

Social Assessment- Indigenous People

Development of SIRA Executive: People who will be involved in training and capacity building and setting up of SIRA.

Indigenous people of the Project Area

Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands is one of the Melanesian countries in the Pacific Region. It is inhabited by more than 500,000 people. The population consists of the three major races, the Polynesians, Micronesians and the Melanesians. Inter-marriage to Europeans and Asians has accounts for certain percentage of the total population as well. There are 9 main Provinces scattered across the ocean close to Vanuatu and PNG and more than 1000 small Islands and Islets formed by volcanic activity thousands of years ago. The Islands are mainly volcanic and raised limestone Islands.

The country is known for its pristine forest and marine resources as the centre of Biodiversity hot spots next to PNG and some South East Asian countries like Indonesia. However over-harvesting, unsustainable logging and prospecting (mining) are continuous and emerging threats to the biodiversity. Conservation and resource management programs are in place to ease some of the negative impacts imposed by these threats. Methods used by communities are integrating traditional knowledge and modern science to protect the resources. Most of these programs however can be found in most remote areas of the country, which is very challenging.

Despite the challenges, efforts have been made in encouraging networking and partnership to manage the challenges and utilize the potentials available. Thus Solomon Islands Ranger Association (SIRA) was established and intended to play the role of supporting the local village rangers that employed by Community-based Organization (CBOs). One of its objectives is to set up an avenue that Rangers can improve their skills & knowledge on and have good communication links among themselves also where they can express their concerns to be heard. This avenue proposed to link them to other international Rangers Association, institutions and donor agencies. SIRA already made some links to other ranger association such as the Queensland Rangers Association, Australia. We understand that it's time that Rangers' great works must be acknowledged and the protectors of the Biodiversity in Solomon Islands must be empowered. Tetepare Island and Arnavon Islands are only known sites that have organized rangers whilst many out there are not formally established. Hence this project will support the setup of the Solomon Islands Rangers Association (SIRA) who will in turn support the great champions in the communities and in locally managed areas.

Activities that SIRA proposes to achieve in this project include training its executive members on financial and project management, developing a strategic plan with clarity on roles and responsibilities and to set the future direction of the association. The launch of SIRA and its programs in Solomon Islands is envisaged to have positive impacts for conservation and locally managed areas.

Potential Positive and Negative Impacts

Positive

One of the outcomes of this development would be employment of a part-time administrator to assist on activities required of him/her during the course of this project. He or she will be the core communication link between members and the executive, responsible for updating templates and provide reports on activities as well assist in coordination and logistics (if required). SIRA will pay for his or her time for doing the work. As a registered Association under Charitable Trust Act, SIRA will venture into other funding sources from both local and overseas.

Education, capacity building and training for the executive members will be other benefits. This is to empower them to carry out their duties in appropriate manners. Two capacities building on project management, financial management are proposed and will be provided for the executive members and the part-timer administrator. The skills and knowledge gain will enable the officers to provide mentoring and coaching for the Rangers.

Information sharing will be another benefit that will impact on Rangers. Educational and awareness materials (fact sheets) published will promote conservation activities throughout the communities, schools (primary & secondary), governments, tertiary institutions and business houses in Solomon Islands. With these SIRA hope to contribute to effective conservation activities and development of trust in the community and have a healthy environment for the local people.

Negative

Negative impacts are likely to be very minor, if they occur. This is because the project will run for only a year. Since the employment of the coordinator is on part-time basis, this may have an impact on timely communication and reporting.

We envisage that bringing the executive members together in a common location will be a challenge. The executive members are on voluntarily basis, prioritizing their own work with the respective NGOs will affect their attendances on any workshop or capacity building. In addition, since they are working in different parts of the province, communication via internet or phone may not be as reliable. Because SIRA is a new setup, much of the focus will be on building the capacity of the executive members to be able to contribute effectively to the organization. Rangers who are members to SIRA may feel left out however through the part time Coordinator, we will ensure that the purpose of this project is clarified and communicated from the start of the project to avoid any complaints. The Coordinator will help to identify some activities in which rangers can be actively involved in for example, there are plans to launch SIRA during world environment day celebration in June 2016. The Coordinator and executive committee together will explore other funding sources to cater for the capacity building and training for Rangers.

Consultation with the affected people in the communities/NGO partners/Government

In the Solomon Islands, a chief, his council and often church leaders in the community are the first people to approach for discussion of matters to be adhered and before any consent given. If the matter needs to go out to all community members then a meeting must be called then announced the matter during the community meeting. For this protocol SIRA will continue to follow and seek permissions and consents before any activity carried out in the conservation sites. We will do the same approach to government officers, NGOs and other concern stake holders.

Addition to that Solomon Islands Community Conservation Partnership (SICCP) will assist in strengthening SIRA with some of the ranger capacity training activities. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) also stated they will render some support that will have impacts on rangers and their activities. After a first national consultation meeting held in April 2015, The Solomon Islands National Government have expressed their support to SIRA. They can support in any capacity trainings for rangers in the future.

Measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits

The identified ways to prevent unfavourable impact that may occur during the course of this project includes a joint leadership and management by SIRA Executive Committee with SICCP and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). This means it will get assistance by providing co-financing and utilize their expertise for nurturing

until it can run by its own. Also it will collaborate and seek support from the Ministry of Environment to acquire Government recognitions and will link up with the provincial governments. In terms of any cases that require legal assistance, SIRA will liaise with the Landowners' Advocacy and Legal Support Unit (LALSU) or the Solomon Islands Environmental Law Association (SIELA) to get legal support.

Hence we proposed that all work that SIRA oversees must be well communicated and open to its members and stakeholders to maintain honesty and transparency in Solomon Islands. Any work that will require community rangers or members in the community, their involvement and participation will always be guaranteed.

In addition to that, the Coordinator will ensure that updates on the project are provided to executive members on a regular basis or as needed. The Coordinator will ensure that finance and progress reports on SIRA's behalf are completed and submitted accordingly by the deadline and as well copies to be provided to the executive committee. A temporary check list will be created as a guideline of the operation before the strategic plan draft completed. These are some of the measures identified.

Monitoring

Monitoring and evaluation will be made at the start and end of the project. Strategies for monitoring will be informal discussion with the concern stakeholders to get general view. The use of questionnaires will be a formal and some of the questions would be, "do you like the project?" Alongside option will be made by circling any of these words like {Strongly Agree, Agree or Disagree or Strongly Disagree}. Will this project improve your ranger capacity building on monitoring? These are examples of questions that will be used to get their opinion and monitor positive and evaluate negative outcomes of the project. This will only focus on the partners and members. Another ways is to put out opinion box for people to drop comments on the paper inside it and at the end of the day we will collect and analyses them. Minor auditing can be done as well on the use of the funds that provided the reports will be documented and sent to members.

Grievance Mechanism

The mechanism to resolve any grievances raise by any member or people towards this project, a letter must be written and forward his or her complaint to the executive and will be tabled. Once resolved (the solution or the action) will be communicated back to the person concern. Hence in general any grievances raised with the project team or third party contact will be documented on paper and communicated to the CEPF Secretariat and the Regional Implementation Team at IUCN within 15 days, together with a plan for remedial action (if any required). The Regional Implementation Team can be contacted via phone on +679-331-9084 or email on cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org and lysa.wini@iucn.org or via post on c/- CEPF Regional Implementation Team, PMB 5 Ma'afu St, Suva, Fiji.

Map of Working Areas

Below are two maps showing the network group of community-based Organizations (CBOs) that their rangers are member to SIRA. Figure 1: New Georgia Islands Network in Western Province, the current partners to SICCP, perhaps from Gatokae in Marovo to Kolombangara Island. Figure 2: Some of the places that have CBO across Solomon Islands with their rangers are members to SIRA, from Temotu to Choiseul.



Figure 1: New Georgia Islands Group highlighted in orange colour, from Biche, Zaira (Marovo Lagoon), Tetepare (Rendova), Roviana and Kolombangara Island. These communities are current SICCP partners as their rangers are member to SIRA (source SICCP, 2014).

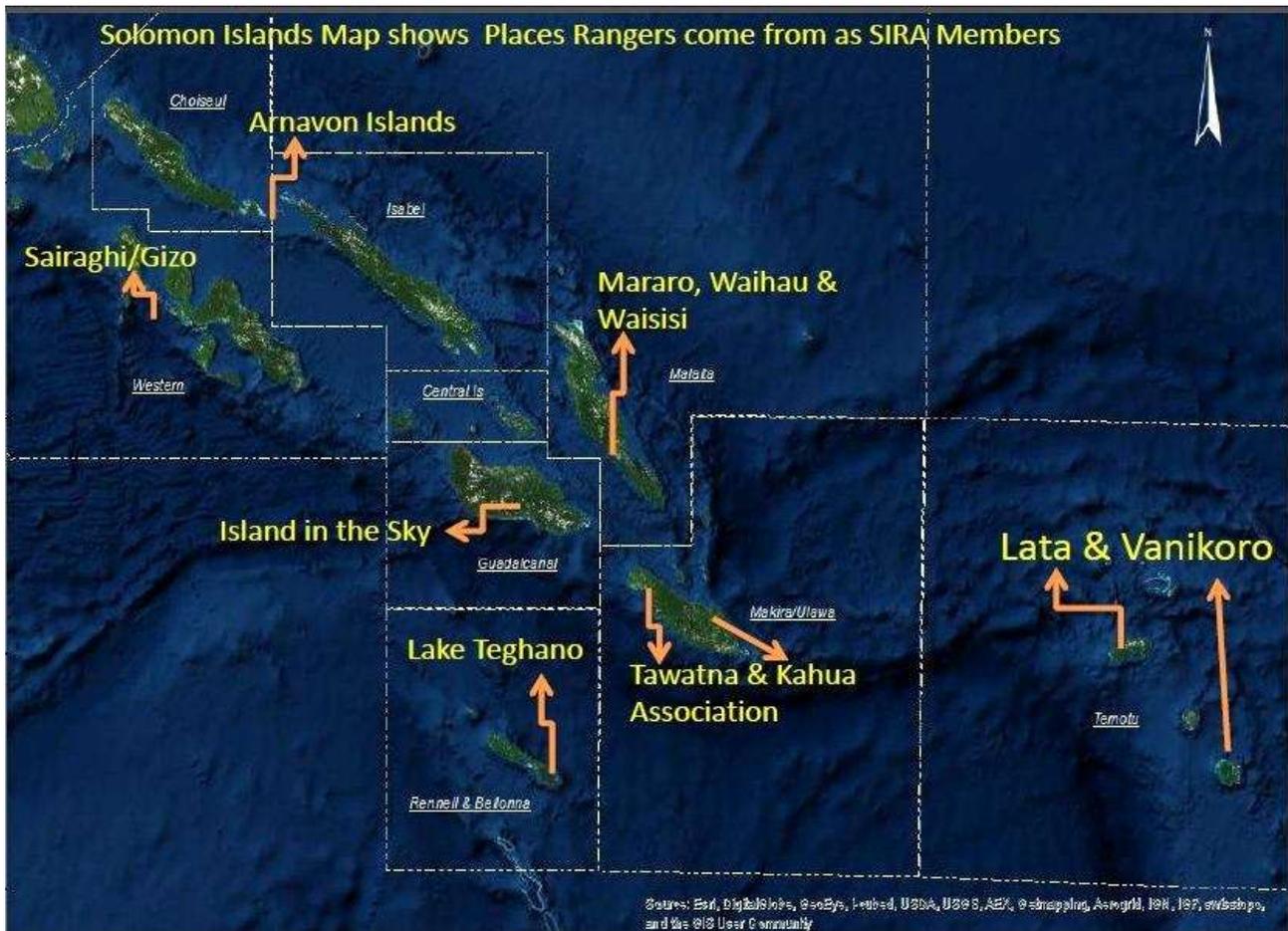


Figure: 2. Map of area of work areas across Solomon Islands showing locations of CBOs that their rangers are SIRA member from Temotu to Choiseul and from Rennell Belono to Malaita Province (Source, Google earth, 2015).

Thus SIRA members comes from various remote rural areas that have conservation areas, in Temotu Province rangers are from Gemeli Community General Conservation at Vanikoro Island and Lata community based resource management (Santa Cruise Island). Makira Provinces ranger members to SIRA are from Tawatana Community Conservation Development Association (TCCDA) and Kahua Association. Further that there are member Rangers from Lake Teghano World Heritage site, Rennell and Bellona Province, also Island in the Sky on Mt. Popomanuseu, Guadalcanal and across to Malaita Province, Ranger members from Mararo Community-based Conservation Area, Waihu Community-based Conservation Area and Hahorarumu Uru Tribal Conservation Association (HUTCA) at Waisisi. Lastly but not the least SIRA extend its membership to Arnavon Islands (Choiseul and Isabel Province) rangers and Sairaghi Community-based Conversation areas Gizo Island, Western Province (refers to fig: 2).