

Social Assessment

Prepared by Ecological Solutions, Solomon Islands

For the CEPF project Mapping of Customary Land in Mount Maetambe-Kolombangara River.

Project Site: Mount Maetambe to Kolombangara River Corridor

Social safeguards

The project will implement activities in areas with Indigenous Peoples; hence a Social Assessment has been prepared to demonstrate how the project will comply with CEPF's Safeguard Policy on Indigenous Peoples.

ESSI team has identified almost 20 tribes (MOU document) and has been working with Indigenous peoples in the project area for six months now. We have conducted free, prior and informed consultation meetings with chiefs and Customary Land Representatives, Luru Land Conference of Tribal Community and Choiseul Province Government.

The tribes that we are working with are as follows; Matakali which is composed of three sub tribes known as Barikobo, Nanaboe and Sio, Ngava, Vumba, Qoza, Kona, Paleka, Bantongo, Jito, Garasa, Naqua, Siporae, Sikipozo, Padezaka, Zondi, Sirebe and Vuri. Right now we cannot give the exact number of people in each tribe. This is one of our objectives for this phase of our project. We will do genealogy recording for each tribe. We can only inform CEPF at the completion of this phase of project the number of people per tribe.

All the tribes listed above depend on their forest for survival in terms food, building materials, economics and traditional medicine.

This project will also collect data's for livelihood strategies for each of the tribe. Hence, we perceive that there will be a variation of livelihood needs for each tribe.

ESSI team have conducted the following monthly activities since June 2014

- a. In the month of June for three days (June 24 to June 26) ESSI team (David Boseto and Myknee Sirikolo) have traveled around Choiseul Island with a list of chiefs and Customary Land Representatives (CLR) and their villages based on a list provided by LLCTC. The purpose of the trip was to inform them about the project and at the same time invited them to a consultation meeting.
- b. In the month of July, ESSI team (David Boseto and Myknee Sirikolo) conducted a three days (July 22 to July 24) consultation meeting with all

the Chiefs and CLR at Rarakisi Village, South Choiseul. The main objective of the meeting was to bring all the chiefs and CLR to a central place to inform them about the project and at the same time to seek initial consent from Chiefs and CLR to allow expedition team to access to their customary lands to conduct scientific research. At the end of the meeting the chiefs and CLR signed a consent document to allow the expedition team to enter their customary land to conduct scientific research.

Furthermore, Chiefs and CLR proposed two requests. The first request was for ESSI team to conduct awareness activities to inform their communities and members of their tribes about the proposed Mt Maetambe-Kolobangara River Watershed proposed conservation area. Secondly, they have requested that ESSI and expedition partners must sign an MOU with each tribe. The first awareness program was conducted at Rarakisi Village at the eve of July 23, 2014.

- c. In the month of August for ten days (August 18 to August 28) ESSI team (David Boseto and Fred Tabepuda) have conducted awareness programs in 10 villages around Choiseul Island. The community awareness program was a success since it was attended by young children, youths, women, men and elderly people. People from the surrounding and nearby villages had to walk to the villages where the awareness program was held.
- d. In the month of September SPREP provided funding for a two-day meeting at Taro for further consultations with the Chiefs and CLR. At the Taro meeting, Two draft MOU's were reviewed. The First MOU is for the expedition team and partners to sign and LLCTC will sign on behalf of all the tribes within the project site before the scientific expedition be conducted. The second MOU is for ESSI to sign on behalf of each partner with each tribe within the project area.

At the Taro meeting we also provided a time line projections and a three-phase stage for the project. The project time line and phases are below

Table 1: Project Timeline: June 2014 to May 2017

Year	Phase	Activities
2014-2015	1	Project set up and Biological Baseline Survey inventory
2015-2016	2	Land Use Planning
		Customary Land Boundary Demarcation
		Recording of each tribe genealogy
		Land Aquilization and Land Registration
		Registration of each tribal Association
		Formation of Resource Governance body and policy
		Draft of policy on resource benefit distribution
2016-2017	3	Establish a Protected Area in accordance to the Protected Act of SIG
		Registration of the resource Governance body
		Draft biodiversity management plans
		Finalize Biodiversity Management Plans and Policy
		Finalize the policy o resource benefit sharing

All the customary landowners, partners and stakeholders are aware of the timeline and the different phase of the project. They are anticipating that our

partnership will achieve the about project projections. We will continue with our public relations and awareness program with the tribes to keep them abreast of each steps and development of the project.

e. In the month of October

ESSI team successfully led a scientific team that conducted baseline biological inventory of Mt Maetambe to Kolobangara River Watershed. The scientific expedition was conducted between October 9th and October 27th. The expedition team includes local scientists, international scientists from French Museum, Paris, USGS and Kansas University, USA, James Cook University and University of Queensland, Australia and a scientist from the Depart of Environment, New Zealand. In addition to biological surveys and baseline inventory, the expedition also provided training and mentoring for local field biologists.

Providing the above outcomes has had a positive impact on the indigenous people. In turn the communities are excited about the project and are looking forward to the expected outcome of the project. We have engaged almost 100 young boys and men as field guides and porters during the field expedition. The expedition team also provided basic field survey training for the locals.

This project has had a positive impact on each tribe. Members within each tribe have made peace and reconciliation with each other. They have worked together towards the performance of cultural and custom protocol to prepare their land before the scientific expedition could take place in October.

However, we are aware of very few people within each tribe that are unhappy about the project. We will continue to work with their chiefs to resolve any conflicts within each tribe if they arise during the course of this project.

We are also aware of a court case that is currently pending in the high court of Solomon Islands between two of the tribes within the project site. This is a long-standing issue between these two tribes with regards to their land and land boundaries. The decision by the court judge will not affect our work, as we will still be working with the two tribes. The only concern is that the court case may delay our land boundary demarcation work with these two tribes.

Our next stage of work will be challenging, as we will be working with all the tribes in mapping their land and land boundaries. Since most land boundaries are demarcated using streams and rivers between the adjacent tribes, we are aware of how inconsistencies. At the same time each tribes must be prepared to give and take in order

for them to compromise with each other if they have conflicts among themselves with regards to their land boundaries. However, if conflicts cannot be resolved between each tribe then the next step is to address it through the Choiseul culture and customs rather than going to the magistrate court to make the decision. The Luru Land Conference of Tribal Community (LLCTC) has a blue print on the Philosophy-Theology and Guiding Principles for Choiseul. If all land conflicting cases are dealt with in accordance to the LLCTC blue print then all the land conflicts in Choiseul will be resolve cordially. I will propose the LLCTC blue print as a guideline for resolving any land conflicts between adjacent tribes. In this way we can address land conflicts within the bounds of Choiseul culture and customs.

Our team will continue to monitor the current land issues between the two conflicting tribes and at the same time will be having our ears and eyes alert for any other conflicts.

Our team will provide social safeguard quarterly report that is in accordance to CEPF social safeguard policies.

In case of any extreme situation that our team, our partners LLCTC and Choiseul Province cannot address then we can refer them to the CEPF Regional Implementation Team (RIT) at the IUCN office in Honiara and Suva. The RIT contacts in Honiara and Fiji are provided below

Honiara, Solomon Islands – Lysa Simeon, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology, Vavaya Ridge, Honiara, Solomon Islands. P.O. Box 21, Honiara, Solomon Islands. Office Telephone Telephone Number - +677 26036

Suva, Fiji –Luisa Tagicakibau and Helen Pippard, RIT, CEPF East Melanesian Islands Hotspots, Oceania Regional Office, IUCN, Private mailbag 5 Ma’afu Street, Suva, Fiji Islands. Telephone Contact; +679 331 9084

Our team will keep a record and document any grievances encountered during the project life and will include them in the appendix of project final report.

The obvious expected impact of this projection in terms of positive outcome is the cooperation within members of the same tribe and the cooperation among members of the different tribes. This will reduce risks that land conflicts facilitating access by logging, mining or other extractive industries that are interested in benefitting from the local communities resources. On the other hand the negative impact is the never ending land conflicts.