

Process Framework for Involuntary Restrictions Document

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CEPF Grant 65963

Grantee: Wildlife Conservation Society Papua New Guinea Program

Project Title: Saving Sea Turtles and Promoting Food Security and Sustainable Development on Mussau Island in Papua New Guinea

Project Location

Mussau Island, New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea

A. Project Background

Communities on Mussau have identified that turtles are a major competitor of an edible seaweed (*Caulerpa*) and that feral pigs are a major crop pest. Residents are proposing a turtle cull as a solution and have requested assistance in reducing the damage done by pigs on the island. WCS-PNG is proposing a three-pronged participatory project approach to prevent the turtle cull from taking place, to improve gardening and food security on the island and to increase the effectiveness of pig fencing and investigate short and long-term control options, and to build community capacity to manage these and other natural resource management issues. Food security is an urgent, immediate concern and is threatened by increasingly severe weather events as a consequence of climate change, such as the severe El Niño event that affected PNG in 2015. The main aims of this project are:

- a. Develop and implement a participatory adaptive management plan to reduce the human-turtle conflict. This plan will be developed with local communities on Mussau in order to layout and implement a strategy to: a) identify the agent of declines of the seaweed beds (i.e. estimating the relative impact of turtles on the beds compared to foreshore erosion and over-harvesting by people), b) map the extent of the problem, c) devise alternative interventions (which do not involve turtle culling) which will then be developed with the communities (focusing on the use of cages to protect the seaweed and exclude turtles – here after known as “exclosures”), and d) trial the effectiveness of the interventions through monitoring of seaweed stock and turtle populations.
- b. Improve garden productivity and reduce the reliance on seaweed as a food source: By improving soil fertility and by planting new and drought/pest resistant crop varieties, it becomes practical and cost-effective to utilize fencing techniques to limit pig damage in garden areas, whilst at the same time improving food security for communities on Mussau and increasing the community’s resilience to climate change. Additionally, by improving garden productivity the need to clear secondary regrowth for new gardens should reduce over the long-term allowing faster restoration of logged over areas. This work will be led by WCS’s Agricultural Officers, utilizing crops and gardening methods that WCS has successfully implemented in New Ireland and Manus. Drought and pest resistant crop varieties will be purchased from the National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI). Guidance on potential pig control options will be provided by an international eradication expert.
- c. Build community and CBO capacity: The severe El Niño-induced drought across PNG has highlighted the importance of community reliance on natural resources. To build long-term capacity on the island the above activities will be undertaken in a participatory manner in order to strengthen the community’s capacity for designing, implementing and managing projects. WCS will work with communities and existing

groups/organizations in order to establish a community-based organization (CBO) for natural resource management on Mussau. Such an organization would likely have a broad focus, ranging from management of marine resources (i.e. near-shore fisheries and seaweed beds) and terrestrial resources (i.e. gardening and forests) and would result in improved community capacity to manage their own natural resources.

B. Participatory implementation.

The development of this proposal was based on Participatory Rural Appraisal conducted at Nae and Lolieng through CEPF grant 64357. It was quickly evident that the major environmental issue foremost in the communities' minds was the destructive damage caused by feral pigs (which for religious reasons they do not eat) and the conflict between human use of the seaweed (*Caulerpa* spp) and sea turtles. Because of the remote nature of the island (~ 160 km to the north of New Ireland, with no cellular network) the input of the communities on the current proposal has been limited to capturing their concerns raised in the Participatory Rural Appraisal completed in 2015. Messages have been passed to the island that the proposal has been in development. Given that proper communication with the islanders is only possible through face-to-face visits the first component of this project is to undertake free and prior consent with the communities on the island (as agreed with CEPF) - the project's full activation will be contingent on the outcome of these meetings. The participatory involvement of the communities to establish a process framework for involuntary restrictions shall occur during the once consent is obtained and will occur immediately after the initial FPIC consultations.

Resource restriction will only affect the part of the project examining the role of turtle herbivory on the seaweed (*Caulerpa* spp) resource through the use of enclosures which will limit turtle and human access to the resource. The size of the area affected is small and will only affect of 48–108 m² of marine substrate for the duration of the turtle exclusion study (approximately 1 year). The process of participatory consultation to be undertaken will involve:

- a) Identification of how the *Caulerpa* resource is managed (e.g. as a common's, controlled by an ownership or user right model determined by genealogy)
- b) In light of (a) a series of open community meetings will be undertaken to determine which clans, or areas the community is willing to set aside areas for the use of enclosures for the duration of the study.
- c) The resource restriction will be entirely voluntary and subject to review during every island visit.
- d) The right owners of the resource are entitled to remove the enclosures if they decide to withdraw from the study

C. Criteria for eligibility of affected persons.

If any group of owners / users who initially consent to the use of enclosures then objects to the use of the enclosures over an area which they control then they are entitled to simply remove the offending enclosure(s) and thereby allowing normal access to resume.

D. Measures to assist the affected persons.

Given that the deployment of the enclosures is entirely voluntary and their removal can be effectively instantaneous no assistance will be offered.

E. Conflict resolution and complaint mechanism.

WCS understands that for anyone to be able to have any interaction with the forests or seas in PNG they will have to work with local people who are the resource owners. WCS staff follow a standardized protocol created specifically for community engagement in PNG which outlines all steps of community engagement from entry to exit.

WCS works to train local based Community Facilitators (CFs) to undertake the vital work of working with local communities, ensuring that community expectations match the outcomes that conservation projects can realistically deliver. The major role of the CFs is to act as a cultural liaison by which they attempt understanding community and private sentiment and articulate community concerns, misunderstandings, and communication gaps to WCS staff, and in-turn they disseminate explanations of our project, vision and goals to the community both in formal and informal settings. This process helps establish a mutual understanding of the process and of expected outcomes, it also allows any misunderstandings to be address at the soonest possible moment. Community facilitators are locals from neighboring communities and have an education up to secondary school level. Because CFs are from neighboring communities they have a natural understanding of local culture they can advise the WCS community engagement officers on best social approaches while in the field.

WCS has extensive experience working with the people in the island communities in New Ireland Province. At all community meetings WCS staff will ask for people to voice any concerns. Past experience suggests that grievances may also be brought up by community leaders in private meetings, or will be uncovered by CFs in informal meetings with community members. Members of the community engagement team, CFs, and project leaders will be in dialogue with the community to resolve this in an as amicable manner as possible. Under most circumstances WCS will undertake participatory community meetings to resolve the issue.

WCS does not get involved in disputes/grievances that are outside the project area and do not involved the organization, and such grievances will be dealt with by local authorities through accepted process and norms. WCS's experience of working in PNG indicates that the best way to avoid grievance is to carefully manage expectations of what WCS and the project can deliver, and this should be adequately covered by the

FPIC and community processes described above. All grievances and their outcomes be recorded and relayed back to the CEPF.