



Solomon Islands Community  
Conservation Partnership  
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## **CEPF Social Assessment**

### *Alleviating Pressures on Upland Kolombangara: Supporting Ridge to Reef Conservation*

#### **1) Identify Indigenous Peoples in the project area**

The Kolombangara Uplands priority region includes the area above 400m elevation on the island of Kolombangara, with a dormant volcano reaching 1779 m high. The traditional owners of Kolombangara are known as the Dughore people, and the island has a population of around 6,000. The lowlands of Kolombangara have been heavily and repeatedly logged, but a 19,400 ha conservation area of largely pristine forests has been declared since 2008 and is managed by the Kolombangara Island Biodiversity Conservation Association (KIBCA). Indigenous people on Kolombangara live in ten zones around the island, which are all represented at regular KIBCA meetings. All landowners signed the agreement to protect the area above 400m from logging and other threats.

#### **2) Assess expected project impacts (both positive and negative) on them**

##### ***Positive***

KIBCA rangers have received training in reef resource survey methodologies. A further 40 community members have also been taught how to conduct reef surveys. The training was delivered in the form of workshops and practical sessions. Further training was provided to KIBCA rangers in data-entry.

The communities of Ropa and Muamai north Kolombangara have shown more interest in managing their reef resource compared since the project started. At Ropa two general reef survey data have been collected along with two cycles of trochus survey data. At both Vavanga and Mumaeni, only one cycle of reef survey has been conducted. Seagrass surveys have taken place at Ropa. Biannual monitoring plans are in place for Ropa and Vavanga. Both Ropa and Vavanga have ongoing weekly marine harvest data recording. All the data collected so far have been entered into Excel database by KIBCA rangers.

Community are more aware of environmental issues through the awareness sessions that were focused on general environmental and ecological topics with special attempts made to promote the ridge-to-reef connection. Except for Vavanga, the r2r discussion was new to the other two communities. All three communities have also been made aware of current National Regulations related to resource harvesting. These awareness sessions were also extended to the primary school students at Vavanga.

##### ***Negative***

There were several instances during the early stage of the project where some community members questioned the benefits of implementing locally managed areas. It was suggested that SICCP and KIBCA were the only ones benefiting from this project. This caused some uncertainty amongst the communities and initially affected the progress of the project. A joint effort by SICCP and KIBCA to clarify the intentions of the project was held at a community meeting and this cleared any misconceptions that were present. Those opposing the project activities tended to be from other communities that were not directly involved in the project.

### **3. 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 LoI)**

All SICCP activities were conducted through participatory planning and implementation processes driven by KIBCA. Further meetings (as above) were held during the project to reassure communities of the projects intention. SICCP has nearly 8 years of experience in working together closely with indigenous leaders and communities in the region. Over that period, we have developed a track record of successful partnership and maintain a network of strong community-level relationships. This network of relations is built on trust and has been tested by time.

### **4. Outline measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits**

The wish to protect areas of intact forest from logging and mining comes from grass-roots community associations representing landowners and villages. Protected areas in the Solomon Islands are not imposed by government, but are driven by indigenous landowners. To mitigate possible adverse impacts of our planned activities we design our engagement through multi-representative partnerships that include landowning representatives, government bodies, other local NGO partners, and international NGOs. In addition, SICCP personnel working on the project are Solomon Islanders, including Mr. Alec Hughes.

### **5. Explain how these measures will be monitored**

Any grievances or concerns that arose during the project were directed to KIBCA and SICCP during site visits and all were generally resolved on the spot.

### **6. Detail a grievance mechanism.**

Indigenous peoples and other local communities and stakeholders may raise a grievance about an issue relating to the project. During workshops and meetings, communities were informed about this possibility and contact information will be provided for the SICCP Operations Manager and that any grievance raised with the project leads or third-party contact would be communicated to Lysa Wini the in-country Project Liaison and subsequently the CEPF Regional Implementation Team at IUCN within 15 days, together with a plan for remedial action (if any is required). Lysa Wini can be contacted via phone on +677-7473384 and via email on [lysa.wini@gmail.com](mailto:lysa.wini@gmail.com). The Regional Implementation Team can be contacted via phone on +679-331-9084 or email on [cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org](mailto:cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org) or via post c/- CEPF Regional Implementation Team, PMB 5 Ma'afu St, Suva, Fiji.

7. Map of your area of work.

