



SICCP

Solomon Islands Community
Conservation Partnership

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CEPF Social Assessment

*Building the Capacity of the Solomon Islands Community Conservation Partnership:
Strengthening a Model Component of Community-driven Conservation in the East Melanesian Islands*

1) Indigenous Peoples in the Project Area

Tetepare

At over 12,000 ha, the Tetepare priority region is the largest uninhabited and unlogged island in the tropical Pacific. Nearly two centuries after headhunting and a mysterious disease forced the people to leave the island, the descendants of Tetepare formed the Tetepare Descendants' Association (TDA). TDA is stewarding forest and marine ecological monitoring programs, as well as providing livelihood development initiatives, and successful scholarship programs for its members, currently numbering over 3,000. Members of TDA are scattered across the Western Province, but many can be found on the island of Rendova, adjacent to Tetepare. The Touo people are the predominant descendants of Tetepare and can be found in villages such as Lokuru, Baniata, and Rano. Overall, there are 12 regions across the Western Province represented by an Executive Member within the TDA.

Kolombangara

The Kolombangara Uplands priority region includes the area above 400m elevation on the island of Kolombangara, with a dormant volcano reaching 1779 m high. The traditional owners of Kolombangara are known as the Dughore people, and the island has a population of around 6,000. The lowlands of Kolombangara have been heavily and repeatedly logged, but a 19,400 ha conservation area of largely pristine forests has been declared since 2008 and is managed by the Kolombangara Island Biodiversity Conservation Association (KIBCA). Indigenous people on Kolombangara live in ten zones around the island, which are all represented at regular KIBCA meetings. All landowners signed the agreement to protect the area above 400m from logging and other threats.

Marovo Lagoon

The Marovo region (~65000 ha of land), Western Province, includes areas of two islands where we will work: Vangunu and Gatokae. Each of these volcanic islands has a caldera with steep ridges in the south, where the last intact forest on these islands survives. These forests and adjacent reefs are managed by small communities of indigenous customary owners, who wish to protect their natural resources. Our surveys will focus on these forest remnants.

Vangunu. Zaira is a village of fewer than 200 people on the south eastern weather coast of Vangunu. Zaira community members are customary landowners of three adjacent regions known as the Dokoso, Sunqili and Tavomai Tribal Land Areas, consisting of primary forest surrounded by steep ridges of the caldera of a dormant volcano. The total area of 6000 ha combines 3500 ha

of forest, and 2500 ha of marine areas and Kavachi Reef. These three areas have recently been combined into a community conservation area declared by the landowners, the 'Zaira Community Resource Management Area'. This region is being managed by the six tribal groups living in Zaira village and the nearby similarly small villages of Ninive, Tique & Mbopo, headed by village chiefs (These tribal groups on south Vangunu Island are known as Dokoso, Kale Vangunu, Suqili, Tavoamai, Kadiki and Veala). The Zaira Community Resource Management Area is used for hunting, collecting wild fruit and nuts, and providing water and building materials. Sections are traditionally closed to hunting for five years at a time under a traditional management method known as 'hope', for example the Dokoso section is currently closed to hunting, fishing and felling trees until 2015.

Gatokae. Gatokae is an island adjacent to Vangunu. Biche is a village of around 200 people on the south eastern tip of Gatokae. Biche community members are customary landowners of the newly declared Biche Conservation Area of Gatokae Island, an area of 2000 ha including primary coastal, upland and cloud forest on Mt Mariu (the dormant volcano), and Kavachi Reef and submarine volcano. As on Vangunu, natural resources of this area were also traditionally managed using the alternating taboo area 'hope' system, and the community (headed by the village chief) is now re-enforcing this protection for their forest and marine resources. As on Vangunu, people grow food using shifting agriculture near the village.

2) Potential Positive and Negative Impacts

Positive

One major benefit of our partnerships with community-based organizations is income generation through payment of core staff, rangers, monitors, guides, and landowners. Although villagers in each of the priority areas 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 important benefit will be 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 will provide high school educational materials related to terrestrial biodiversity and conservation, and continue to support scholarship programs at both TDA and KIBCA. More generally, we will host capacity building workshops to train rangers and monitors in techniques necessary for specific projects, but applicable to a range of other settings.

Negative

The main potential negative impact is the failure to meet expectations regarding livelihood opportunities and community benefits at our partner sites. Unrealistic expectations could result in disengagement with the project. Throughout the project period, SICCP will focus on ensuring realistic expectations and avoiding misconceptions about the projects scope.

3. Community Consultation

SICCP seeks to improve resource management in customary lands under sovereign control by indigenous people at priority sites across the Solomon Islands. Activities include community

consultations about land tenure, resource management capacity development, investment in improving local governance, and work around understanding and translating indigenous aspirations into conservation practice and development plans.

All SICCP activities are conducted through participatory planning and implementation processes driven by indigenous decision-making frameworks. SICCP has nearly 8 years of experience in working together closely with indigenous leaders and communities in the region. Over that period, we have developed a track record of successful partnership and maintain a network of strong community-level relationships. This network of relations is built on trust and has been tested by time.

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

The wish to protect areas of intact forest from logging and mining comes from grass-roots community associations representing 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, government bodies, other local NGO partners, and international NGOs. In addition, SICCP personnel working on the project are Solomon Islanders, including Albert Kwatela and Veria Pulekera.

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.

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 SICCP Operations Manager. SICCP 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.