

SOCIAL ASSESSMENT – INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

“Training for ACMCA to ratify Protected Areas Act 2010 in Arnavons”

Solomon Islands

i. Identify Indigenous People in the project area;

The Arnavons Islands are located in the Manning Strait between Isabel and Choiseul Province in Solomon Islands. This small group of islands support the largest remaining nesting population of hawksbill turtles in the South Pacific, and the Arnavons hawksbill turtle population is beginning to recover following a ban on the trade of turtle products across Solomon Islands in 1993 and the establishment of the Arnavons as a community based protected area in 1995. However many of the low lying beaches at the Arnavons are beginning to be detrimentally impacted by sea level rise and it is likely that some of them will become unsuitable for nesting within the next 50 years. When nesting conditions become unsuitable at the Arnavons nesting activity peaks at nearby nesting beaches the Manning Strait that are in close proximity 50 km and 60 km respectively to the main islands of Isabel and Choiseul . This was quantified in the early 1970s after a cyclone destroyed all of the nesting beaches at the Arnavons. But currently mortality rates on both adults and eggs at these unprotected sites are very high. The aim of this research is to provide the basis for climate proofing the Arnavons rookery by identifying unprotected hawksbill nesting beaches in the Manning Strait that have high elevation beaches and are hence resilient to sea level rise. The findings of this research will provide the basis for informing provincial and national governments on priority areas for future turtle conservation efforts. This research should be supported as it will build the scientific capacity of Solomon Island citizens and it will provide a practical example of how to mitigate the impacts of climate change on an iconic species that is of considerable cultural significance to Solomon Islanders.

ii. Assess expected project impact (both positive and negative) on them;

Positive: For the past two decades the communities of ACMCA have experienced abundant sea resources available on their nearby reefs as a spillover from the protected area. And these local people depend very much on these resource to earn their income by selling their goods to the capital city. Hence, this is one of the major benefit of this protected are work in reference to its three communities. Furthermore, this conservation effort has brought in money to the communities through eco tourism activities and field trips held at the research station as well as in the community directly. To date, we have at least four Cruz ships that directly come to visit the protected are only with hundreds of tourist at once. Fees are paid to the project and communities who participated in the touring activity.

In terms of capacity building and education for local students, there have been numerous workshops and trainings hosted by the organisation and local people had the privilege to be educated via this avenue. And for community high schools and primary students the organisation has its own program

where its communities have equal opportunity to make a look and learn trip to the protected area. The purpose of this program was to give hands on version of learning for the students.

Biologically, this conservation effort will sustain the ancestor lifecycle of the endangered turtle species (hawksbill) in this region. Hence, contribute to the effort of the global community in conserving the last unique and rare species on earth.

Negative: In general, that negative impacts of this project are likely to be minor. Simply because, the project will only last for 1 year and the major activities of this project is based on workshop. However, should there be minor adverse impact to this project below are the issues to be address to be considered during the cause of the project implementation.

Community members not fully aware of rules and regulation within the projected area. Also, how it links to the Protected Area Act 2010 and the penalties for bridging the rules. However, this issue is the core subject of this project thus staffs in charge and partners will make sure that the activities are carried out as per the work plan.

Geographical location of the project and its expenses; that this project's major expense is fuel consumption to carry out patrol activities, transfer of on duty and off duty staff from communities and transporting project staffs from project site to airport. Hence, availability of fuel at the project site is paramount as far as it is concern in order to keep track of the activities. However, the organisation has well established logistic arrangement of transferring its goods and services to and from Honiara. And should there be any delay made on transportation wise, the organisation has very strong relationship with local fuel agents in those three communities thus operation of the project has been very successful for the past 20 years or so.

iii. Describe how free, prior and informed consultations have been carried out with affected communities during design of the project (i.e. prior to submission of the Lol);

In Solomon Islands, land, sea and natural resources are owned by the people through traditional rights and not by the state. Hence, any project activity engagement with local communities can go through several steps before entry for operation can be permitted. However, for the case of this project ACMCA board of management (who are nominated by the 3 communities) have agreed on this proposal. The early stage of the proposal was drawn from the community strategy to enforce its management rules and regulation in this conservation site. In particular, last year a team consists of Ministry of Environment, The Nature Conservancy, Provincial Government and ACMCA Board members implemented a massive awareness to ACMCA communities regarding the new Protected Areas Act 2010. And the outcomes of the meeting were to get ACMCA as the first local conservation organisation to be registered under this act. This was relevant as most of the lesson learnt used to develop this Act was brought out from Arnavons conservation effort.

Hence, this organisation is the most advance and prominent project in conservation nationally and regionally thus most of the community engagement protocols and norms have been well in placed prior to the development of this proposal.

iv. Outline measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits;

To avoid adverse impacts and to provide culturally appropriate benefit to ACMCA communities the project has decided to continue engage Rano and Com for legal training provider (partners) to this project. Previously, the company was contracted by TNC to carryout community consultation meeting regarding this new Act (PA Act 2010) and further reviews its management plan. Therefore, it is seen appropriate to maintain the ongoing engagement with this partner to lead the organisation through to the final stage of being registered and actually providing enforcement workshops to local communities (Rangers, ACMCA Board of Management).

v. Explain how these measures will be monitored;

At the beginning and ending of each workshop conducted by the local legal firm there will be evaluation forms made available to the participants to see how the project would improve from relevant ideas that would be missed out in the initial stage. Also, prior to each meeting, participants will be informed in advance to discuss with their own communities regarding the project and should there be any comments the project will take into consideration from the evaluation. This activity will be lead by the independent organisation purposely to maintain transparency and accountability with its communities.

vi. Detail a grievance mechanism;

Community members will be engaged to register any grievances with community representative at the project sites. 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.

vii. Map of the area of work;

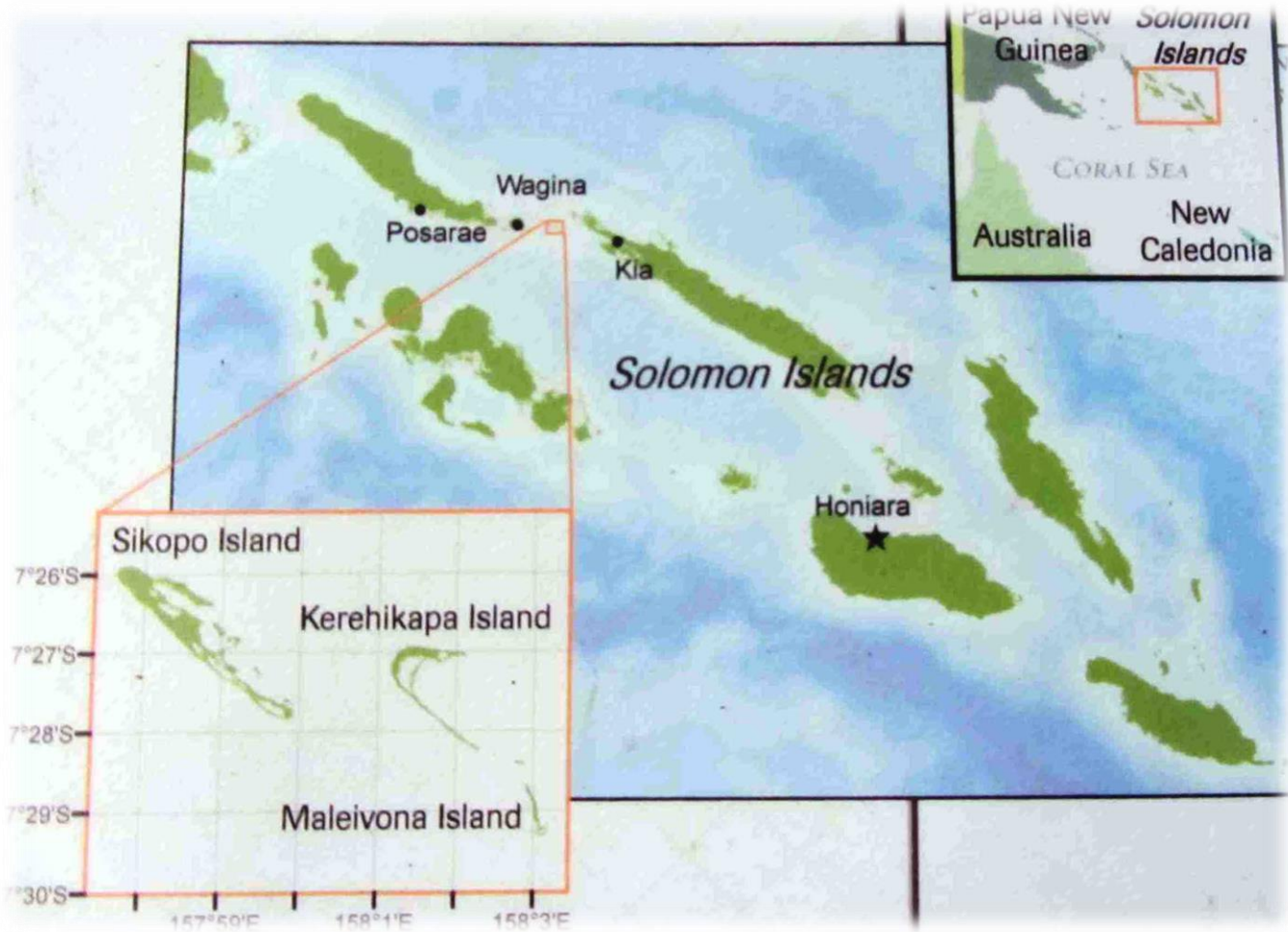


Figure 1 showing Arnavon Islands (Sikopo, Kerehikapa & Maleivona) on Solomon Island Map and in Western Pacific.