

**Testing Effective Models for Governance and Implementation of REDD+ to Provide
Equitable Benefits for Forest-dependent Indigenous People: Solomon Islands
A Project of ADB's Poverty and Environment Program (PEP)**

A. Basics

- Total project cost: \$249,464
- PEP funding: \$248,351
- Approval date: November 2010
- Implementation period: May 2011 - December 2012
- Main project partner: Live & Learn Environmental Education
- Project officer: Jean Williams, Pacific Department
- Type of intervention: Pilot intervention
- Focal area: Natural resources and sustainable livelihoods

B. Background

The project area, Choiseul province, has some of the most rare, unique, abundant speciation in Solomon Islands and in the world, but it is also under immediate threat from logging. The future of thousands of villagers is under threat should logging operations proceed. By supporting the development of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) methods and policies, the project aimed to help provide secure land ownership and ensure that equitable benefits from land and land-based resources are afforded to indigenous people in the target communities. This will in turn contribute to higher-level goals of reducing GHG emissions from deforestation and degradation, and providing tangible co-benefits, including biodiversity conservation, maintaining essential eco-system services, resilience, and capacity to adapt to climate change, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development opportunities.

C. Summary of PEP assistance

The project developed and implemented a REDD+ demonstration activity for forest-dependent indigenous communities in Choiseul Province in the Solomon Islands. Two land owning groups participated in the demonstration activities. The project included:

- Identification of appropriate and effective methods for measurement, reporting, and verification of emission reductions from REDD+ projects;
- Recommendation of financial and governance processes that provide transparent and equitable benefits acceptable to indigenous landowners and the Solomon Islands government;
- Identification and development of methods to strengthen capacity, and finalize indigenous landowner involvement in REDD+ to provide transparent, equitable, and sustainable community benefits;
- Identification of mechanisms to finance and support sustainable livelihood opportunities for forest-dependent communities; and
- Identification of property rights and land tenure issues and offer solutions.

The project further aimed to contribute to higher-level goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and degradation, and provide tangible co-benefits, including conserving biodiversity, maintaining essential eco-system services, strengthening local people's

resilience and capacity to adapt to climate change, and providing poverty alleviation and sustainable development opportunities. The overarching objective of this action was to reduce poverty, create an enabling business environment for REDD+, and improve transparency, accountability, equity and efficiency in the management and use of natural resources.

The adopted methodologies sought to enable the forest-dependent indigenous target groups to participate in REDD+ by developing tools for education, engagement, and capacity building. The project adopted a partnership approach, aiming to foster dialogue between the government and local people to ensure that lessons learned through development and pre-testing of practical tools support REDD+ policy development and opportunities for project replication.

Seven activities were implemented to achieve the objectives and the five expected outputs:

- Activity 1: Measurement, reporting and verification (MRV), which comprised three phases: (i) project strategy development – definition of carbon market strategy options; (ii) methodology – a project methodology was developed in line with the chosen carbon market standard (Plan Vivo); and (iii) first draft of Project Description Documentation (PDD) and development of a Project Idea Note (PIN) – the outputs of this activity were extremely useful as there were no other REDD+ methodologies in development in the Solomon Islands, and to date there have not been any other methodologies validated in the Pacific Island region (including Papua New Guinea) for REDD+.
- Activity 2: Identification of government regulatory mechanisms, capacity and governance structures for REDD+ in the Solomon Islands. This activity was modified when it was understood that the Solomon Islands Government had not established any institutional arrangements or policies for REDD+, and was yet to commence any significant work in this respect. The outputs included identifying current REDD+ Readiness activities (if any) that may have started or were planned, and determining the capacity of various stakeholders to contribute to REDD+ in the Solomon Islands. This increased relevance by achieving the main purpose of the activity – to establish the current ‘state of play,’ to enable the project to better coordinate with other work of Government and stakeholders.
- Activity 3: Identification of land tenure and carbon property rights issues through desktop study, including perceptions of indigenous landowners relating to land tenure and carbon property rights through research on aspirations and perceptions (RAP) linked with activity 5. The analysis was useful to provide an understanding of legal avenues to secure carbon rights, and included an assessment of opportunities and risks.
- Activity 4: Enabling education on climate change and REDD+ (CCRE) in order for target communities to engage in informed dialogue. Issues covered in education delivery included CCRE, concepts of multiple forest values, changes to forests, long-term consequences of deforestation, intergenerational equality, governance and decision-making, and links between forest-uses, conflict, and poverty. The outputs from this activity were extremely useful in improving the limited understanding about the abstract concepts of CCRE. A CCRE manual was developed as a facilitator’s guide to delivering REDD+



Live & Learn REDD+ Project officer Bill Apusae at the project site in Ngorambara



Scenes from the animated films: "Climate Change – Everyone's Business" and "Ready for REDD+?"

education for village level audiences. The CCRE manual was improved through pre-testing during the implementation period, leading to a professionally designed and printed publication. Two [animated films](#) were developed in Solomon Islands Pidgin and English to support the

education manual.

- Activity 5: RAP study to examine community perceptions of environmental, cultural, social and economic issues relating to REDD+. This activity also served to provide the baseline for monitoring. The RAP study enabled Live & Learn to effectively engage with and learn from target communities. Live & Learn confirmed that implementing this process early in a project builds strong relationships and knowledge base from which to continue with project delivery. Outcomes of the RAP workshop demonstrated the low knowledge base of participating communities, supporting the relevance of this activity. The education program (activity 4) was extremely successful in further assessing current knowledge levels and then subsequently increasing these (measured through post-workshop assessment). However, mechanisms that were identified to focus REDD+ finance to support sustainable livelihood opportunities for forest-dependent communities were not fully explored as these were found to be of less interest and priority to landowners than the more general question of if and how REDD+ finance could be secured.

- Activity 6: Education and planning workshop to recognize the need to create local ownership of the model and to ensure that the design was not in conflict with national government positions. This activity was delivered through a participatory learning and planning workshop. The main objective was slightly modified from originally proposed, into critically analyzing a proposed option (rather than multiple options) for demonstration concepts. The potential for the proposed demonstration concept in contributing to REDD+ national policy was also explored. The workshop was an effective means to engage village level stakeholders with national level government and non-government stakeholders to share understanding, learn, and critique the REDD+ demonstration concept.



Participants at the Ngorambara Education and Planning workshop

- Activity 7: Concept demonstration incorporating information and material produced through activities 1-5. The output of this activity largely incorporated information provided through activities 1-5. As such the activity and its outputs could have been omitted as an activity in its own right because the results from previous activities (especially activity 1),

provide the demonstration activity concept. The concept activity design would more appropriately be expressed as a sub-project objective.

D. Long-term impacts, sustainability, and lessons learned

The project has achieved its objectives and delivered the intended outputs. The outcomes strongly suggest that REDD+ is a viable alternative livelihood for people dependent on forest resources and required to combat the strong drivers of deforestation. The pilot project has been well-supported in the target communities and informally at provincial and national levels.

A small number of the outcome indicators were difficult to measure or unrealistic. For example, the indicators for the main outcome included Solomon Islands Government “endorsement” of the REDD+ pilot project. However, it was found that institutional arrangements to approve (or otherwise) a REDD+ project do not currently exist. The national government position on REDD+ policy and project types is yet to be determined, therefore Live & Learn was not able to engage in effective policy dialogue at this level during implementation of the project

The project achieved numerous significant results that were not mentioned as indicators, but were nonetheless valuable.

The progress made through this project has created a platform for an implementation phase involving market standard certification and issuance of carbon certificates. The outcomes suggest that REDD+ is a viable livelihood alternative for local forest-dependent people and that it is required to combat the strong drivers of deforestation. The project is well-supported in the target communities and also informally at national and provincial levels. Other tribal groups will be in a good position to benefit from the project outcomes and be involved in future REDD+ activities that may arise as a result of this project. Many aspects of this project are not “site specific” and are therefore highly replicable, given community support for such an approach.

Continuation of pilot project development and implementation would be highly desirable to local communities and to agencies supporting REDD+ in the Solomon Islands. An implementation phase would also be needed to demonstrate REDD+ in practice and demonstrate to landowning communities that an alternative to destructive and unsustainable logging practices is viable. Such a pilot activity would also enable the model to be replicated in new locations and at increased economies of scale and promoting the concept of community-driven combating deforestation initiatives elsewhere in the Pacific.

Consultations and policy dialogue with Department of Forestry and Environment and Conservation Division will be required to support expanded REDD+ activities. As logging companies are extremely proactive in Solomon Islands, proponents of REDD+ need to be equally active in promoting how the model can provide income for local communities while at the same time helping them maintain sovereignty over their resources and protect the same. For REDD+ to move forward and relieve pressure on land-owning groups to sign agreements with logging companies formal buy-in at provincial and national levels would be required to support indigenous people protect their resources within some type of national framework.