

Integrated Forest Management (IFM) Project in the Solomon Islands

**Project ID - GCP/SOI/001/GFF
GEFID - 5122**

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Solomon Islands, Year 2021**

Response by recommendation

In this section, Management should address each recommendation, discussing them in the order presented in the executive summary of the MTR report. This should be done in the format of the Management Response matrix below and include:

- a. The recommendation number and text copied from the MTR report;
- b. Indication of whether the recommendation is accepted fully, partially, or rejected;
- c. Description of the actions to be taken, with comments as required on the conditions to be met during implementation, or on reasons leading to a partial acceptance or rejection of a recommendation;
- d. The responsible party or FAO unit for implementing the action/s;
- e. The time-frame for implementation and/or an implementation schedule, if required;
- f. Indication if further funding from FAO or a resource partner is required for implementing the recommendation.

Management response matrix¹

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					11 November 2021
Evaluation Recommendation (a)	Management response (b) Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
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Recommendation 1: R.1 Cross cutting recommendation: General strategic shift to an adjusted niche to maximise relevance, that on one hand consolidates the focus on a more realistic set of targets (details under effectiveness) but at the same time increases the added value of the pioneering nature of the project by enhancing an adaptive action learning approach, documentation and communication of lessons (details under effectiveness and factors affecting performance).	Accepted	Communication products from LL for tribal communities and preparation of course curriculums are being developed by SINU. Communication of National Forest Reference Level was already made to the UNFCCC. All documents have been prepared through consultative process and adaptive learning approach is being followed.	Needs approved by the FLO. PMU with oversight from PSC.	Cross cutting throughout rest of project – specific suggested targets, revisions and timeframes added in effectiveness recommendations. Planned completion time, by end of Decemeber 2022	N

¹ Each column is cross-referenced to the bullet letters above.

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Recommendation 2: R2. Emphasis on harnessing indigenous knowledge to make approaches more relevant and acceptable to local people across all aspects of project work (e.g. in PA establishment, SFM and SLM and curriculum development and research focus) and in lessons dissemination. Students at SINU could get involved through research projects.	Accepted	Traditional knowledge has been emphasized as being important for addressing many issues from stand points of environmental sustainability and land management to climate change. Some old traditional technologies can still be applied to these. Course development at SINU could be harnessed to include indigenous knowledge.	PMU, SINU, Live and Learn, other partners and field coordinators	Within Q2 of 2022 and be explicitly emphasized in revised workplans.	N
Recommendation 3: R3. Under Component 1. reduction in target of PA establishment and also reviewing the sites, removing those that are not suitable (e.g. that have land disputes or where PAs are not willingly accepted). Needs to be discussed with provincial staff, ministry representatives, the PMU, the PTF (including LTO) FAO and GEF with oversight by the PSC and the FLO/FAO-GEF Coordination Unit. Based on experiences to date of how	Accepted	A simple analysis to reflect on the need to revise and reduce the overall PA target size was made following a direction by the Chairman and the PSC members during the MTR briefing on 12 August 2021. It has been accepted by the PSC that the new PA target is 25,000ha. Justification note is available.	PMU in consultation with ministries at national and provincial level, involving service providers, the PTF members (BH and LTO) and with oversight from PSC FAO-GEF CU.	New target decided by PSC on 28 Oct 2021	N

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<p>long PA establishment takes, a target of around 20-30 PA unevenly distributed among project sites depending on potential might be more feasible.</p> <p>The total area would be difficult to ascertain there should be some flexibility, but again based on experience, possibly an average 1,000 ha per site that is manageable for community groups with limited resources, making a total of around 20'000 to 30'000 ha but with some flexibility required as unpredictable. However, the project would have to ramp up its lesson learning and commit to developing a set of practical guidelines for PA establishment based on its experiences with lessons learned incorporated that should be made available online for ease of access.</p>					

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<p>Recommendation 4: R4. Under Component 2. The target could also be reduced – with a suggestion from various stakeholders to have the total target to be roughly around the same size as the PA target, e.g. 30 to 40,000 ha.</p> <p>However, this must be agreed with all key stakeholders.</p> <p>With the reduction in scope the process must be strengthened, particularly integrating/linking the activities to PA establishment, enhancing the SFM element to go beyond training to include piloting community-based SFM process.</p> <p>Like PA establishment this should include maps to identify boundary, agreement over customary managers, simple management plan, and clear</p>	Partially Accepted	Although recommendation was discussed, PSC decision was to allow more time for partners such as LL to continue the current work to engage with communities, farmers and extension officers and liaison with them a suggested target can be proposed. However, on the other hand it is thought that a lot of communities would be needing areas of land to access for livelihood as is currently being practiced in sussistence agriculture.	PMU in consultation with ministries at national and provincial level, involving service providers, such as LL, the PTF members (BH and LTO) and with oversight from PSC FAO-GEF CU. Drawing on expertise of other projects and organisations such as JICA but also on international experiences that are relevant, for example those working within FAO on	Live and Learn is rolling out training starting in November. Trianing is based on their RAP assessment and other curriculm development initaives under LOA. The PSC will decide to lower the area target based on the feedbcks received from the SLM training in coming 6 months.	N

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<p>use rights and responsibilities over the forests in the buffer zone.</p> <p>Such an agreement should ideally preclude concessions for commercial logging and mining, but encourage productive and sustainable management and use of the forest in the buffer zone by communities who sign the agreement.</p> <p>This is important as restrictions in use in the PA might put extra pressure on the buffer, which could be relieved through productive but sustainable management and use, this should include promoting selective - sustainable logging in the buffer zone.</p> <p>As this piloting of Community Based SFM will be a substantive undertaking, it is recommended that coalitions are built with other organisations to develop it, and lessons could also be</p>			Community Forestry, tenure, SFM etc.		

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drawn from other projects such as the JICA pilot on community based SFM.					
Recommendation 5: R5. In addition to ramping up support for Trust Fund development as planned in the coming months, livelihood enhancement at community level must be a priority. It is recommended to also fast-track the exploration of 'low hanging fruit' viable	Partially Accepted	Conservation Trust Fund establishment is in progress and expected to be in place by Q3 of year 2022. Work on Livelihood options has been initiated with consultation being held with tribal communities.	PMU in consultation with ministries and overseen by PSC. Drawing on expertise of organisations	PATF is planned to be installed by June 2022 All livelihood options to be	N

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enterprise support ideas. These should be based on value chain analysis to identify bottle necks and opportunities, and could range from improving market access, creating economies of scale to cut out middle men, adding value etc. etc. A process plan for support needs to be urgently drawn up on assessing and screening enterprise development ideas – which should be linked to PAs, SFM and/or SLM and should have a special consideration for women’s groups as women already are often engaged in marketing activities. Again, this is a substantive undertaking and collaboration with organisations with expertise in livelihood/enterprise development would be helpful, for example Live and Learn has experience of lucrative organic products markets.		However, considering the limited scope of livelihood option support under this project it would be difficult to have diversified impact. Hence workable options will be considered which can equally benefits tribes, who are establishing PAs.	working in the area of enterprise development.	implemented by end of 2022	
Recommendation 6: R6. Regarding component 3. Although support for	Accepted	The Nakau program is an attractive carbon financing scheme that is currently being	PMU in consultation with	Throughout project	N

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national REDD+ programme could continue, the emerging opportunity of discrete carbon offsetting programmes linked to PAs should be further explored and synergies between the PA establishment process and carbon offsetting programme should be strengthened and the valuable lessons from this experience documented and shared.		implemented and benefiting tribes in Choiseul such as SIREBE. This or similar programmes needs to be explored so that othe tribal groups in other provinces could also benefit form such scheme. Padejaka PA in Choisuel province is another potential PA for carbon trade. These two PAs will set example to be scaled up in the whole country.	communities, NAKAU, NRDF, REDD+ unit and MECDM		
Recommendation 7: R7. Regarding component 4. Critical review and re-strategizing of restoration work. As well as reducing the target to a realistic amount (at least for government driven reforestation), the project is recommended to support a review and strategizing meeting to explore other options if the current strategy is not working. Based on advice during the review, this would best involve community representatives and the private sector as well as government	Accepted	Has been discussed on a number of occassions that current MOFR target of 200-250ha per year is highly unachievable. MOFR has previously made a target of 500ha. When it was relaised this cannot be achieved they reduce to 250ha and even this is difficult to achieve. PSC meeting on 28 Oct suggested that similar analysis to that of revised PA target be made by MoFR and presented to PSC electronically for decision.	PMU with MoFR, private sector and communities.	3 months	N

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and NGOs, to develop a reforestation strategy that was possibly more private sector and community driven.					
Recommendation 8: R8. Regarding component 5. Discuss contract ending of staff at SINU and explore ways to strengthen course development and support for implementation, this might include reaching out to other actors in the appropriate sectors to pull resources to provide the support the courses require – especially staff capacity. Also provide direct support on how to operate and maintain equipment provided by the project for the courses.	Partially Accepted	All relevant SINU staff (esp within faculty of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) has been contracted back by SINU and work on course development is expected to be finalized.	SINU, ministries, PMU and other projects	Need to assess support needs with SINU by end of Q1 of year 2022 and provide comprehensive support	N
Recommendation 9: R9. Regarding component 5. A cross cutting and more explicit focus should be on revitalising, harnessing and documenting customary beliefs and	Accepted	LL has developed the training materials and course program for agriculture extension officers and wil test out the designed manuals in beginning in November 2021.	PMU, field coordinators SINU, Live and Learn, new staff working with lesson learning	Should be integrated into work plans of year 2022.	N

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practices and including them in processes and documentation of work in PAs, SFM and SLM.		Other course development by SINU will be initiated. A communication expert will be hired to prepare documentary evidence on customary beliefs and practices and including them in processes and documentation of work in PAs, SFM and SLM.	and communication		
<p>Recommendation 10: R10. Regarding component 5. much more emphasise should be put on developing an accessible repository for knowledge products, for example putting the information on an online portal in an accessible format prior to the project phasing out, also related to sustainability.</p> <p>Suggested key knowledge products should include process guidelines for establishing PAs, the carbon reference level, biodiversity survey results, land use policy study and recommendations, and on indigenous</p>	Accepted	All documents will be placed on MECDM WEBSITE and Portal for access by relevant agencies and even Public with access rights.	PMU, PSC and ministries, SINU	Should be integrated into work plans within next 3 months.	N

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knowledge of forests and agricultural land stewardship.					
Recommendation 11: R11. Stronger collaborations. It is clear that the project cannot do everything with regards to piloting community-based PA, SFM and SLM or the other aspects like setting up new courses at SINU, but it can play an important part. However, for this part to be sustained there must be strong collaboration with others to play the other parts – playing to the strengths of their organizations. The project has had some success with this but needs to be more explicit in building synergies over the next two years through the forest sector working group and others. It is recommended to use the current Forestry Working Group as a platform to discuss stronger joint work-planning to build synergies.	Partially Accepted	It is already in place. But PMU will discuss with MOFR, MAL, MECDM and SINU and other partners.	PMU, Forest sector working group, ministries and all partners active in the sectors.	Within next 3 months. More explicit focus on collaboration in the workplans.	N

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<p>Recommendation 13:</p> <p>R13. Several issues to solve which are not only relevant to this project but others in similar circumstances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must as a priority develop action plan and involve key stakeholders Must as a priority find a way to either set up a project or FAO bank account – this could then be relevant to other countries without fully fledged FAO representation. • Must as a priority strengthen staff capacity in admin and finance aspects to lower the load on project management. • Longer term explore ways of devolving and making both the procurement and recruitment process faster and relevant for remote 	Accepted	On 28 Oct PSC has re-emphasised its call for this recommendation be considered. FAOSAP needs to take course of action. This was raised also during briefing by MTR consultants.	PMU/LTO/Sub regional office to develop proposals with justifications and recommendations with support, oversight and approval from finance department, GEF Coordination unit	<p>Suggestions provided by project within next 2 months, via the FAO regional office submitted to the GEF Unit and FAO and FAO finance department. Budget adjustments prepared by PMU to deal with project extension.</p> <p>Time frame for implementation will be Q1 of year 2022.</p>	N

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<p>countries with small numbers and often low capacities of suppliers.</p> <p>Also related to finances, with the project extension, the running/management budget left is only US\$33, 917, budget adjustments to deal with the extension are clearly required, the rationale for the increase, where the money will come from and the budget for the next two years will need to be put forward and checked by the finance officer against GEF requirements concerning increasing project management costs.</p>					
<p>Recommendation 14: R14. Update log frame based on new achievable targets and revised outputs. Some specific suggestions for consideration are stipulated in Factors Affecting Performance section- M&E, these must be screened and adapted to what is considered desirable and feasible by</p>	Accepted	PSC agreed on 28 Oct 2021 meeting that SAP/FAO FLO will need to consider this.	PMU with oversight from PSC and the FAO-FLO, GEF Unit.	Revised logframe outputs and target approved by PSC within 2 months.	N

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the PMU, PSC and must be approved by GEF.					
Recommendation 15: R15. Strengthened Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation, skills support and review and planning with field coordinators and ministries. There should be more consistent Participatory Monitoring and Review of activities at all project sites – possibly quarterly with rapid troubleshooting undertaken when problems arise in either process or performance. Need to likewise provide more skills and materials support and more regular face to face review and planning to the field coordinators, where possible bringing some or all together face to face in the review and planning to also do peer review and peer sharing of lessons among field coordinators. Also it would be ideal to conduct quarterly or half yearly review and planning	Accepted	<p>More collaboration is now happening. Activities to support this has been badly affected during high time of COVID19 in the country and around the globe.</p> <p>Low levels of understanding in similar nature of work by coordinators prove this tough for them. New Field Coordinator is now being recruited for Malaita following non-oeformance of previous officer. And contract for Coordinator of Guadalcanal has not been renewed also due to non-performance. Need to recruit new field coordinator for GP.</p>	PMU and ministries	System for PM&E and review and planning enhanced within 3 months.	N

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meetings with the ministries to coordinate work better.					
Recommendation 16: R16. Need to strengthen capacities within the team. With the team already overstretched and with a need to enhance PM&E, review/planning and especially lesson learning documentation and communication it is recommended to explore hiring more staff capacity, possibly covering an umbrella of related work on coordination of project activities, PM&E, review and planning, lesson learning, documentation and communication. This role depending on the candidate could also involve gender mainstreaming and development of safeguards – see cross cutting dimensions. There also does seem to be a need for other support staff for example HR/admin assistant that could be combined with finance and	Accepted/	<p>Low levels of understanding in similar nature of work by coordinators prove this tough for them. New Field Coordinator is recruited for Malaita following non-oerformance of previous officer. And contract for Coordinator of Guadalcanal has not been renewed due to non-performance. Need to recruit new field coordinator for GP.</p> <p>Consideration is given to hire communication expert, Admin/Finance/HR/ livelihood experts.</p> <p>Office space is still proven to be an issue and where currently PMU officers are seated at differnet buildings.</p>	PMU and finance officer to propose this for approval by PSC, FAO regional office/HR and GEF.	Budget reallocations explored, job advertised and recruitment (full time or consultant) within next 3 months.	N

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procurement, especially in light of the extra financial challenges due to having no national account. However, the finances for this would have to be explored, if reallocations were indeed possible, a proposal would be required by the PMU including the finance officer. Another aspect of strengthening staff capacity and performance is to look into ways to address issues related to office space and operational needs especially at province level which although had improved of late was still a source of some complaint. Finally at the time of this report drafting it was reported that dynamic local community members were being recruited to help with the workload PA establishment process, this is a very welcome development and it is recommended to strengthen this approach.					

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Recommendation 17: R17. Recommend to ask partners to conduct another estimate of co-finance ideally annual, but at least by the final review of the project. In addition it is recommended to work out an estimate of the co-finance contribution of community members to the project activities.	Accepted/	<p>Consideration is given to roll a sliding scale kind of method for estimating co-finance from government and other partners.</p> <p>It is proven difficult to ascertain co-finacne during implementation.</p> <p>The 5 yr office budget for NRDF, for example, was used for estimating co-finance from them as a partner during the project design.</p>	PMU, Ministries, project partners, community organizations	Ideally annually, but essential before end of the project.	N
Recommendation 18: R18. Need for a cross cutting gender strategy/approach which aims to enhance gender mainstreaming, but based on a careful diagnosis with women themselves to understand the best means of engaging them and for what ends, with approaches tailored to context. Rather than being an 'extra', the strategy should be cross cutting and built into ongoing activities, for example specific cross cutting	Accepted/	Project is taking due care of gender inclusive approach. For example, gender and role of women has been described in the LL report. In the PA process itself, consideration has been given to women involvement and in some cases office bearers of PA Management Committees are held by women.	PMU, Partners	Within next 3 months further assessment with women undertaken and elements to enhance gender equity embedded within project activities.	N

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elements of the PA establishment process, or full engagement in management planning for SFM and enterprise support.					
Recommendation 19: R19. Social safeguards must be strengthened. A system of social safeguarding must be integrated into the PA establishment process, including a practical and impartial way for communities with a grievance against the process to register their grievance and have it addressed to an appropriate 'neutral' body at provincial level.	Partially Accepted	This needs be further clarified in the PAC Act 2010 and its Regulations. IF work needs to be undertaken to improve grievance registration and how to address them well then all actors need to be identified to progress this. This activity will be led by MECDM and IFM project can support in consultation.	PMU, ministries and provincial government, relevant partners	Within next 6 months mechanism and workplan will be developed.	N
Recommendation 20: R120. Cross cutting emphasis on harnessing indigenous knowledge on forest and land stewardship. More explicit focus – on harnessing indigenous knowledge and customary practices across all aspects of project work and	Accepted/	Considered the recruitment of communication expert. Also any action need to be consideration of action items in Recommendations 2 and 9 above.	PMU, SINU, Live and Learn, other partners and field coordinators	Within next 3 months be explicitly mentioned in workplans.	N

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communicating it – for example in the PA, SFM and SLM work and new SINU courses. Also students could help in documenting indigenous knowledge as part of their research work.					