



**FORMAT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF  
STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS  
BY THE STATES PARTIES**

**(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the Operational Guidelines)**

Name of World Heritage property East Rennell World Heritage Site, Solomon Islands  
(Identification number)

1. Executive Summary of the report

*[Note: each of the sections described below should be summarized. The maximum length of the executive summary is 1 page.]*

The year 2023 has been a very challenging year for the Solomon Islands government as it anticipates and prepares for the hosting of the 17<sup>th</sup> Pacific Games 2023 in Honiara Solomon Islands. This is because most of the resources and commitment is committed towards achieving a successful games by the hosting country. Despite of this, there are number of progresses made in addressing issues affecting East Rennell World Heritage Site and ultimately towards the removal of the site form the danger list by 2025.

This report will provide progress update information about the status of tasks implemented in East Rennell by various organisations to ensure it is removed from the danger list. These initiatives will address issues of invasive species, effective network of protected areas and Carbon trade potential towards achieving sustainable livelihoods in East Rennell.

The Solomon Islands Government also do acknowledge the ongoing challenges on the ground and the potential threats posed on these initiatives and ensures its continuous support to the program by working with key stakeholders, government ministries and Lake Tegano Association to achieve the DSOCR by 2025.

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

*[Note: The State(s) Party(ies) is/are requested to address the most recent Decision of the World Heritage Committee for this property, paragraph by paragraph.]*

If the property is inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger Please also provide detailed information on the following:

- a) Progress achieved in implementing the corrective measures adopted by the World Heritage Committee

*[Note: please address each corrective measure individually, providing factual information, including exact dates, figures, etc.]*

**1. Live & Learn Environmental Education**

East Rennell is one of the sites where Live and learn Solomon Islands is implementing a carbon project. The objective is to deliver forest conservation and community development outcomes through the creation and sale of carbon credits in the rural communities of East Rennell.

The purpose of carbon financing in the rainforest sector is to enable landowners to sell carbon credits instead of wood and timber through logging and other land uses as a way to fund their economic development needs.

The following are the current progressing activities on site:

- Conduct Community consultation by providing carbon project awareness through FPIC (Free, Prior, and informed consent)
- Conduct several meetings with the community governance groups (Council of Chiefs), community elders, and leaders.
- Continuous carbon project awareness conducted in collaboration with other partners (Solomon Island Government – MECDM & MoFR), Nakau, and Renbel provincial government.
- Conduct assessment for the land holding entity to form the project governance group.
- Conduct carbon stock assessment for East Rennell using remote sensing tools with support from Nakau (Technical Partner)
- Continuous work with the EREPA project to implement the Protected Area process for East Rennell.
- Support East Rennell land holding representatives for learning exchange trip to Babatana (Choiseul Province) carbon project site in Solomon Islands.

## **2. Birdlife International**

The goal of this Project is to establish evidence base and enabling conditions for sustained IAS/rodent control in the four East Rennell World Heritage Site (ERWHS) communities and Province-wide biosecurity, to contribute to food security, livelihood resilience, endemic biodiversity protection and national/regional IAS responses.

This initiative has collaborated with Local Tegano World Heritage Site Association (LTWHSA) with Min. Environment SI Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology and SI Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Biosecurity to deliver on key project outcomes.

The following are the project progress update:

- Project Inception Workshop successfully held in Honiara and at the ERWHS (Aug – Sept 22)
- Local Project Coordinator (LPC), Mr. George Tauika recruited (Aug 22)
- Project Funding Agreement signed with the LTWHSA, as the local implementing Partner and an Implementation Timetable/Workplan & Budget discussed and agreed (Sept 22)
- Refresher training for LTWHSA on project management, reporting & financial management (Sept 22)
- 4 Local Rangers nominated from each of the communities & recruited (Sept 22)
- Masters student selected from USP, Fiji (Sept 22)
- Rodenticide bait, bait stations & other equipment purchased from NZ & delivered to Honiara (Nov 22 – Feb 23).
- Local Rangers have marked/confirmed four forest plots & have GPS-marked the bait points for the four 1km<sup>2</sup> rodent control plots in their respective 4 forest areas (Nov 22 – Feb 23).
- Biodiversity monitoring indicators established, with technical support provided by Dr. Ray Pierce & BLI (Feb-Mar 23)
- Masters student meet with LPC and Local Rangers and discuss collation of research data and results (March 23)
- Rodenticide bait, bait stations & other equipment delivered to Rennell (April 23)
- Renbel Biosecurity Coordinator/Officer identified & discussions underway with SI Biosecurity to finalise Contract & TOR (Apr 23)

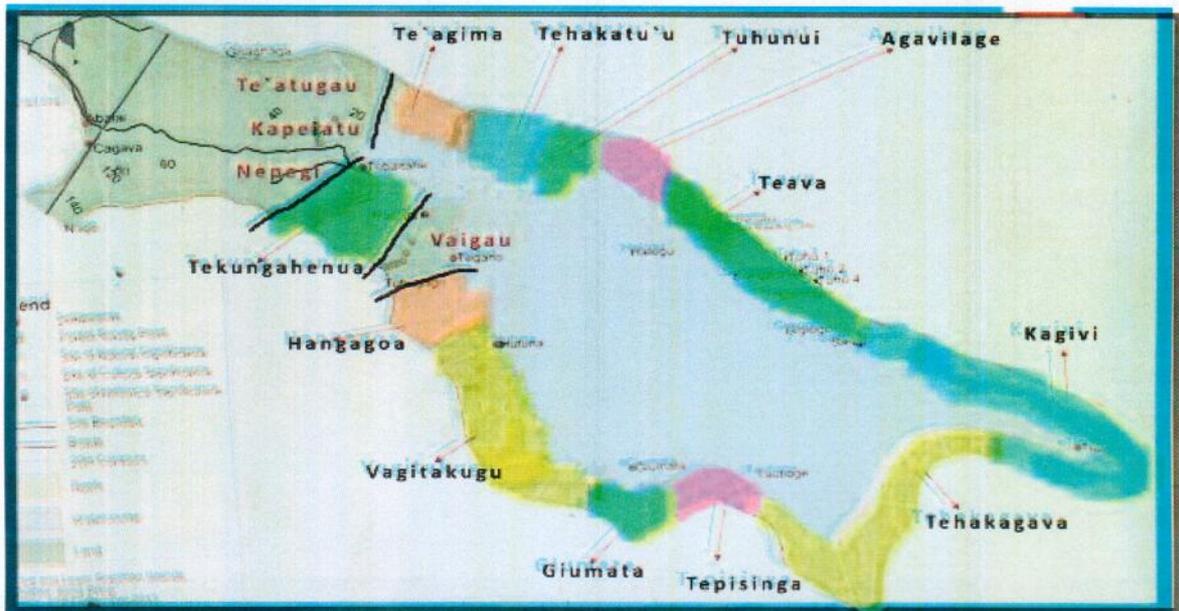
- Community-based monitoring protocols established with Local Rangers & LPC and Rangers trained in implementing these protocols. These include monitoring of biodiversity (birds, snails), crops and bait uptake, both at the treatment sites and non-treatment sites (Mar – April 23)
- Project Steering Committee Meeting, hosted by the MECCDM. Meeting outcomes included the endorsement of a PSC Terms of Reference (TOR), Darwin project update from BLI and the
- LTWHSA; and progress updates from stakeholders implementing complementary work at the
- ERWHS – Live & Learn SI, NZ MFAT & GEF6 EREPA Project (Aug 23)
- Complete baiting of the four village 1km<sup>2</sup> plots by the Local Rangers. These are the 4 rodenticide treatment plots, in each of the 4 village forest areas within the East Rennell World Heritage Site (May – July 23)
- Community-based monitoring started, Rangers collecting & recording data and BirdLife receives this via email monthly (Aug 23)
- Formation of Women's Savings Club at ERWHS & Community Mobilization (Aug 23)
- Socio-economic Baseline Assessment conducted by Local Consultant at the 4 villages of the ERWHS. Analysis from this survey and the biodiversity and crop monitoring data should verify whether there has been a reduction in crop damage from rats (because of the rodent control program), and therefore a change in crop yield/consumption (Aug 23)
- This provides an understanding of the level of impact rodents have on food security at the ERWHS, and the varying level of understanding communities have of 'wellbeing' and potential ways the project could support/improve this (Aug 23)
- LTWHSA capacity needs assessment conducted by Local Consultant. As a result, a training program for the LTWHSA has been drafted, with a series of workshops to be conducted on governance, project management, financial reporting and grant development/proposal writing (Aug 23)

#### **Protected Areas Act 2010 - EREPA**

The Ministry of Environment has secured funding from GEF through International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) which is entitled "Ensuring Resilient Ecosystems and Representative Protected Areas in Solomon Islands (EREPA)" GEF 6 funded project. This project is led by MECCDM and its key implementing partners are Ministry of Forestry, Research, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.

The following are progress update:

- Recruited Provincial Project coordinators
- Conducted tribal meetings in East Rennell for Protected Areas Act 2010
- 12 tribes submitted their Expression of Interest (EOI) namely, 1. Tuhunui, 2. Agavillage, 3. Teava, 4. Kagivi, 5. Tehakagava, 6. Tepisinga, 7. Giumata, 8. Vagitakugu, 9. Hangagoa, 10. Tekungahenua, 11. Teågima, 12. Tehakatuù.
- The other four tribes with still yet to decide, namely, 1. Nepegi, 2. Kapeiatu, 3. Teatugau and 4. Vaigau.  
(See map attached showing indication of interest)



The coloured blocks have already submitted their EOI. The other 4 tribes (Red) still yet to decide.

- Recommendation to form the East Rennell Management committee was done in October 2023.
- Planned in March to finalize our land use map, and start developing our new management plan

### Extinction of flying foxes on Rennell Island

In 2021, disappearing of bat is one of the great phenomena that shocked the communities of East Rennell as well the whole island of Rennell. After few months we noticed the sudden disappearing of flying foxes where carcasses are found all over the forests. The case was reported to the agriculture office as well as to the focal point (MECCDM).

The MECCDM officers, Mr. Trevor Maeda and Mr. Veira investigated this catastrophic disappearing of flying foxes and they hardly found anyone. Hence, the research came to an end. The MECCDM officers ended up at Mt Poghoavu bat cave, about 1km walk from Hutuna up to the forest. It was confirmed that only the small bats still exist. The other bigger bats normally visible everyday disappeared. However, there are rumors that, the bigger flying foxes has sighted at west Rennell, but this needs to be verified.

### Barge wreckage at Nukuma`anu

The barge (SAPOR 2302) has been grounded early in 2021 at Nukuma`anu beach in East Rennell. It was never revealed until the land owners surprisingly sighted it washed ashore at their fishing ground. The LTWWSA committee liaised with MECCDM officers and the environmental impact assessment was undertaken on the 23rd June 2021.

The coastal area is one fishing ground that people rely on until when the barge washed ashore, it causes substantial damages to the corals reefs and marine ecosystem at large. The tribal group never use that area, due to the pollution cause by the wreckage.

The case is being pursued by the Land owners because East Rennell World Heritage is yet to gain Protected Area Act 2010. However, the case is still pending as land owners faced challenges to hire lawyer to pursuit the case.

If needed, please describe the success factors or difficulties in implementing each of the corrective measures identified

- b) Is the timeframe for implementing the corrective measures suitable? If not, please propose an alternative timeframe and an explanation why this alternative timeframe is required.

There are still ongoing support and initiatives from the Solomon Islands Government towards East Rennell World Heritage Site Program and the continuous effort towards the removal of the site from danger list by 2025. Hence, the time frame remains applicable and achievable for Solomon Islands.

- c) Progress achieved towards the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR)

The ministry of Education has applied for International Assistance in aiming to accelerating the implementation of DSOCR. Currently, an ongoing planning for livelihood activities is underway with the support of the Netherlands and Japan Funds in Trust for East Rennell communities with potential meetings and consultations schedule for the end of May 2024.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value

[Note: this includes conservation issues which are not mentioned in the Decision of the

Other related issues will be made available as supplementary documents to this report

*World Heritage Committee or in any information request from the World Heritage Centre]*

4. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

*[Note: this report will be uploaded for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of conservation Information System (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc> ). Should your State Party request that the full report should not be uploaded, only the 1-page executive summary provided in point (1.) above will be uploaded for public access].*

6. Signature of the Authority



Mr. Josef Hurutarau

Director (Acting)

**Environment & Conservation Division**

Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management & Meteorology

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024