

**Social Assessment**

**21/02/2017**

**CEPF Grant GA17-02**

**Edenhope Nature Preserve**

**Strengthen Local Conservation Networks to Respond to Threats within the Santo Mountain  
Chain**

**Tasmate, West Coast Santo, Vanuatu**

## **Grant Summary**

1. Edenhope Nature Preserve
2. Strengthening Local Conservation Networks to Respond to Threats within the Santo Mountain Chain
3. Grant number (GA17/02)
4. \$19,990
5. April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 to April 30<sup>th</sup> 2018
6. Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu
7. 21/2/2017

### **8. Indigenous People affected:**

The community of Tasmate village, West Coast Santo, is primarily affected by the scope of this project within the broader context of Edenhope's presence as lessees of Tasmate's traditional (custom) land. Four tribes/family groups constitute the population of 160 in Tasmate village: the Rojo family, the Kenneth family, the Teno family and the Ben family. Representatives of the younger generation of each of these families are signatories to Edenhope's lease of the 786ha that constitutes the Community Conservation Area of Edenhope Nature Preserve.

As the proposed project requires logistical support from the village community, including transport, accommodation and catering for intended participants, as well as use of their land to provide the space for training, the residents of Tasmate are thus most affected by this intervention. Any remuneration for service to the project must be distributed fairly among the four tribal groups and due consideration must be taken of the needs of the community as a whole. Further, appropriate organisational structures need to be in place within Tasmate community in order to facilitate the level of co-operation required for Edenhope's implementation of the project.

### **9. Summary of the proposed project:**

The goal of this project is to establish a network of Community Conservation Areas along the West Santo Mountain chain. This will offer a decentralized, cost-effective, sustainable and locally appropriate support mechanism for ni-Vanuatu communities in a peer-to-peer biodiversity and conservation extension/leadership system.

Our implementation strategy, in the short-term, is to facilitate an innovative partnership among indigenous civil society groups, local academic institutions, Government agencies, science organizations and development partners. This will take the form of three intensive training sessions of at least three days' duration each, directed at establishing an active network of conservation champions amongst the 17 remote communities of West Coast Santo. The training program will be undertaken in a multi-partner consortium, led and managed by Edenhope Nature Preserve in partnership with the Nguna-Pele Marine and Land Protected Area Network.

Edenhope is the technical information venue and center of learning for members of the proposed Network. We are primary facilitators and conveners of this project, the anchoring point between the external biodiversity expertise (Nguna-Pele, Island Reach, Government of Vanuatu) and the intended network of local champions on West Coast Santo. Edenhope actively communicates with local communities on an organisational level, as well as hosting many of the proposed workshops and events.

On a resources level, Edenhope has the space available to convene workshops in Tasmate Village, as well as onsite facilities to host gatherings of champions for future conferences. Furthermore, Edenhope is the only registered CCA on the entire West Coast of Santo and serves as a learning model for other communities in regards to governance and proactive biodiversity management.

This project will enable an informal information exchange between resource champions of Nguna-Pele and indigenous communities of the Santo Mountain chain for sustainable transfer of knowledge and skills related to community biodiversity and climate change related programming and implementation. Ni-Vanuatu conservation champions from the Nguna-Pele Network will host a series of capacity building, and network strengthening activities with the 17 communities located on the central West Coast of Santo.

This Network will benefit from the extensive conservation experience of the Nguna-Pele communities. Hands on practical training on resource monitoring, management planning, enforcement and practical biodiversity enhancement will be undertaken in a peer-to-peer format. Specific activities of this program include a refinement of lessons learned and compilation of experience-based best practices developed over years at Nguna-Pele. These materials will be made available for use and distribution at the capacity building workshops on West Coast Santo.

Under the program, three training courses will be carried out for up to 30 resources champions on West Coast Santo with a goal of establishing a Santo Mountain Chain conservation network and building the capacity of community leaders. The workshops will cover the following topics:

1. Biodiversity conservation and ecosystem-based adaptation
2. Environmental Governance and Planning
3. Ecological Monitoring

The initial training by Nguna-Pele will raise the capacity of multiple communities and then targeted work can continue in those locations that are most motivated, interested and able to further develop biodiversity conservation programs.

Activities implemented in areas inhabited/used by indigenous people are the training sessions, which are intended to take place in a large facility in Tasmate village belonging to the Edenhope project. To accommodate and cater for the workshop participants, Edenhope will need the support and assistance of the Tasmate Community.

The role intended for Tasmate is to host training facilitators in the local guest house and arrange accommodation for participants from the neighbouring villages with host families. One large communal meal is to be prepared by Tasmate community for training participants per day at lunch time, with host families providing breakfast and dinner on an individual basis. The cost of food and catering would all be remunerated to community members under the CEPF grant, as well as boarding costs for training participants.

Edenhope will also require the support and assistance of Tasmate in arranging transport by boat for training participants to travel to and from Tasmate. Their help will be needed to disseminate important information and documentation to other communities, as all mail on the West Coast must be delivered by hand. Although remuneration is covered for many of these tasks by the CEPF grant, participation of Tasmate requires a certain amount of organisation and responsibility for meeting the needs of training participants.

**10. Potential impacts:** This section will assess expected project impacts (both positive and negative) on Indigenous People.

**Positive project impacts:**

- Engendering a sense of duty and responsibility for maintaining conservation areas.
- Fostering development and education of cultural minorities within the indigenous community, i.e., women and young people.
- Empowering indigenous communities to take necessary action to adapt to the effects of climate change on food security, resource management, and infrastructure development.
- Indigenous communities are enabled to design locally relevant conservation actions that respond to major threats at priority sites.
- Local networks have increased capacity, including training and mentoring in financial and project management, meaning less reliance on Government and external environmental partners.
- Training will focus on co-operative, sensitive strategies to conservation management; no outcome or agenda is enforced or imposed upon indigenous communities, rather techniques and skills learned from field experience in conservation are shared and compared.
- Creating a context within indigenous communities for discussion about environmental issues.

**Assessment of positive project impacts:**

The goal of the proposed project is to empower and engage the indigenous peoples of West Coast Santo to get informed and take action on conservation issues that importantly affect their way of life. Edenhope wishes to take a non-interventionist, facilitator strategy that enables the expertise of an experienced indigenous conservation network (Ngunu-Pele) to be shared with the local residents of West Coast Santo, who have had no such opportunity until this time.

For the Tasmate community specifically, which is most affected on a practical level by these training opportunities, the most vital positive impact is the transformation of their remote regional location into a centre for education and conservation strategy. The opportunity to host these trainings makes Tasmate a leading exemplar on environmental management, which as a whole is something for the community to be proud of.

**Negative project impacts:**

- Resistance to change could result in loss of culture and social cohesion. A lack of understanding about the long-term aims of the project (i.e. setting up an indigenous conservation network) could mean that local residents do not trust the intervention and resist co-operation on the practical implementation of the project.
- Dependency on external support could arise through the very opportunity of receiving remuneration for the support offered by Tasmate community. Following the initial period of the grant, unreasonable expectations could arise that affect the way that Tasmate community relates to the proposed long-term network in terms of hospitality towards and relations with the proposed network of champions.
- A lack of organisation in Tasmate community could result in remuneration for support and service not being distributed fairly amongst different tribes/families or not directed at mutually beneficial community projects.
- Potential conflicts may arise within the community, and/or between Tasmate and Edenhope, on account of misunderstandings or miscommunication about sustainable use of natural resources; e.g., the prohibition on hunting and fishing on CCA land.

**Assessment of negative project impacts:**

All the potential negative impacts to the indigenous peoples included in this project can be successfully mitigated by proper communication at the outset (during the free, prior and informed consultation) and by implementing an effective organisational structure within Tasmate community (i.e., a specialised committee) that deals exclusively with any social, financial or land use issues arising from the establishment of a local conservation network.

Further, the key values of Edenhope's co-operation with Tasmate on any matters concerning the implementation of the project a mutual sense of trust, respect, and transparency. It is the duty of Edenhope as grantee to ensure that all services rendered by individuals in Tasmate village to the project are adequately and fairly remunerated. The specialised committee of Tasmate residents can support and verify the integrity of the project to the wider community.

**11. Participatory preparation:** This section will describe the participation of affected communities during the project design process (i.e. prior to submission of the full proposal), and explain how Free, Prior and Informed Consent was obtained.

A meeting was held in Tasmate village on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2017, with the following agenda:

- To explain in detail the opportunity for local education provided under the CEPF grant
- To share what the contribution of partner organisations such as Nguna-Pele is to be, including statements from members of these partner organisations.
- To consider the practical implementation strategies to be undertaken by Tasmate in co-operation with Edenhope: i.e., what is to be done, who could do it, and how remuneration is to be provided.
- Setting up of a specialised committee for the implementation of this project.
- Consultation with this committee on matters pertaining to project design and community involvement; discussion of the grievance mechanism and dispute management options; providing information about participatory monitoring and evaluation exercises.

The Chairman of Tasmate community, Andrew Kenneth, presided over the meeting on behalf of Chief Titus. Nicola Trethowan from Edenhope Nature Preserve and Tasaruru Whitely from Nguna-Pele Marine and Land Protected Area Network made a short presentation of the opportunity to receive a grant from CEPF. As the meeting was scheduled directly after the local church service, the majority of community members – including women and young people – were present.

First, Nicola detailed the scope and practical aims of the grant, paying particular attention to the role of Tasmate Community and the short-term and long-term benefits of the proposed Conservation Network. Then she detailed the specific roles that Tasmate would assume responsibility for, as hosts of the proposed training workshop, such as catering, accommodation and transport. She emphasised that Tasmate, as the host village of the proposed training workshops, would be responsible for setting the final dates for these trainings and encouraged the establishment of a specialised committee for CEPF matters.

Following this, Tasaruru spoke in more engaging detail about his experience with the establishment of a local indigenous conservation network on Nguna-Pele, discussing the benefits that had started small and grown over time, such as increased Government support and assistance in the regional communities, and positive impacts on the health, food security, local economy, and level of education in the indigenous villages of Nguna and Pele. He reported a few important ways that these communities had prospered following environmental training, including more diverse species surviving and thriving in the reefs, and opportunities to sell new local handicrafts at market.

Overall, Tasaruru was able to discuss the tangible ways in which conservation training had improved the quality of life in villages covered by the network. He emphasised the short-term and long-term benefits that had arisen through Nguna-Pele's involvement with CEPF and was able to share facts based on his own experience.

To conclude the meeting, Chairman Andrew Kenneth proposed to form a specialised committee of Tasmate residents to assist with implementing the project. This committee was given responsibility, over the following week, to arrange suitable dates for the trainings to take place in Tasmate village as an important part of the project design process. Nicola then gave an outline of the basic grievance mechanism relevant to this project, and informed the wider community that Edenhope would be ready to receive any negative feedback at any time from any individual in the community and let it be known to the Regional Implementation Team.

The proposed trainings were met with enthusiasm and support by the residents of Tasmate community, and our intended aim of setting up a specialised committee to support the project design and implementation of the CEPF project was met successfully during this meeting.

## 12. Mitigation strategies

Our two key mitigation strategies for the management of grievances in this project are: communication and co-operation.

**Communication** ensures that the needs of Tasmate community and Edenhope representatives are both expressed and considered. Andrew Kenneth and Roger Rojo have agreed to act as liaisons on behalf of Tasmate Community with Nicola from Edenhope in relation to implementing the CEPF project.

Before and during the project term, we expect to meet in person at least once per fortnight to discuss any relevant matters arising, including requests for assistance and any grievances concerning specific implementation strategies. Andrew and Roger will keep us informed of any negative issues affecting members of the community or the village as a whole both in relation to the CEPF project and Edenhope's overall presence as lessees of Tasmate customary land.

**Co-operation** comes down to willingness and availability on both sides for needs expressed by one party to be met by the other. For instance, in our preliminary discussions about implementing workshops in Tasmate, the village community reserved the right to set prices for catering, room and board, and any other costs involved with hosting these events. As the prices they determined were fair and reasonable, no grievances came up for either party. Throughout the implementation of this project, we aim to ensure above all that a willingness remains to work harmoniously with each other, whatever needs are expressed and whatever problems or grievances may arise.

The grievance mechanism was explained in detail both to community representatives Andrew and Roger, as well as to the community as a whole. However, as no communication by telephone, email or post is available on West Coast Santo, we advised that all grievances will first be handled by Nicola Trethowan, as detailed below under the grievance mechanism.

### **13. Monitoring and evaluation:**

Monitoring and evaluation of safeguard policy will be done on a quarterly basis. At the end of each quarter, members of the specialised committee of Tasmate community residents will undertake a survey to evaluate their level of satisfaction with the progress of the CEPF project, and specifying any positive or negative impacts they have experienced in that quarter. The survey will be prepared for them to complete in Bislama, translated by Nicola Trethowan, and sent with a scan of the original survey to the Regional Implementation Team.

Questions included on the survey will include:

- How would you rate your satisfaction with the project in the last three months?
- How often has the committee met to discuss for this project in the last three months?
- How often has the committee met with members of the community to discuss this project?
- How often has the committee met with members Edenhope to discuss this project?
- In the last three months, how difficult was it to manage this project?
- In what ways has this project benefited the community in the last three months?
- In what ways has this project impacted negatively on the community in the last three months?

Responses to the first 5 questions will be on a sliding scale of 1 to 5. For the last two questions, which look specifically at positive and negative impacts of the project, respondents will be asked to give specific details about the impacts of the project.

Evaluating by a quarterly survey will enable Edenhope in partnership with the community to look at ways to ensure that a line of communication and co-operation remains open throughout the project. The survey format, written in clear language easy for the respondents to understand, is a good way to monitor the level of information exchange at all levels of the project implementation. Further, it offers a coherent way to look at any risks or grievances that may come up for Tasmate community at any stage of the project. As the community are primarily involved in a hosting/facilitatory capacity, their input during monitoring will help us to formulate ways to properly manage the training sessions in Tasmate village.

Over the year of the project, the quarterly monitoring process will also enable us to create a progressive, evolving account of ‘what comes us’ and ‘how do we solve it.’ All negative impacts, and the strategies involved to mitigate them over the course of the year, will be included in a report and submitted with analysis as a final evaluation of Edenhope’s Social Safeguard compliance in conclusion of the project in April 2018.

**14. Grievance mechanism:** All projects that trigger a safeguard are required to provide local communities and other interested stakeholders with means by which they may raise a grievance with the grantee, the relevant Regional Implementation Team, the CEPF Secretariat or the World Bank. Affected local communities should be informed of the objectives of the grant and the existence of a grievance mechanism. Contact information of the grantee, the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director should be made publicly available, through posters, signboards, public notices or other appropriate means in local language(s). Grievances raised with the grantee should be communicated to the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days, together with a proposed response. If the claimant is still not satisfied following the response, the grievance may be submitted directly to the CEPF Executive Director via the dedicated email account ([cepfexecutive@conservation.org](mailto:cepfexecutive@conservation.org)) or by mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Secretariat, the grievance may be submitted to the World Bank at the local World Bank office. Please describe the grievance mechanism that you will use for your project, and how you will ensure that stakeholders are aware of it. 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 on c/- CEPF Regional Implementation Team, PMB 5 Ma'afu St, Suva, Fiji. The Grant Director can be contacted via email on [mzador@cepf.net](mailto:mzador@cepf.net).

The West Coast of Espiritu Santo is the least developed region of the island, and has no access to telephone reception, post office, or internet. Edenhope, which has satellite internet access, is therefore only communications point on the whole West Coast and all grievances will therefore have to come through Edenhope. In general, when local residents have a message to communicate to Edenhope they either travel to us on foot or wait until we visit Tasmate village.

Full details of the grievance mechanism in place, and the contact details of the Regional Implementation Team, will be shared with members of the specialised committee of Tasmate community members dedicated to the implementation of this project. They will be the first contact point for any claimant wishing to make a grievance, and will direct them to co-ordinate their grievance through Edenhope's communication system.

The main contact person at Edenhope responsible for dealing with grievances is Nicola Trethowan. Any claimant wishing to raise a grievance about the intended project will be asked to share their grievance with her, either verbally or in writing. Verbal grievances will be recorded and written down in Bislama, signed and dated by the claimant. The written record of a grievance will be scanned and sent to the Regional Implementation Team, accompanied by an English translation and the proposed response from Edenhope. If the response is not met with satisfaction by the claimant, then Edenhope agrees to take up the matter further on their behalf by contacting the CEPF Executive Director via email.

In written communications that Edenhope distributes to local villages along the West Coast in regards to the project, full details will be provided as to how to contact CEPF and Edenhope with any grievances.

**15. Budget:** This section will summarize dedicated costs related to compliance with the safeguard policy on Indigenous Peoples. These costs should be incorporated into the budget of the CEPF grant and/or covered by co-financing.

All dedicated costs related to compliance with the safeguard policy are included in the 'in-kind support' offered by Edenhope Nature Preserve in the proposed budget of this project.

The only foreseeable cost of implementing this policy is time taken to arrange meetings with the specialised committee in Tasmate, and processing survey results. This will all be done on a voluntary basis by members of Edenhope.

**16. Map:** Please insert a map (indicate boundary if possible) of the area where the project will be implemented.

