

## **State of Conservation Report 2023**

### **Brief Update**

This brief update is the outcome of the **Lake Tegano World Heritage Site Association communities' consultation meeting** and **Honiara stakeholder consultation dialogue**, which has brought together key stakeholders, including representatives of the communities from East Rennell and those based in Honiara, line ministries, provincial government, NGOs and experts.

The purpose of this community and stakeholders consultations is having a discussion on existing challenges and opportunities in East Rennell, and also identifying potential sustainable livelihood options in East Rennell.

The outcome of the consultations resulted in an **Action Plan** developed towards developing sustainable livelihoods in East Rennell World Heritage Site. The action plan clearly identified four (4) key priority actions/ areas, the type of activities, key actors from the relevant SIG line ministries and stakeholders, funding source and timeline to implement these programs and was subsequently endorsed by the Minister and Permanent Secretary of the Min. Education and Human Resources Development.

Furthermore, the Solomon Islands National Commission to UNESCO together with the World Heritage Site Focal point, the ministry of Environment do acknowledge the report by East Rennell World Heritage Site Association Chairman on the community consultations and have endorsed it as part of the 2023 SOC report update. *(see annex below for full report)*

However, it is envisaged that the approaches and activities spelled out because of these consultations will require a collaborative effort of relevant SIG line ministries and key stakeholders and partners to fully achieve what has been agreed in the action plan.

## **Annex**

### **SMALL GRANT PROGRAM ( SGP) THROUGH UNDP TO LAKE TEGANO WORLD HERITAGE SITE ASSOCIATION.**

#### **Contractor**

Name of the Local CBO providing the report: Lake Tegano World Heritage Site Association

Address: Lake Tegano, East Rennell

Person in charge of the final report: George Tauika

#### **Activities**

Activities Performed under the East Rennell community Livelihood projects

- Installation of apiary facilities
- Installation of piggery facilities
- Installation of poultry facilities
- Installation community deep freezers / generators
- Setting up sanitation at Tevaitahe community.

#### **Results:**

Describe to what extent the objectives of the Agreement were accomplished:

- Bee keeping progress well. Still is splitting process.
- The funds provided piggery facilities in our communities and they managing it well. Already in their first sale. The management committee is slowly extending the piggery shelter.
- Local people utilized deep freezers for preservation and selling their marine products locally. Communities mostly use the deep Freezers in their daily routine.
- The communities have setting up poultry facilities. They had their first selling. The demand is very high, but the suppliers and poor shipping services to our island delays our market.
- One of the challenges we had encountered is, we don't have easy accessed to vehicle to transport our products to West Rennell. Most of our catches especially Tilapia were only for family meals.
- Toilets were share amongst families at Tevaitahe village. Only few families manage to complete their toilets. The rest still wait for other fittings.

Immediate benefits received by the participants and/or the recipient communities at East Rennell:

- The communities of course benefitted a lot in our community projects set up in our villages. They are in marketing stage; unfortunately poor shipping services is our main obstacle.
- When the funds provided deep freezers in each community, they preserve their fishes to sell at west Rennell. When there was no transport available, they use them to sustain their meals. In the past, when families got good catch, it's only a day meal and sometimes wasted.

Describe long term benefits:

- The long-term benefits are the facilities established in each community. Maybe in the future, the management committee may not be competent to run the project, but the facilities are there to use.
- Like in our Honey project, most people still yet to see the actual benefits, but once the splitting is completed and manage well, it will indeed assist our community basic needs.

### **New Developments and unexpected difficulties/problems:**

#### **New Developments and unexpected difficulties during the implementation of the project:**

- The establishment of livelihood income generating projects in the community is a facelift in our communities. When we actually implement our community project, we had encountered a lot of impediments and obstacles which go beyond our capabilities.
  - The irregular delivering of supplies/stocks from our main supplies from the capital.
  - The irregular shipping services to our island delays the progress of our livelihood projects.
  - To locally manage our livelihood projects, it needs certain skills/ abilities to sustain the operational functioning of our communities' projects.
  - Lack of financial management skills.
  - Lack of training to the management committees on how to look after the projects.

#### **Actions taken to solve them.**

- When communities' projects setup in our communities, there were unforeseen circumstances that go beyond our strength, and management committee solely responsible to handle such situation.
  - In the initial plan, our committee liaised with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) to facilitate trainings and workshops to our newly agricultural facilities in our communities. Unfortunately, it was miserably fail. In our newly Honey Farm, its quite complex to manage so the chairman ( George Tauika) had travelled to Honiara and enrolled in one Honey bees training, then he returned and train some local community members in some basic understanding about Honey farm.

### **Remarks/lesson learned:**

When we established our Honey farm as well piggery, poultry, small scale fishing project, and sanitation in our communities, we had encountered a lot of challenges. There were a lot of unforeseen circumstances arose.

This long delay to set up our poultry project in our communities, is when the international borders were closed, because most of our supplies we depend on international flight for our poultry products.

Poor shipping services to our remote island is our major setback. When our poultry and piggery runs out of feeders, our local farmers finds it very hard to sustain the health of their farms.

Marketing outlets is one important component of running a Business. We estimated that Honiara is our main market target area. Unfortunately, it was not working because of poor shipping services to our island.

The poor condition of our road becomes an obstacle for vehicle owners not extend their services to East Rennell. The lack of land transport is our big problem to shift our product to West Rennell.

Lastly, training is one very important component in running such livelihood projects. A lot of failures we had witness. one clear example is, most of the piglets died in the early and some grew very unhealthy and malnutrition. This is due to lack of skills and knowledge how to keep such uncleaned animals.



Honey Bees farm at Hutuna village



Piggery at Tevaitahe village





Piggery at Niupani



Tilapia catch







Date: 13/02/2023

Proposed by: George Tauika



In 2018, the Bird Life International had conducted a survey in East Rennell World Heritage Site to identify the type of rat that hugely damage the fruit trees, garden food and potentially endangering the endemic species in East Rennell.

In short, the end result of the Research was, the introduced rat is now prevailed in the whole island and potentially difficult to totally eradicate them in East Rennell, but there are ways to suppress and control its impact.

In 2022, the Bird life international had secured funding support from Darwin Initiative Foundation (UK) to assist East Rennell to suppress the impact of rat in the island.

In September 2022, the BLI had reached the four communities in East Rennell and they introduced the project, and at the same time, Local project coordinator was picked to work on the project.

The BLI had given the task to our LTWHSA committee to facilitate meetings to select two community Rangers from each village (8), and Rangers to work with communities to select four Casuals from each villages. Total up to eight (8) Rangers, sixteen (16) Rangers.

Currently their work is to identify garden areas in each village to put the Rat bait station. The training of this inventory program will be on next month with the BLI team.

The communities are now benefited a lot especially with the funding support to pay the Rangers/casuals working on each community plot by identifying marks for the bait station to be set up soon.



Communities' participation. 2022



Steve and Milly (BLI) introduced the project to the community



Rangers practical work. October 2022





Steve (BLI) training communities Rangers. (Oct 2022)



Steve from Bird Life international (BLI) with the communities Rangers (oct 2022)





Cut and marked bait station to be set up.

**This year, 2023, the National Government had identified the potentials in East Rennell to include Renbel Province amongst other four provinces in Solomon Island that will be benefitted from GEF 6 funding support.**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023, the Government delegates from ministry of Environment / Ministry of Forestry/ deployed to Renbel province for the provincial inception workshop and community inception at East Rennell.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Ensuring Resilient Ecosystems and Representative Protected Areas in the Solomon Islands (EREPA) is a GEF6-funded project implemented by the IUCN Oceania Regional Office with the Solomon Islands Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology (MECDM) and SPREP. The project's goal is to "establish an effective network of protected areas to achieve healthy, productive and restored landscapes in Guadalcanal, Malaita, Rennell-Bellona and Temotu provinces". The project will be implemented in these four provinces of the Solomon Islands.

As part of achieving this goal, the degradation of terrestrial ecosystems will be reduced and there will be a multiplication of co-benefits. The project interventions will lead to improved community livelihoods through the diversification of income-generating sources, increased direct economic value and benefits from natural resources, and increased resilience to the effects associated with climate change. At the national level, baseline information gathered on natural resources and other variables as well as capacity building will contribute to sound and efficient decision making in the Solomon Islands.

The project will contribute to addressing terrestrial biodiversity loss and ecosystem decline through the improved management of natural resources, and the creation of protected and conserved areas within four Key Biodiversity Areas. Biodiversity preservation and ecosystem services will be promoted over at least 50,000 hectares of terrestrial and coastal land. By promoting biodiversity protection, building capacity for the creation and management of protected areas including access to relevant information for land-use planning, and strengthening the policy framework for the creation, management and maintenance of protected areas, the EREPA project will significantly support Solomon Islands in meeting its commitments under multilateral environment agreements.

The design of the project is fully aligned with Solomon Islands' national priorities and will be implemented within the framework of the Protected Areas Act and other relevant national policies and regulations. The strong political will of participating ministries will be an important factor in sustaining the longevity of the projects outputs. The strong relationship between



government institutions and the executing agency, as well as supporting organizations, will also contribute to sustaining project interventions and output.



Government officials finally touched down to Rennell (Tigoa Domestic Airport) 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2022.



EREPA team conducting Renbel provincial inception workshop. (Feb 2, 2023)





East Rennell council of chiefs/ community leaders/ women/ youth reps/ church elders attended at the community inception meeting at Motumahi conference, Hutuna village, East Rennell on the 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023.

One of our commitments is to facilitate meetings to key stakeholders ( East Rennell council of chief, tribal groupings in East Rennell,) to understand steps of Protected Area Acts (PAA).