

# CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

## I. BASIC DATA

**Organization Legal Name:** University of the South Pacific

**Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement):** The Viwa Island Restoration Project, Fiji

**Implementation Partners for this Project:** The Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII) and the Department of Conservation, New Zealand.

**Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement):** October 1, 2005 – August 31, 2006

**Date of Report (month/year):** September 2006

## II. OPENING REMARKS

*Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.*

The key opening remark would have to be that his project was a team effort and as such many of the comments below have come from the team, the Project Coordinator, the Project Manager, and the Stakeholders Committee on Viwa.

Many of the lessons learnt are under one or two sections, rather than putting them into a variety of sections as the review may wish. By doing this, many of the issues are not repeated and all the information you require is in one location. Many of the lessons learnt were rectified when they arose or they have subsequently been put into action.

## III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

### 1. What were the initial objectives of this project?

#### GOAL

To restore and protect the native biodiversity of Viwa Island and enhance the sustainability of livelihoods of men, women and children on Viwa.

#### OBJECTIVE 1

To eradicate selected invasive alien species from Viwa Island.

#### Outputs

1. Capacity is developed among Viwa residents and within Fiji to effectively address the threats posed by invasive alien species on islands.
2. Eradication programmes developed and implemented.
3. Ecological monitoring programmes and research initiated and maintained.
4. Appropriate surveillance and contingency actions implemented.

#### OBJECTIVE 2

To enhance the quality and sustainability of the livelihoods of Viwa residents

## **Outputs**

1. To improve domestic water supplies and wastewater disposal on Viwa Island improved.
2. Crop yields enhanced and new opportunities for agriculture and horticulture created.
3. Work experience for men, women and youth from Viwa provided.
4. Opportunities for sustainable tourism ventures on Viwa based on UNEP guidelines created.

## **2. Did the objectives of your project change during implementation? If so, please explain why and how.**

Although we faced a few difficulties, the overall objectives and outputs did not change dramatically and we achieved virtually all the tasks set out in the Action and Operational Plans.

The only tasks that weren't completed in the limited timeframe (but were started) were:

- 1) The improvement of the water supply. The villagers have the equipment and the rest of the work will be done by the villagers in their own time.
- 2) The final construction of the project and tourism house – although this has started - the villagers will be completing this shortly.
- 3) We tested several cane toad traps but we have not decided on which traps will provide us with the best methodology to catch the toads. More work is required on this task.

## **3. Briefly describe the methods used in achieving the objectives of this project.**

### ***Rat Work***

#### **1. Monitoring Work**

Before any of the rats were targeted for eradication we surveyed the island to assess the rat densities. Three lines of 10 trapping stations (with two snap traps each and a gnaw stick) were used. All the traps were numbered and tied to a wooden peg by a 15 cm string. The traps (baited with burnt coconut) were set in a number of habitats (village, gardens, forest, mangroves, etc). Each snap trap was set in place at each site for 3 nights. The paired traps were 1 m apart and spaced at 25 m intervals along a line within 20 m of the shore. The traps were set at sunset and reviewed at dawn to avoid the capture of birds, crabs, and reptiles.

#### **2. Eradication Work (Bait Stations and Hand-broadcasting)**

A grid network of 25 x 25m was established on the island and each bait station was individually numbered so that accurate records of bait take could be kept. This reduced the risk of missing bait stations during checking. The bait stations were designed to limit access to crabs, toads, and other non-target species, and to stop water getting into the station to ruin the bait.

The bait stations were put out 4 weeks prior to the eradication. Initially, 80 grams of bait (40 baits) were put out in each station on a daily basis, however, this was reduced to only 10 baits towards the end of the baiting period. Completely fresh bait was placed in

the stations at least every three days. Maintenance of fresh bait in the stations continued for 15 days after the last confirmed bait was taken by the rats.

Hand-broadcasting was used in areas where bait station placement was difficult. Typically, these areas were ledges or steep faces on the coast of the island, isolated rock stacks/islets, and the immediate margins of streams, drains, mangroves and ponds. The baits were spread at intervals of 25m, along parallel lines no more than 50m apart (600-750 grams per stop) and the bait was cast as widely as possible to either side. Marker flags were placed out beforehand to provide a visual guide for accurate coverage. All hand-broadcast bait was spread out on certain days (e.g., one day a week over a period of 1 month).

### ***Cane Toad Work***

Much of the cane toad work has been exploratory. From the preliminary findings we believe the eradication of the cane toads will require multiple methods that focus on 1) the eggs, larvae and tadpoles, 2) the metamorphs and 3) the adults. There are limited waterbodies on the island and these are easily accessible, so this is advantageous as we wish to deny the toad's access to the waterbodies and, thus, prevent the toads from breeding. All the waterbodies on the island have been identified and we are currently entering this data onto a GIS map. Some waterholes have been filled in, some drained, while others have been fenced off to prevent cane toads from entering or leaving the waterholes. The fences are 50 cm high with the top 10 cm of the barrier hanging to the inside to prevent cane toads from climbing out of the barrier.

We have been testing a local Fijian tree root from *Barringtonia asiatica* to poison the young tadpoles and eggs and to date this has proved very effective. We have tested several trap designs (water, light, acoustic, invertebrate bait, drift nets, pitfalls) but we have not decided on one trap over another. More intensive testing is required in the field. However, the bulk of this work is planned for Stage 2 of the project.

### ***Community and Social Work***

We have engaged the community in several workshops and meetings. The key areas we are monitoring people and activities in the village are: 1) the volume of water used by the villagers, 2) the status of the health of the people (we hypothesise with rats gone there should be fewer illnesses), and 3) to create a better understanding of the impacts and problems created by invasive alien species, thus, covering issues like biosecurity and reinvasions, and the loss of their native flora and fauna.

## **IV. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE**

***Project Purpose:*** To restore and protect the native biodiversity of Viwa Island and enhance the sustainability of livelihoods of men, women and children on Viwa.

### Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<p><b>Purpose-level:</b></p> <p>Positive changes in biological parameters have been attributed to IAS management.</p>	<p>The key biological change for the project is that the rats, cats and dogs are no longer on Viwa. It is too early to be able to say for certain how the eradication of these invasive pests will change the biota of Viwa but we envisage we should see more native species such as ground frogs, skinks, ground invertebrates, and ground birds. We have already have reports of seeing newly hatched ground frogs and eggs. In the past we never saw any. The flora is already starting to recover, especially the seedlings and in the agricultural plots.</p>
<p>Social and/or economic benefits for men, women and children as a result of IAS management</p>	<p>1) The people of Viwa have a great deal of pride in knowing that they are the first island community living in Fiji without rats.                  2) They are now able to leave food unattended without it being consumed or defecated on by rats.                  3) The financial assistance we were able to provide the people on Viwa meant that they could pay their children's school fees on time and purchase items for the community at large.                  4) The small increase in water reticulation will also help them through the drought periods, although, much more needs to be done to improve their water supply and sanitation needs.                  Again, many of the long-term benefits are not immediately apparent but the people are already recognising and accepting the changes</p>

#### 4. What was the impact of the project (if any) at the national level?

Other than through the media, at this stage there has been no impact of the project at the national level. However, it is envisaged that there will be a lot more attention on the project once the word of the eradication success spreads.

The British High Commissioner (BHC) has been in contact (as he had heard much about the project) and we plan on taking him out to Viwa to show him what we have achieved on the island in the next month. The BHC stated that his office is very interested in projects like ours, especially as an example for other islands and communities.

5. **Did your team experience any disappointments or failures during implementation? If so, please explain and comment on how the team addressed these disappointments and/or failures.**

Please see comments below under Sections VI and VIII.

6. **Describe the key positive and negative lessons learned from this project that would be useful to share with other organizations interested in implementing a similar project.**

Please see comments below under Sections VI and VIII.

## V. PROJECT OUTPUTS

**Project Outputs:** Enter the project outputs from the Logical Framework for the project

### Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<b>Output 1:</b> To eradicate selected invasive alien species from Viwa Island.	
<b>1.1.</b> Feral cats and feral dogs removed from Viwa.	No cats or dogs remain on Viwa.
<b>1.2.</b> Rat eradication infrastructure in place.	The rat infrastructure has been completed and is in place. In total 1296 bait stations were put out around the island. We think we have eradicated all the rats off Viwa but this will only be known after a 2 year post-monitoring programme.
<b>1.3.</b> The most effective techniques to detect and remove cane toads identified.	We have identified two effective techniques to detect and remove cane toads. However, whether they are the most effective techniques is debatable and only time will tell? We aim to test these techniques properly in the upcoming cane toad eradication work (Stage 2 of the project).
<b>Output 2.</b> To enhance the quality and sustainability of the livelihoods of Viwa residents.	
<b>2.1.</b> The community's water supplies improved.	This was only partially completed, as time did not permit us to install all the water tanks and guttering. However, this will be done in the very near future. There will be no additional costs incurred by CEPF as the villagers will do this work themselves as a community project.
<b>2.2.</b> Agricultural output improved.	We have already had positive feedback from the villagers saying that their crops are not being eaten and that the young

	tubers and shoots they have planted are not being consumed (like they had been in the past).
<b>2.3.</b> Rubbish management and containment improved.	The village rubbish dump has been cleaned up and each household now has a proper rubbish bin and incinerator. Some excess rubbish pits still need a final tidy-up but the bulk of this task has been completed. This is an on-gong task that will be completed by the community.
<b>2.4.</b> People of Viwa have gained a variety of work experiences.	At some stage, probably every person on Viwa had the opportunity to earn some money and gain some work experience. The work involved organising team leaders, counting bait, putting out the bait, data entry work, and the monitoring and evaluation work.
<b>Output 3.</b> To enhance cooperation and communication between project stakeholders.	
<b>3.1.</b> Awareness raised of IAS issues and their management among Viwa residents and supporting organisations.	We held 3 meetings to raise awareness of IAS issues. The first meeting was on the importance of biosecurity and training people to be vigilant, the second meeting was to bring over journalists from the two major newspapers in Fiji, and the third meeting was for the additional 300 people who stayed on the island during the recent Methodist Church conference. The last meeting helped raise the profile of our work in a part of Fiji we wouldn't have had the opportunity to do so.
<b>3.2.</b> Findings reported to appropriate audiences.	We reported our findings to the newly established Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN) in Palau (May 2006), the Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII) In Suva (June 2006) , the CSIRO Cane toad workshop in Brisbane (June 2006) and the Society for Conservation Biology in San Jose, California (July 2006). Several scientific papers are being prepared for publication in internationally refereed journals.

**7. How has the project been promoted? (Please enclose/attach press clippings, brochures, publications, videos, websites, photos, etc). Please describe the products developed during the project and how and to whom these were disseminated.**

The project has been promoted on a) Fiji television, when we first received the money for the project, b) in the two daily newspapers – the Fiji Times and The Sun; several stories have run and not just on the project itself but also on human issues stories related to the people on Viwa as well<sup>1</sup>, c) in the USP BEAT (the university newsletter) that goes out to 4000 readers, d) at conferences (see 3.2 of the outputs), e) we are producing a 30 minute documentary on the work out on Viwa, however, we still have a long way to go before we finish the editing and production on this, f) we will be highlighting our research work to the Pacific Forum leaders at their meeting in Suva in the next month), g) in my lecture room to my students – I have used Viwa as a case study on the impacts of IAS on islands and what we are actually doing about it, h) PII, have put our story on their website (see <http://www.issg.org/cii/PII/viwa.htm>). We'd like to establish a website of our own but unfortunately, I do not have the necessary skills to do this. However, this is something that we aim to rectify in the very near future and, i) Ben Joliffe (CI) is writing a short note about our project in the CEPF annual report.

<sup>1</sup>. I can post these newspaper stories to you if you would like to see them.

**8. Describe any follow-up activities you wish to implement and how you intend to do so (e.g. other invasive species management actions you wish to pursue, or how you plan to scale up the project to a broader area).**

The project was always designed to be in two stages. Stage 1 was to remove the small invasive mammals. Stage 2, is the removal of the cane toads (*Bufo marinus*). However, before we could start stage 2, we had to clearly demonstrate whether we could achieve stage 1 and we are sure that we have accomplished this. Now that stage 1 has been completed (although we cannot declare Viwa Island “rat-free” for another 2 years) we can now do two things: 1) say to people (in Fiji and the rest of the Pacific) that this demonstration project was a success and what we achieved here can also be done elsewhere with careful planning and implementation and, 2) we can now focus all our attention onto stage 2, which is the really interesting stage scientifically. We have an infrastructure set in place, we have a workforce that has seen a successful eradication programme in action, and we have the support of the community and local leaders.

**9. Please provide any additional information you think may assist CEPF in understanding any other aspects of your completed project.**

This was a multifaceted project, with people from many different backgrounds, and it incorporated both new and tried techniques. The good news is that we have achieved the desired outcome but bringing all these facets and people together took an inordinate amount of time and organisation – much more than was originally intended. Trying to achieve large conservation goals in a relatively short time-frame normally does not work very well in the Pacific. Fortunately, we managed to do this in this instance but only because, a feasibility study, the community go-ahead, and much of the planning had been done prior to the involvement of the CEPF, otherwise, we would not have achieved this result.

One of the hard lessons learnt that may assist CEPF in understanding conservation work in the Pacific is that people very rarely appreciate what a deadline is. This is not to say that the people are lazy (this is not true because they work extremely hard), but their reference to time is often much different to that of people from outside the Pacific. What

may look like a very simple task on the surface may be an extremely complex issue when one deals with it at the community level. So many decisions cannot be rushed.

A second problem is that people in the Pacific often want to “please” people and so they rarely say “no” to you about anything or they may not tell you everything because they do not want to offend you. Unfortunately, unless you know their culture and way they deal with things within the community, you may not hear about a problem until much later. We were lucky in this project in that we had a very competent project manager who was very good at communicating matters to the people. Even though a few conflicts arose they were dealt with tactfully and with respect. This is perhaps the most important lesson for any project. Without a good project manager that has the respect of the people, then the project will ultimately fail.

## **VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT**

***Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.***

As for CEPF's performance: there were some issues that need to be addressed but James Atherton did a great job in assisting us through some difficult situations – as did John Watkin (when he was available) and Monali Patel. However, there is always room for improvement and just like us here on the ground, I hope that they have learned a great deal about managing projects here in the South Pacific.

My key disappointment of CEPF was the initial difficulties of when we would receive the funding. The funding issue was a major cause for concern. If the university had not been so flexible in extending money to us (allowing us credit – at one stage we were USD \$30K in the red, because the CEPF funds had not come through) then this project would have failed – in every sense of the word. The accountants at USP were getting very anxious at times about when we would receive the money and I had to try and assure them that the money WAS coming. I think timing expectations, that is, being told that the money would here at a certain time and it wasn't needs to be resolved as this puts everyone under a great deal of pressure.

***Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/failure)***

The project plans were crucial to the success of this project. PII's planning network and support, particularly by the Department of Conservation in New Zealand, brought in a great deal of expertise and these experts really helped steer the project in the right direction. Without this, the project may have failed. However, I would like to say that this process could be further refined and we have already discussed this quite openly with the staff at PII. I trust we both learned from the experience.

***Project Execution: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/failure)***

The information below is a summary of some of the discussions between the Project Manager (PM) and the Project Coordinator (Dr Morley). We have highlighted some of our problems first and then we have included some of the advantages or point points about the project.

## Problems with the Project (and Management).

- The project operated on a weekly basis (because of the logistics of travel and money). However, the funds released from the university required acquittals to be handed in before next payment could be released. This added to the logistical difficulties for the Project Manager (PM) as he had to travel to and from project site (Viwa) much more frequently than we previously anticipated (or budgeted for). The university system prepares cheques every 3 days but if there is a hold up in the university system (and this happens frequently), then the PM has to wait around for the cheques and then wait again to clear them at the banks. If the funding required each week were above the withdrawal limit on the ATM's, the PM had to come into town all the time to withdraw the money across the counter – and this all took extra time and money.
- The villagers asked to be paid for their work in the same week in which they did the work. Although this sounds easy, it wasn't. Calculating their monies in advance proved problematic especially if we had some emergency expenses to cater for. In order to cover for "additional" expenses we tried operating a "limited" float but even this caused problems. See the above point.
- There were two incidences where cheques deposited into the project account were crossed and would normally have taken several working days to clear. This delayed the financial proceedings on the island, as people received their pay late and it resulted in extra money being used for travel.
- It was the PM's role to also make sure that the workers had the all equipment they required for project to precede. This meant the PM was often away from the island for a day or two simply acquiring these goods. Whilst the PM was away there were a few instances where "self-nominated" people decided to try and run the project their way, despite the clear directions from the PM for the work that had been already set. These people created conflicts with the project's goals.
- Conflicts also arose in the village by certain individuals trying to change the timetable set by the PM. This was really only one person but it did cause quite a bit of discontentment among the rest of the people.
- During the actual eradication programme itself, the PM and New Zealand consultant (Rob Chappell) could not stay on the island due to the lack of fresh water available. Unfortunately, with all the extra people visiting Viwa for the project this exacerbated the water shortage. Unfortunately, this meant quite a bit of extra money was needed to cover the travel costs. None of this could have been foreseen or planned for.
- Whilst the timetable for rat eradication had been drawn up a year in advance (even in consultation with the local people themselves), some other village commitments were not anticipated (or were inadvertently overlooked) and these commitments occasionally caused serious setbacks for the project. The Methodist Church Conference that was run on the island next to Viwa meant many of the people would (or could) not turn up to work as they had other commitments. On the other hand, all the building activity on the island may have assisted us with clearing out the rats.
- Clearer guidelines (rules and regulations) are needed in the future when it comes to employing people. These guidelines will resolve problems like conflict of interest, miscommunication and poor leadership.

- We found we had to carefully label and tag all the equipment because on more than one occasion items went missing by well-meaning villagers who took things for granted, or for safe keeping, or for because they wanted to use them for themselves. Some people promised they would return these items when they were lent to them but sometimes we never got them back or had to spend time searching for them. This is a delicate issue because in Fijian society of someone asks a favour to borrow something it is seem as very rude if you do not lend what it is they are asking for to them.
- Unauthorised entry of visitors into the project house could in the future develop into a bigger problem in the future if not controlled. The PM had an open door policy where visitors could come into the house whenever they liked. Unfortunately, many people came over just for an idle chat with the project workers (which often delayed work progress). In future, we will set down work hours and rules where people can come in to socialise; otherwise they will only be there for work purposes.
- Miscommunication can be a problem in a Fijian village where information is passed on to each other by word of mouth. Unfortunately, this can occasionally be left open to interpretation. Therefore, if something is agreed upon in future a written log will be kept to record these decisions.
- Telephone messages or other forms of communication weren't always delivered to the intended person and/or the message got misconstrued causing many problems. Fortunately, the local mobile provider (Vodaphone) has put in a cell-phone tower out on Bau Island (next door to Viwa). This means that the PM can now receive text messages whenever they are sent.
- Without wanting to fall into the trap of micromanaging the project, sometimes it was difficult for the Project Coordinator to contact the PM – and vice-versa. However, much of this has been resolved now thanks to mobile text message services.
- The training of the individuals who carried out the project work needs to be done three or four times so everyone understands what is required of them. The project may seem simple enough to scientists but when we are working with people from a mixed range of education we must be mindful of the education differential. This problem transcended into other facets of the project, especially in terms of how to get the people to dispose their rubbish properly, how to count the baits, how to measure the water usage, and in the continued dedication to the eradication programme.
- Following on from this, getting the people to continually follow the recommended guidelines outlined by the project management staff can be difficult. Our biggest concern is the implementation of the biosecurity measures e.g. checking all the bags and items loaded onto the boats. Although we have reminded the boat captains of their responsibility, they often fall into lapses. Continual vigilance by project management staff is required to counter this problem. One suggestion has been to conduct workshops using PowerPoint Presentations with lots of photographs as this has worked in other communities.
- Selected individuals for positions of responsibility have to be selected on merit. Chosen delegates by the village to take these positions are often not the best people for the task, unless they have had a chance to prove commitment and responsibility.

- We had an issue with the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty for Animals). Although we had sought and gained animal ethics approval for doing this work (and this goes via the SPCA), unfortunately, someone in the media misrepresented the comments from the SPCA Director and this caused a few PR problems. However, this was quickly rectified once everyone had the facts at hand.

## **Advantages and Successes for the Project Management**

- One of the key advantages was the involvement of virtually all the villagers in all facets of the project. Having them help us prepare the work plans was a very good idea. This also helped the people on Viwa identify with the project and to take ownership of it.
- Establishing the Viwa Stakeholders Committee was a good idea, this ensured that representatives of the project were on site at all times and they looked out for the project.
- Payment for the research assistants was a good idea, this ensured that the people employed to carry out tasks, did their work on time and when required. Expecting this project to run on voluntary labour may have been a big mistake – even though the ultimate benefactors would have been the people themselves. The money earned was used to pay school fees and for other financial commitments.
- The community decided to tax the wage earners so those working on the project could contribute to the general community fund and for church obligations.
- There were many social benefits for the village, e.g. improved water reticulation and rubbish disposal was seen as a good incentive. However, it will take some time for these benefits to really show through.
- The increased promotion and public awareness of the project spurred the community on and helped gain their support. The people took great pride in the project and they loved telling everyone about it.
- The villagers really enjoyed all the visitors from all the different countries. To the people of Viwa this symbolised the importance of the project and the fact that professionals travel from other parts of the world to visit Viwa is a concept held with great pride among the community.
- The ground work to gauge community support was done really well during planning stages and so it was easy to push the needs of the project in village meetings and diplomatically demand that schedule be kept to.
- The communication structure from the villagers, to the PM, to project co-ordinator was set up well. Arrangements with telephones and reversed call charges ensured that problems were solved in time before they became worse.
- The science component of the project was well planned and straightforward, this made it easier to instruct train the research assistants. In the end, most of the problems that the project faced were mostly social and financial. In future, it may pay to engage a social scientist or proper fund manager from the outset.
- Setting up a group structure with team leaders was a key action as these leaders took responsibility for the data collection and they ensured that their transects

- were completed accurately and on time. Giving out small incentives like “best worker” and “best group” helped improve the quality of duties carried out.
- The consultancy work carried out by Rob Chappell from the Department of Conservation in New Zealand was extremely useful. Rob helped set up a practical work plan and he trained the project manager to process the data, analyse it, and look for patterns and problems and how to troubleshoot these problems.
  - The community are now dead-keen to start stage 2 of the project. By doing the rat eradication first we have set a precedent and created more than enough motivation among the people. Further, by doing the rat eradication work first we now have an infrastructure in place that will prove to be extremely useful in stage 2 of the project, when we plan to eradicate the toads.
  - There should be enough data and information available to publish several internationally refereed journal articles. We are currently working on a GIS mapping paper that will highlight to the people living on tropical islands where the “trouble-spots” are likely to be for any future rat eradication work. This will ultimately save time and money.
  - PII in NZ were extremely helpful, first with Chris Denny and later with Bill Nagle. Souad Boudjelas, Steven Bavin, Annette Lees, Karen Johns and Alan Saunders also provided useful advice and assistance to which we thank them very much.
  - We worked very closely with Birdlife International with their rat eradication project on Vatu-i-ra. Although their project was much smaller and used a different methodology, we were able to train several Fijians in both eradication methods, thus increasing the training capacity for both projects.
  - Some people have already approached us to carrying out a similar project on their islands. Once we have completely determined the success of this project then we aim to up-scale our knowledge to eradicate rats elsewhere.

**VII. ADDITIONAL FUNDING**

***Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.***

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Type of Funding*</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
USP	USP research grant – top up funding	\$1515.00	Because we overspent on the wages and salaries we required a small amount of money from USP to balance the accounts.

***\*Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:***

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)*
- B** *Complementary funding (Other donors contribute to partner organizations that are working on a project linked with this CEPF funded project)*
- C** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project.)*

*D Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

**Provide details of whether this project will continue in the future and if so, how any additional funding already secured or fundraising plans will help ensure its sustainability.**

The project will continue in the future, funding provided. As mentioned above this was only the first stage of the project. The second stage is perhaps the most interesting and important. We will need to secure a substantial amount of money – in the order of USD \$200K for this work as it will be a long-term project, possibly 3 to 5 years.

The project will be continuing in the following manner:

- 1) We have to continually monitor whether the rats stay off Viwa. This work is being carried out by the people of Viwa under their auspices and funding (at this stage).
- 2) All boat traffic going out to Viwa is being monitored to prevent any biosecurity breaches. All persons travelling to Viwa have to have their bags inspected to see if they are harbouring any stowaways, rats and/or cane toads. All cats and dogs have been banned from the island. This is a voluntary process by the villagers.
- 3) There are 3 student research projects being conducted out on the island and they will monitor how quickly the island recovers biologically. USP is funding much of this research work – or the students have managed to obtain some external money.
- 4) Water usage is still being monitored to assess their water needs.

## **VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Below are some comments and recommendations on the management of the project – as per our discussions with the Viwa Stakeholders Committee.**

1. We need to manage the money for the workers out on Viwa better so they are paid on time. We had several discussions with USP finance people and although we almost got it right we still need to tweak things a little more so the PM does not have to spend so much time off the island sorting out the funding and thus being away from the island and not actually running the project on the ground. A local might be trained up to manage the HR and personnel issues on the island. A register will be kept of people's wages; these records should be available to everybody to promote fairness and transparency.
2. There is a need to structure the recruitment and termination of research assistants (people working on the project). We tried to employ almost everyone on the island so there was a fair distribution of earning potential. If we structure this properly for stage 2, we will ensure that there smooth transition of when people are working and when they are not. A log or register will be kept in future of people that are working. This will ensure that everyone knows when everyone is working. They will need to sign in and sign out everyday.
3. Because the PM was not often on the island (as he was away doing other tasks), the villagers were not always aware if there had been a change in the planning or

- organisation of the project. Questions were often raised on reasons for some decisions and about some of the delays.
4. There needs to be a code of conduct for the stakeholders committee where in confidentiality is a major requirement. Occasionally some things discussed in the stakeholders committee meetings were “leaked to the villagers” even though nothing had been decided in concrete. These leaked discussions caused some problems, especially if we had talked about rewards or money. By voicing our decisions through proper channels, we will ensure that the right information gets out to the villagers and that it is accurate and correct.
  5. The PM needs to be wary of individuals that will cause discontent amongst the villagers. Hopefully, improvement in the established communication structure will negate their efforts to disrupt the project.
  6. The PM should direct someone in the village for people to refer to if he is not available if a decision needs to be made. (Turaga ni Koro [village head-man] has been elected to take on this responsibility).

**None of these problems are insurmountable. Indeed, we learnt a great deal from our mistakes about project management, as did the villagers, and once the people understood many of the issues in full, then most of these issues died away instantly. The key advantage now is that we won't be repeating any of these problems in Stage 2 of the project.**

#### **The Key Positives from the Project are:**

1. There are no more rats on the island and the concept of food storage has changed for the better. People also believe they will have less health problems as a result. Only time will tell.
2. The money brought in for the project has really made positive changes to families.
3. The people, especially the youth are becoming more conservation savvy; that is, they no longer deliberately kill the snakes and frogs on the island but instead they rather save them.
4. There has been some very good media coverage about the project and this has shown Viwa in a positive light – and the people are extremely proud of this fact.
5. Although it is early days, the people have already commented that their dalo (taro) quality has improved.
6. There are already 4 people doing their Master's degrees on Viwa and the relationship between USP and Viwa has been really strengthened by this project.
7. This project has given us a real opportunity to monitor the biological changes on a tropical South Pacific island after the rats have been removed.

Conservation work is not just about achieving scientific outputs and results; it is also about leaving behind a legacy, a change, and a renewed interest in the environment in which people live. Without the cooperation of the people on Viwa, this project would have failed and I wish to thank and acknowledge their community spirit and assistance. It is to them, we must duly recognize for having faith and trust in us and for their input and patience.

I would also like to mention that we were saddened by the loss of Lemeki Lenoa from Conservation International. Lemeki visited Viwa on several occasions and helped us in many of our discussions about the project. He will be missed.

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*The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund is a joint initiative of Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.*

## **IX. INFORMATION SHARING**

CEPF aims to increase sharing of experiences, lessons learned and results among our grant recipients and the wider conservation and donor communities. One way we do this is by making the text of final project completion reports available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and by marketing these reports in our newsletter and other communications. Please indicate whether you would agree to publicly sharing your final project report with others in this way.

**Yes**

If yes, please also complete the following:

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