

## **Social Assessment**

### **Advancing a Conservation Strategy for the Uplands of Guadalcanal**

**American Museum of Natural History Center for Biodiversity and Conservation**

**Application Code: 64276**

As noted in CEPF feedback from the LOI submitted for this proposal, our work will involve extensive interactions with indigenous people with sovereign control over key areas within the Guadalcanal Watersheds Priority Area. In response to CEPF feedback, we have prepared the following Social Assessment to outline our plans to comply with CEPF's Safeguard Policy on Indigenous Peoples. Please see also the TRHDP Entry and Sustainment Framework (sent under separate email cover) and External Assumptions section above.

#### **Indigenous Peoples**

The work we are proposing seeks to build capacity to co-create a community-managed protected area in the upper Tina River catchment as a model for the implementation of the Protected Areas Act in customary lands in the Solomons.

As stated in other components of the proposal, TRHDP assessment work provides a solid baseline for patterns of indigenous occupancy and resource use within the project area, and has established free and open prior consent to engaging in the process of developing a protected area in the upper Tina River catchment. The TRHDP study area consists of over 30 villages and hamlets of mainly indigenous people originating from the central Guadalcanal mountain lands, and several settler villages made up of people originating from South Guadalcanal/Weather Coast.

The Bahomea villages and their component hamlets are mainly stretched out alongside the Ngalimbiu River and lower-mid sections of the Tina River, and are often only hundreds of meters apart. In some cases it is hard to distinguish where one hamlet ends and another begins (e.g., Antioch and Valesala). Most hamlets in the study area are connected together by walking tracks and in some cases by dirt roads, which are prone to becoming impassable during wet weather. In recent years, settlements have been established along the main Bahomea access road and logging track that runs up the ridge that marks the left side of the Tina Valley.

Settlements range in size from two-house hamlets with one extended family up to villages with dozens of houses and over a hundred residents. These larger villages tend to be arranged around a village square/green with a substantial church, and perhaps a meeting-house and other facilities.

The details of the various villages are provided in the Baseline Social and Ecological Assessment of the Tina River Hydropower Development Project, and Roughan *et al* (2011) and Entura (2012) both provide a history of the settlement of the Tina River area. While

these accounts differ in some respects, they agree on aspects relevant to the proposed work:

- The present-day indigenous inhabitants of Malango Ward and in particular the proposed project area are closely related and have common ancestors.
- The originating communities lay at the base of Mount Popomanaseu, and were variously named Sasahakama, Belana, Tuhurutolu, and Malukuna.
- Since WWII and the establishment of Honiara City, there have been successive waves (or chains) of migration down from the villages of the central mountains to the foothills to the north in so that people could be closer to modern services and employment, to be safer from landslides and other natural disasters, and to protect clan lands from intrusion inland by squatters and others.
- In these moves, people from different originating Malango villages stayed together and settled in different areas: the people from Belana and Tuhurutolu settled in the Tina river/Bahomea area, the people from Malukuna settled in the Malango area, and people from Sasahakama settled in the Gold Ridge area and on the Toni River.
- There has been some subsequent movement from the north back up the main ridges of Malango Ward as areas have been opened up by logging roads, and possibly to avoid exposure to ethnic conflict.
- Mixed in with the indigenous Malango-speaking communities are more recent arrivals of people from the Weather Coast who sought refuge locally from natural disasters, poverty, and conflict; and moved to find employment in the plantations and foreign-owned resource industries.
- Since the 1980s there has also been unauthorized settlement on Malango lands by migrants from Malaita and elsewhere that were drawn to Honiara for employment.
- The ethnic tensions of the late 1990s and early 2000s displaced the non-indigenous settlers, including many hundreds working in the (now GPPOL) palm plantation and squatters, resulting in a major reduction in the population of the Malango and West Ghaobata wards.
- With the subsiding of ethnic tensions, people from the Weather Coast have returned to the Bahomea area, and squatters are again moving on the government and alienated lands within Malango Ward.
- Today, the mountainous interior of Malango Ward, the focal project area, is essentially unpopulated apart from periodic expeditions by the traditional owners for hunting and camping, and to reconnect with customary homelands. The indigenous people of the Tina area are therefore aware of the locations of their key originating villages and important cultural sites. Since membership of particular clans is claimed through kinship connection with people from successive historic settlements and originating places, knowledge of such places is crucially important for establishing identity and land and resource rights.
- Original migrants from these upland villages can be still found among the older residents of the TRHDP study area, and they have knowledge of the sequence of migration

and village creation within the Tina catchment. A number of stories of such movements were recorded during the social impact assessment fieldwork.

### **Potential Impacts and Mitigation Strategies**

Proposed project activities might cause potential challenges for communities, particularly relating to social engagement in the protected areas design process. However, in the overall impact measures and assessment process for the TRHDP, the Impact and Measures Matrix presents the development of a forest reserve or protected area in the upper catchment—the ultimate goal of the work proposed here—as a key Proposed Mitigation and Compensation action throughout. Nonetheless there are set of potential impacts of the specific actions of community engagement under this project that may negatively influence local, indigenous communities. The following summarizes several primary potential impacts and links them to Mitigation strategies.

The proposed project aims to co-create or reinforce self-governing local community bodies that can formulate common rules for managing and utilizing collective natural resources, distributing resulting benefits from protected areas management, and the potential development of a research and education center. Possible impacts in addition to the types presented above include: 1) altered management regimes limit access to natural resources; or 2) autonomy over resource use decisions that communities presently enjoy may be altered or diluted.

Mitigation will be achieved through a participatory, co-creative approach to balancing protected areas management with local community cultural and economic values or interests. This may be achieved by:

- Providing equitable access to conservation activities that can generate income, including but not limited to the development of a plan for establishing the Tina River Research and Education Center;
- Leverage the TRHDP power generation benefits sharing agreements to compensate opportunity costs of PA management; and
- Provide financial and technical support to the design and legal recognition of resource management plans associated with Protected Areas design.

### **Community Participation and Consultation**

All communities have been fully consulted during the TRHDP Social Assessment Process and we will continue this process to ensure that our activities are clearly understood and consented to. Community participation will follow the time tested models of community engagement and co-creation of community-driven conservation initiatives employed by AMNH, SICCP, and partners over the past decade throughout the Solomons.

## **Monitoring Plan**

With community baseline surveys completed by TRHDP, our monitoring will ensure that protocols set by World Bank and TRHDP project teams are continued in specific reference to our activities. Monitoring and evaluation strategy will include a basic metric of success and impact, formative evaluation that proceeds through the project period, and a summative evaluation process. Formative evaluation questions are designed to allow mid-course corrections through an internal adaptive management process carried out by the project senior staff; thus, the formative evaluation process involves asking hard questions about activity design and implementation. Evaluation of success will also involve tracking the development of community-based agreements to conserve discrete areas of biodiversity importance and then assessing progress toward conservation objectives and compliance with social safeguards via annual auditing of basic social and biological parameters. Community satisfaction with PA development and implementation will also be measured directly through basic surveys and indirectly via assessments of compliance with project social and ecological stipulations (e.g., ban on commercial logging agreements with outside parties).

## **Grievance Mechanism**

Free, Prior and Informed Consent with the local communities is a guiding principle of the TRHDP and will be carried forward in consistent ways in this project. Because we are working within the social and geographic context of a larger World Bank and Solomon Islands government process, for social consistency, grievance mechanisms will follow the stipulated grievance mechanisms in place under World Bank standards via the TRHDP project implementation.