

**SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS
BIOLOGICAL SURVEY – BAINING MOUNTAINS
BISHOP MUSEUM**

27th April 2017

1. Project Background and Proposed Study Site:

This project involved a biological survey of the Baining Mountains, East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea. It was part of an on-going research programme in partnership with the PNG Conservation and Environmental Protection Authority (CEPA, formerly the Department of Environment and Conservation) to document the biological diversity of Papua New Guinea. The East New Britain Provincial Government approved our ongoing biological survey work on 18th May 2004.

The Baining Mts. Survey focused primarily on the upper reaches of the Baining Range on land owned mostly by the people of Riet and Arabam villages (see preliminary report).

We fielded a team of 13 scientists and scientific support staff (including PNG Nationals from the PNG National Museum and the PNG University of Technology) and conducted biological surveys in the area from 23 August to 23 November 2016.

We hired six local landowners to serve as field assistants and established a base camp at the old Wild Dog Mine site (1000 m) and several branch camps. We mainly conducted observational surveys and collected and preserved specimens. We brought in all necessary equipment and basic foodstuffs and purchased vegetables locally.

2. Anticipated Impacts:

We believe that we had a very positive impact on the area. We hired staff recommended by the leaders of local land-owning groups. We also purchased vegetables from local farmers, mostly women. Importantly, we also trained local staff in field survey methodology. Overall, we injected well over K130,000 into the local economy.

The local people in discussions in early May 2013 highlighted the need to scientifically document the biodiversity of their area to support potential ecotourism ventures and to attract potential support for conservation. Indeed at the conclusion of field work local leaders expressed strong interest in developing an ecotourism business at the old Wild Dog Mine Site.

In terms of negative impacts, there was some tension early on with landowners who were convinced that our focus on plants and animals was simply a ruse and that we were actually interested in gold deposits in the area. We met at length with concerned landowners to successfully dispel this myth.

3. Prior Consultation:

We conducted two major surveys of the Whiteman Range in West New Britain Province.

During our visits to New Britain in 2011 and 2012 we met with landowners from the Baining Range who requested us to survey their land. We followed up on this with landowner representatives of Riet and Arabam villages in May 2013 and verbally obtained from them free and informed consent to conduct a biological survey on their land. We subsequently received a letter from them on 9th September 2014 formally inviting Bishop Museum to work on their land. We consulted extensively with local landowners, provincial authorities, local level government officials and members of the Qaqet Council before commencing field work. We continued to consult with these groups during the survey. We also presented our preliminary results to provincial government officials at the conclusion of field work

4. Measures to Avoid Adverse Impacts and to Provide Benefits:

As detailed under section 3, above, we consulted extensively with local landowners and followed their guidance. By relying on the guidance of local leaders for employment decisions, etc. and ensuring that we consulted with them on all important decisions, we were able to avoid many of the misunderstandings that can arise if legitimate stakeholders don't proportionately benefit from the field surveys. We recognized, however, that there was potential for the leaders themselves to seek disproportionate benefits from working with us. This is fairly easy to spot and was avoided by being completely transparent in all dealings with the community. All members of our scientific team have worked in Papua New Guinea and are familiar and respectful of local culture. The expedition leader and most of the scientists speak Pidgin.

5. Monitoring Community Benefits, Interests and Concerns

When conducting a survey we worked closely with local leaders and local people on a daily basis. This ensured that they could easily raise any concerns with us. We treated any concerns as important and addressed them immediately, consulting as appropriate with local leaders. Our overall goal was to ensure that the local people were happy with what we accomplished and how we conducted ourselves, and would be happy to have us back. I believe that we accomplished this.

6. Grievance Mechanism

This project was conducted with the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of landowners from Arabam and Riet villages. We worked with them to resolve any grievances, involving as necessary LLG representatives, and provincial officials.

Because we worked within the social and geographic context of a larger United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and PNG Government process, for social consistency any grievances that couldn't be resolved locally would have been referred to the UNDP for guidance.

Further, Any grievances raised with the project leads or third-party contact would be communicated to Helen Pippard and Luisa Tagicakibau of the CEPF Regional Implementation Team at IUCN within 15 days, together with a plan for remedial action (if any is required). The Regional Implementation Team can be contacted via phone on +679-331-9084 or email on cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org or via post on c/- CEPF Regional Implementation Team, PMB 5 Ma'afu St, Suva, Fiji.