

**Social Assessment**

**April 2, 2019**

**CEPF Grant 109332: EMI-SD1**

**Wildlife Conservation Society**

**Empowering communities to conserve PNG's Central Manus Key Biodiversity Area**

**Manus Island, Papua New Guinea**

## **Grant Summary**

1. Grantee Organisation: Wildlife Conservation Society Papua New Guinea
2. Grant title: Empowering communities to conserve PNG's Central Manus Key Biodiversity Area
3. Grant number
4. Grant amount (US dollars): \$250,000
5. Proposed dates of grant: 1 June 2019 – 31 May 2021
6. Countries or territories where project will be undertaken: Manus Province, Papua New Guinea
7. Date of preparation of this document: March 22, 2019
8. **Indigenous People affected:** This section will describe the Indigenous People in the project area.

The proposal will cover three main indigenous tribal groups within the great central Manus forest; the Tulu, Mondropolon and Pohowa tribes. These tribes are composed of major clans and many sub-clans, with a total combined population of about 10,000 people. This project will target 10 interested clans within the tribal groups. The land is customarily owned and governed by a traditional leadership system, known as the chief system, where the tribal chiefs and clan leaders, make decisions over the use and/or management of the resources.

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has been working on sustainable resource management education and awareness raising and community based forest conservation with these tribal groups since 2011. In November 2018, 52 clans from these three tribal groups entered into an agreement with WCS to conserve 43,000 hectares of their pristine forest from the potential threats posed by large scale logging and large scale forest degradation activities, in an effort to safeguard livelihoods and food security. The conserved areas are situated inland, about 10-15 kilometers from the current coastal settlement, where most of the people have lived since 1946. Historically, the communities lived in the forested and mountainous areas but following the Paliau Reform Movement, people congregated along the coast in order to live together in an organized manner that would enable the exchange of agricultural skills and knowledge with the fishing communities. Thus, whilst much of their life is spent on the coast, the communities still heavily depend on the forest for medicine, food, fresh water, materials for shelter and other resources.

## **9. Summary of the proposed project:**

WCS proposes to work with interested clans in the establishment and formalization of community conservation areas in central Manus through the implementation of conservation deeds. WCS aims to work with up to 10 clans that have a combined customary land ownership of at least 15,000 hectares within the Great Central Forest in Manus, and that have expressed strong interest for long term conservation of their forest. The protection will take the form of conservation deeds in which the clans will determine the specific regulations governing the conservation areas within their forests. This work would require initial consultations with the clans in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent specific to the proposed activities of developing conservation deeds.

This will be made possible through extensive consultations and implementation of a process to obtain free prior informed consent (FPIC) with clans who have expressed interest for long term conservation. Community consultations will be with clans so that all clan members (men, women, children, youth, the elderly, people living with disability, etc.) fully participate in the process and that sufficient information is provided for them to make an informed decision. This process will take several months, to ensure the conservation partner communities clearly understand the requirements, the environmental and livelihood benefits, the possible challenges, and are better informed prior to approving the project. Following the completion of this process, if the clans approve, WCS will work closely with the Indigenous People through a step by step process to getting their conserved areas under protection. At all stages the clans will have the options to cease working with WCS and to end their conservation deeds. The establishment of conservation deeds with a customary group will then follow a 4-step process consisting of:

1. Preparation of the draft conservation deed
2. Mapping of the clan area
3. Community development of the content of the deed
4. Formalization of the deed.

To encourage the establishment of community conservation areas, WCS will:

1. Provide information to landowners, and local and provincial governments about the ecosystem services provided by the central forest, and the longitudinal risks associated with its loss.
2. Expose central Manus clan leaders to the impacts of prior agroforestry and logging projects by organizing visits to communities that have already experienced the negative effects of such projects.
3. Provide trainings facilitated by legal professionals that will inform landowners of their customary rights, explain the national laws that govern natural resources and highlight international best practice standards expected in the conduct of agroforestry and logging operations.
4. Support the development of feasible, conservation compatible sustainable natural-resource-based livelihoods. Thanks to funding from the Australian Government, in 2019, WCS engaged an expert to explore the commercial potential of local cash crops in Manus (e.g. coconut, vanilla, cocoa, and Gallip nut *Canarium indicum* - a species native to Manus). The final report of the expert should be available in June 2019. This will include an assessment of existing supply chains and barriers to production, and the formulation of a work plans for developing the most feasible livelihood options, based on the outcomes of the feasibility study. Through the proposed project WCS will then begin developing demonstration projects based around the identified cash crops with the deed communities through the provision of technical assistance, training, and equipment to head start the new livelihoods.

## **10. Potential impacts:**

The project will have significant impacts on the indigenous people since it will safeguard their forest areas from large-scale logging, thus protecting the ecosystem services these communities depend on for their livelihoods, such as clean water, fruiting trees, timber resources and wild meat. This will also help preserve culture through traditional management practices including existing tambu, or sacred sites, and also open opportunities for future natural based income earning avenues like eco-tourism. The potential loss of these sites could signify the loss of tradition, belief, respect, traditional identity in addition to the loss of existing ecosystems.

Opposing the logging company could lead to external pressure being applied on communities. WCS is providing participants with legal training so that communities will fully understand, and know how to exercise, their legal rights.

As mentioned in the accompanying process framework for involuntary restrictions, there is a chance that this work will re-ignite or exasperate land ownership tensions. WCS will operate cautiously when dealing with contested land issues and let the interested parties resolve their dispute, with WCS input.

#### **11. Participatory preparation:**

During the six-month consultations for the renewal of the conservation agreements which were finalized in November 2018, the current project was introduced to the clans for their input and their consent to proceed with the application. The provincial stakeholder workshops in June 2018 were followed by community inception meetings organized in each community to introduce the project to communities, as well as clan leaders, and ward councillors. Information was provided in Tok-pisin using power point presentation, posters, short videos, and hard copies. Discussions allowed people to raise questions and talk about the project. At follow-up meetings, consent forms were signed by interested clans and allowed ample time for internal community discussion about the project.

Previously, in 2016, WCS facilitated the development of ward development plans for nine communities in central Manus, which was a legal requirement under PNG's organic law. A stakeholder workshop was held with the provincial and local level government and the targeted communities. The proposed project was strongly informed by the issues which arose during this process, such as the need for stronger environmental protection and cash livelihoods.

#### **12. Mitigation strategies:**

In general, adverse impacts will be avoided by following FPIC guidelines. WCS will hold community meetings and neutrally facilitate the meetings if tensions arise. WCS will actively identify and propose resolutions. If resolution is not possible WCS will withdraw from the community. The Conflict Resolution and Complaint Mechanism will be followed at all times.

Below we identify potential points of tension and provide mitigation strategies that will be implemented to avoid some specific adverse impacts.

#### **Land ownership**

Ownership of customary land is often a matter of disputed between individuals, clans or tribes. The current project could inflame these tensions.

*Mitigation:*

During the FPIC process, WCS will have identified communities with prolonged internal land issues. Any communities identified as having these issues will not be included in the project. Inclusion of these communities would jeopardize success and could risk raising community or inter- clan or tribe tensions.

WCS may be able to work with communities with undefined land ownership areas if these areas are geographically limited and can be removed from the area protected under a conservation deed. If the process of mapping areas for conservation deeds arouses land ownership tensions WCS will discuss the issue with the community/s. If a clear pathway to resolution is not apparent WCS will withdraw from further work with the community. When local communities have secure rights and the legitimate authority to manage their territory, they have the solid foundation they need to invest in natural resource-based enterprises that will generate sustained benefits for their families now and in the future. WCS hopes that when families see tangible benefits from their management efforts, they are more likely to continue to invest their time, or even invest further time, in protecting these resources

Perceptions of unfair benefit sharing

There is a risk that the cash crop initiative may disproportionately benefit a minority of the community if not well planned.

*Mitigation*

WCS helps indigenous, traditional, and local communities build the equitable and accountable systems they need to make decisions about how to manage their lands and waters sustainably and share the benefits of their efforts equitably with current and future generations. WCS will therefore consult the clans on how to roll out the project to ensure benefits are shared fairly across the community This will be achieved by ensuring an equal ratio of clan involvement and engagement, targeting a broad range of community members of all ages of majority, and working to ensure that women's voices are an inherent part of the process.

The cash crop will benefit those clans that are interested in long term forest protection. WCS will identify the number of households seeking engagement and shall work with them to identify suitable sites and required land size for cash crop cultivation, noting that some households will already have existing cash crop cultivations. We will maintain an inventory of clan household, including those households with existing cash crops, and those who have expressed interest in cultivation. All related cash crop trainings from cultivation, management, harvesting, processing, marketing, etc. will be given to the farmers. Usually each clan is comprised of a small number of households, allowing WCS to monitor the equitable realization of benefits.

**13. Monitoring and evaluation:**

Monitoring of the safeguards will occur during each field visit from the WCS team, especially during the entry and exit meetings with the community which are part of WCS PNG

standardized community engagement protocol. All issues will be noted and reported in WCS' reports to CEPF.

**14. Grievance mechanism:** All projects that trigger a safeguard must provide local communities and other relevant stakeholders with a means to raise a grievance with the grantee, the relevant Regional Implementation Team, the CEPF Secretariat or the World Bank.

Stakeholders will be able to raise grievances at all times. We will make sure that each clan has a printed brief in easily understandable language that conveys the project objectives and a description of the grievance mechanism, which will include the email and telephone contacts for WCS, the CEPF Regional Implementation Team, and the local World Bank office, as well as the email of the CEPF Executive Director. During the first set of community meetings, WCS staff will go through the grievance mechanism with each community. We will share all grievances – and a proposed response – with the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days. If the claimant is not satisfied following the response, they may submit the grievance directly to the CEPF Executive Director at [cepfexecutive@conservation.org](mailto:cepfexecutive@conservation.org) or by surface mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Executive Director, they may submit the grievance to the World Bank at the local World Bank office.

**15. Budget:**

Compliance with safeguard policy will occur during field trips to the sites and during the FPIC consultations in particular. This has not been budgeted as a separate program activities so no compliance costs will need to be included in the budget.