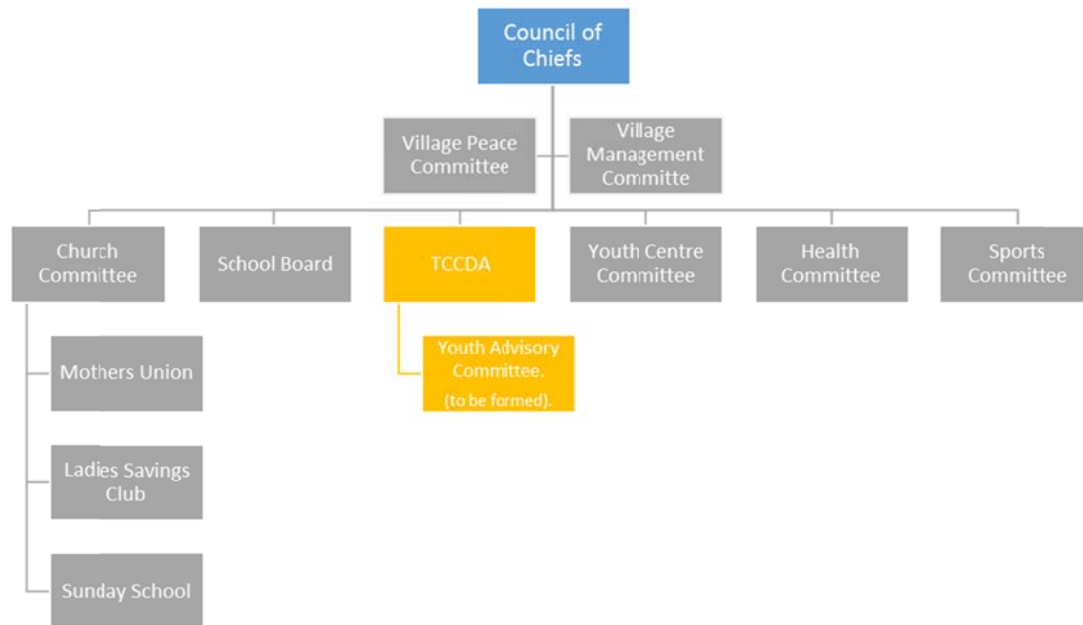
(v) explain how these measures will be monitored;

The avoidance of adverse impacts and delivery of culturally appropriate benefits will be monitored through meetings of the clan and village chiefs. The Council of Chiefs meets on a regular basis and will be asked to consider positive and negative impacts arising from the project. This feedback will be provided to the TCCDA so that any required changes can be implemented. This will be supported by informal community meetings held each Sunday that provide the opportunity for people to raise issues or discuss upcoming projects and activities. At each of these gatherings the progress of relevant community projects is discussed and monitored, identifying any negative impacts and the measures to avoid them. Additionally the village committee meets regularly to discuss administrative issues for the village.

The TCCDA will ensure opportunities are given at its meetings to discuss any feedback, concerns or impacts of the project.

(vi) detail a grievance mechanism.

The TCCDA operates within a community structure that provides clear mechanisms for input and grievances to be managed (see diagram below). The TCCDA reports to both the Council of Chiefs and the Village Committee and grievances are managed through these channels. If the grievance is of an administrative nature it is managed by the Village Committee before being escalated to the Council of Chiefs. If the grievance or input is related to a matter of custom or customary law it is managed by the Council of Chiefs directly. In both situations if the issue is not able to be resolved through these mechanisms, it is progressed to the Village peace committee who determine whether formal legal proceedings are required.



Any grievances raised with the project leads or third-party contact will be communicated to Lysa Wini the in-country Project Liaison and subsequently the CEPF Regional Implementation Team at IUCN within 15 days, together with a plan for remedial action (if any is required). Lysa Wini can be contacted via phone on +677-7473384 and via email on lysa.wini@gmail.com. The Regional Implementation Team can be contacted via phone on +679-331-9084 or email on cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org or via post c/- CEPF Regional Implementation Team, PMB 5 Ma'afu St, Suva, Fiji.

This mechanism worked well within the village however for future projects we will ensure that it is expanded so that it recognises the interaction with neighbouring villages. To deliver the project in the village there was a number of community meetings and held. Members from each zone and other groups were included in the training and project activities. If any individual had an issue with the project activities they were able to raise them directly with the TCCDA members or with the village chiefs. Issues were then discussed and resolved. When issues were raised in neighbouring villages, the local chiefs managed any discontent and through discussion between the chiefs were able to resolve most issues. On one occasion the issue was elevated to the provincial government level to prevent illegal logging in the local area. This was not really a project related activity however undertaking the project meant that the TCCDA was better able to manage the situation. The local structures were still able to deal with the grievances they were just not outlined in this safeguarding document.

Appendix 1: Map of project area and Tawatana location.

