

Environment and Social Impact Assessment

Date

26/01/17

CEPF Grant GA17-01

Grantee

Natural Resources Development Foundation

Project Title

Forest Conservation through Payment of Environmental Services (PES) on 3 sites in
Choiseul, Solomon Islands

Project Location

Choiseul Province, Solomon Islands

Grant Summary

1. Grantee organization.

Natural Resources Development Foundation

2. Grant title.

Forest Conservation through Payment of Environmental Services (PES) on 3 sites in Choiseul, Solomon Islands

3. Grant number (*to be completed by CEPF RIT*)

4. Grant amount (US dollars).

USD 19,550

5. Proposed dates of grant.

1st April 2017 – 1st April 2018

6. Countries or territories where project will be undertaken.

Choiseul Province, Solomon Islands

7. Summary of the project.

Unsustainable logging has had serious impacts on forests and the larger environment. Logging has changed the vegetation cover of the main islands of Solomon Islands, potentially reducing biodiversity and threatening endemic species. Further, the forests provide significant “ecosystem services” which include but are not limited to habitat for plants/animal; carbon sinks; water catchment areas; soil filtration; erosion control; food and shelter; runoff avoidance, and flood control. Besides this many social issues are associated with logging in Solomon Islands including corruption, land disputes, prostitution, child abuse and corruption. In an effort to provide forest owning communities (tribes) with pro-forest alternative income to unsustainable logging, NRDF has developed a suite of activities that are leading to improved forest management and increased household income. One of these activities, and subject to this proposal, is to link forest conservation efforts to the so-called Nakau programme.

The Nakau Programme is a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) programme focusing on Community based forest protection and enhancement and sustainable development. PES units are created by implementing measurable and additional forest protection/enhancement outcomes. The purpose of the Nakau Programme is to provide a financing mechanism to cover the costs of conservation activities and addressing any landowner opportunity costs where relevant.

The main aim of NRDF is to develop the Nakau-PES programme into a pro-forest income generating activity, supporting forest communities in Choiseul to protect and conserve their forest ecosystems. The benefits for communities engaged in the Nakauprogramme are twofold: 1) the income from the sales of PES units cover the direct costs needed to protect and manage the allocated forest conservation sites, and 2) Income from PES units are invested in group benefit activities such as community investments, community projects and enterprises to sustain a longer economic development within the communities.

Main steps and related activities are: identifying the forest areas, boundary survey and mapping, tribal and community consultation, writing management plans, setting up permanent sample plots, registration of legal entities (community companies) and certification/verification project under VIVO standards.

The main outcomes of the project is that 3 forest owning communities in Choiseul are registered and certified under the Nakau PES programme and receive incentives from selling verified PES units from their forest conservation areas to financially support their livelihood development and conservation initiatives.

8. Date of preparation of this document.

26 January 2017

9. Indigenous People affected: This section will describe the Indigenous People in the project area.

The project areas where the activities will take place are owned by local tribes. Most tribal members live in nearby villages and settlements (communities). The main communities/settlements linked to the 3 tribal target areas are Sasamunga community and Boeboe community. Most of the tribal members live in these communities while other tribe members live in other places in Choiseul or the Country. Members living in different places still engage in tribal meetings and decision making. Choiseul is patrilineal which means that men (mostly appointed chiefs) have the power to decide upon land issues. Only tribal members and associates can use the land and resources available within the areas. The tribal land is used to gather and harvest products for livelihood purposes and to make small gardens for food. The areas proposed for the Nakau/PES activities have already been set aside by the tribes as conservation areas in 2009. Within the conservation areas it is still possible to harvest and gather necessary products but only in accordance and approval of the conservation committee. Commercial harvesting and hunting is not allowed but can be practiced in designated areas outside the conservation areas.

NRDF has been active in the areas for more than 6 years and build close relationships with the people of the 3 tribes (Sirebe, Vuri, Kamaboe), implementing activities such as FSC certification, honey farming and forest conservation projects. The Nakau programme is seen as another activity that the tribes and NRDF want to start together to support and strengthen the conservation efforts and livelihood development. NRDF will make sure that all tribal members are involved in the project activities and decision making. The Nakau programme itself has a

strong benefit sharing mechanism based on international standards (VIVO) and agreed upon by the communities members involved, making sure that income from the credit sales is well managed and used and benefits all tribal members.

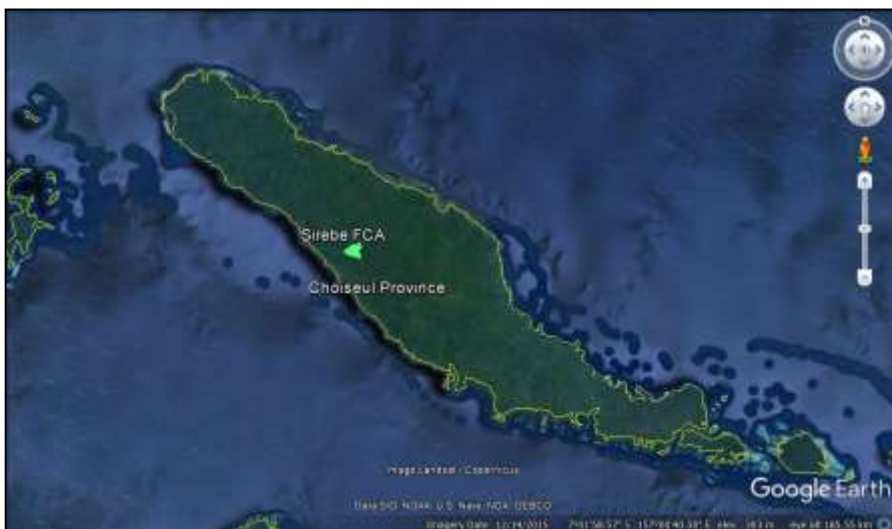
10. Map of your area of work: This section should include a map of the location of the area (s) which will be directly affected by your project.

See next page



LOCATION OF AREAS DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE PROJECT

Sirebe/Vuri Forest Conservation Area (Sirebe& Vuri Tribal land)



Guerre Forest Conservation Area (Kamaboe Tribal land)



11. Summary of the proposed project: This section will describe what you plan to do and how you plan to do it, with a particular focus on activities implemented in areas inhabited and/or used by Indigenous People.

The initial 3 sites that will be supported in this proposal are: Sirebe tribal area, Vuri Tribal area and Kamaboe (Guerre) Tribal area and are combined under the project name: SASABOE (ref to the communities of Sasamunga and Boeboe) . Total forest area eligible to bring under the NakauPES programme is estimated to be 2,600 hectares and concerns areas that have been designated as conservation areas since 2009. All 3 sites are under serious threat from commercial logging companies. The Kamaboe area is also under threat of nickel mining and is situated in a proposed mining tenement area. The main purpose of the proposed project is to bring all 3 tribal areas under the Nakau PES programme to sell verified PES credits to provide an income for the community's conservation efforts and general economic development in the communities. The only way to save forest from logging and mining is to provide forest owners with a reasonable alternative income.

Project objectives:

1. At least 3 forest owning communities in Choiseul are registered and certified under the Nakau PES programme and receive incentives from selling PES units from their forest conservation areas.
2. Other forest owning communities are aware of the Nakauprogramme and commit themselves to forest conservation by signing MOU's with NRDF or stakeholders such as ESSI.
3. NRDF is fully capable and equipped to bring in and register more forest areas under the Nakauprogramme.

Activities:

All activities are to support the process for the 3 tribal communities to become verified Nakau project sites. All requirements and steps follow the Nakau Methodology Framework and the Technical Specifications Module.

1. Determine (GPS) and map the exact boundaries of Nakau eligible forest areas in each of the 3 tribal lands. NRDF staff and landowners will be involved in this work.
2. Establish permanent sample plots in each area to quantifying PES units. NRDF staff and landowners will be involved in this work.
3. Setting up legal entities in each forest community that will coordinate the Nakau activities in their respected areas and that are responsible for the financial management and benefit sharing. This activity is facilitated by a Nakau team from Vanuatu who are experience in participatory set up of similar entities in nakau project areas in Fiji and Vanuatu.
4. Organize awareness sessions on Nakau and forest conservation in general for other communities that show interest in conserving their forest areas.
5. Social economic baseline study for each tribal community. This is a recorded baseline for community impacts and is done through household surveys using standard templates from Nakau projects in Fiji and Vanuatu. Social impact assessment is an ongoing monitoring requirement of the Plan Vivo Standard and the Nakauprogramme.
6. First third party verification audit of the Sasaboe project by auditor under plan VIVO standards.

12. Potential impacts: This section will assess expected project impacts (both positive and negative) on Indigenous People. You can include and expand on the points that you listed in you LOI under

- Environmental Aspects and
- Health and Safety

All the 3 target sites have been designated as forest conservation areas since 2009. The tribes and the people living in and around the areas are aware of the (informal) protected status of the areas and the restrictions of use imposed by the tribal committees. The Sirebe and Guerre (Kamaboe) sites are also in the process to become a Protected Area under the Protected Area ACT 2010. This decision (to make the areas legally protected) was made by the tribes themselves to stop any further logging threats to their forests. The proposed project will have no impact or will not change the status of the areas as being conserved by the tribes and communities. The project is intended to support and strengthen the conservation activities already carried out. Therefore no negative environmental or social impact is expected from the project but rather positive effects as it will further support a healthy forest habitat for the indigenous people to live in and use.

Regarding health and safety, the project activities are very low impact and will not put people in any risky or dangerous situations or circumstances.

13. Participatory preparation: This section will describe the participation of affected communities during the project design process (i.e. prior to submission of the full proposal), and explain how Free, Prior and Informed Consent was obtained.

Since 2014 the people at the 3 project sites have been involved in REDD+ activities and the Nakau programme. The sites and communities were part of the first preparation and demonstration activities in 2014 and 2015, initiated by Live and Learn and NRDF. In 2016 NRDF continued with readiness activities with the 3 communities. The communities are aware of the last “gaps” that need to be fulfilled and are committed to achieve final project verification this year.

The Nakau Methodology Framework defines a voluntary and participatory planning process Based on Plan VivoStandard 2013, by means of theProject Participation Protocol (PPP). The PPP is required to provide a transparent process for addressing social and cultural Safeguards associated with project development and implementation. The PPP is also required as a means of reducing internal risk and enabling Project Owners(the Tribes) decisions concerning project development, implementation and management to be consistent with the principles of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).

All projects in the Nakau Programme shall apply the PPP to:

- Enable participants (project owners) to grant or withhold their free, prior informed consent for key aspects of project design, development and implementation, inparticular for decisions that create continuing commitments, responsibilities or have potential for future impacts on local livelihoods and land use.
- Enable participants to develop ownership of and meaningful input into project design, implementation, and management.
- Ensure that representatives of Project Owner groups have a mandate from group members, including people who may be disadvantaged based upon gender, age, income or social status.
- Ensure that the process of undertaking a PES project is transparent, empowering, and community building for the Project Owner.
- Ensure that costs associated with project development and on going management are transparently understood and agreed by the Project Owner.
- Ensure that the benefits of any PES project are equitably and transparently distributed between the Project Owner, the PES unit buyer, the Programme Operator, and the Project Coordinator.
- Ensure that the benefits of any PES project are equitably and transparently distributed within the community of the Project Owner.

The PPP prescribes a participatory process of project development and management and is considered a minimum requirement for project engagement. Significant further education, consultation and engagement with the Project Owners may be necessary to ensure equitable and sustainable outcomes. The Programme Operator will assess each project independently to ensure that the PPP has been followed, and that it has achieved its purpose. The PPP requires a process of community engagement, typically involving meetings/workshops between the Project Owner (the Tribes) and the Project Coordinator NRDF (facilitated by the latter) throughout the project cycle. Other key/relevant stakeholders are engaged where appropriate

14. Mitigation strategies: This section will outline measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits. Make sure to also include in this section measures that will be taken to mitigate negative impacts on:

- Environmental Aspects and
- Health and Safety

Although the Nakau programme and methodology has many safeguards provided in its set-up to avoid any negative social or environmental impacts NRDF as project Coordinator should be aware of any non-compliance in the project's implementation.

It is NRDF's task as project coordinator to closely monitor the project activities and processes and intervene as soon as any acts of noncompliance, grievance, disputes, mis-management etc is observed. In case problems occur which cannot be solved by consultation between project coordinator and project owners, outside mechanism will be triggered which could lead to temporarily closure or suspension of the project from the Nakau programme until problems have been resolved.

15. Monitoring and evaluation: This section will explain how compliance with the safeguard policy on Indigenous Peoples will be monitored, and reported to CEPF and/or the Regional Implementation Team. Monitoring and evaluation methodologies should be adapted to the local context, indicators, and capacity.

NRDF has a comprehensive monitoring system in place. Beside the general monitoring procedures that measures the outcomes and impacts of the programme it also uses the FSC monitoring procedures in areas that are FSC certified and the monitoring procedures that are integrated in the Nakau programme. Concerning the target areas in this CEPF proposal the communities will be closely monitored by using all three monitoring systems: FSC, Nakau and NRDF general monitoring. Attached are the current guidelines of the general monitoring system currently used by NRDF officers.

16. Grievance mechanism: All projects that trigger a safeguard are required to provide local communities and other interested stakeholders with means by which they may raise a grievance with the grantee, the relevant Regional Implementation Team, the CEPF Secretariat or the World Bank. Affected local communities should be informed of the objectives of the grant and the existence of a grievance mechanism. Contact information of the grantee, the Regional Implementation Team should be made publicly available, through posters, signboards, public notices or other appropriate means in local language(s). Grievances raised with the grantee should be communicated to the Regional Implementation Team via email (cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org) and (Fiona.RODIE@ext.iucn.org) within 15 days, together with a proposed response. If the claimant is still not satisfied following the response, the grievance may be submitted directly to the CEPF Executive Director via the dedicated email account (cepfexecutive@conservation.org) or by mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Secretariat, the grievance may be submitted to the World Bank at the local World Bank office. Please describe the grievance mechanism that you will use for your project, and how you will ensure that stakeholders are aware of it.

NRDF will make a project summary with all appropriated contact details. This hand-out will be made available for all members in the 3 target communities.

17. Budget: This section will summarize dedicated costs related to compliance with the safeguard policy on Indigenous Peoples. These costs should be incorporated into the budget of the CEPF grant and/or covered by co-financing.

Continuous monitoring of the activity takes place when NRDF staff is visiting the areas. Beside the proposed activities under this CEPF grant, other activities take place within the same areas. Parts of the areas are FSC certified and as part of this programme communities and areas are monitored frequently by NRDF staff. Monitoring is focused on environmental as well as social economic issues. FSC (NRDF) has a complaint and dispute mechanism in place to make sure no negative impacts occur. NRDF partner areas are visited on an average base of once in the two months, depending on which activities are planned. Costs for monitoring are covered by other grants and are not incorporated in the CEPF budget lines.