



**ENVIRONMENT PROJECT
LANDHOLDERS CONSERVATION
INITIATIVES**

FINAL EVALUATION

REPORT

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SEPTEMBER 2010

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Acknowledgment

I would like to acknowledge and appreciate PCU staff in the office in Vila for entrusting me with this important work for the LCI project. PCU through the previous Project Coordinator, Mr. Amos Kalo and his office staff had allowed me access to all the important information in the office to update me with the important work of LCIP. Mr. Kalo had already moved on to another job but I still valued his input into this report as he was instrumental in the LCI project implementation until its completion. To the staff in the VEU office that had continually provided supportive suggestions during the research and writing up of this LCI Project Final Evaluation Report, I thank you all very much.

I acknowledge also, the new Director of the Department of Environment and Conservation, Mr. Albert William and his staff for their support to me to complete this report. I thank you all.

To those of you whom I have not specifically mentioned your name, (please forgive me as there are so many of you), I appreciated and thanked you all for your invaluable contribution to me to complete this report.

Finally, may I say here, that I take full responsibility for any shortcomings in this report and these cannot be attributed to all of you who supported me in providing the information that I needed. In line with that I want to also sincerely, apologies for these shortfalls.

Thank you again and may God bless us all.

Acronyms

CA	-	Conservation Area
CCA	-	Community Conservation Area
CBOs	-	Community Based Organizations
CC	-	Carbon Credit
COM	-	Council of Ministers
DEC	-	Department of Environment and Conservation
FO	-	Field Officer
FPO	-	Field Project Officer
FSPV	-	Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific, Vanuatu
GEF	-	Global Environment Facilities
HU	-	Highly Unsatisfactory
KAP	-	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
LCI	-	Landholders Conservation Initiatives
LCIP	-	Landholders Conservation Initiatives Project
MCO	-	Management Country Office
M&E	-	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSP	-	Medium Scale Project
MTR	-	Mid Term Review
MU	-	Management Unit
NCSA	-	National Capacity Self Assessment
NGOs	-	Non Government Organizations
PC	-	Project Coordinator
PCU	-	Project Coordination Unit
PDF	-	Project Development Fund
PFO	-	Project Field Officer
PIR	-	Project Implementation Review
POWPR	-	Programme of Work on Protected Area

Q1 Yr 1	-	Quarter 1, Year 1
Q4 Yr1	-	Quarter 4, Year 1
TBV	-	Television Blong Vanuatu
TOR	-	Terms Of Reference
TPR	-	Tripartite Review
TRM	-	Traditional Resource Management
U	-	Unsatisfactory
UN	-	United Nations
UNCBD	-	UN Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCLD	-	United Nation Convention to Combat Land Degradation
UNCFCCC	-	United Nation Convention Framework on Combating Climate Change
UNDP	-	United Nation Development Program
VEU	-	Vanuatu Environment Unit
VKS	-	Vanuatu Kaljarol Senta
VPAI	-	Vanuatu Protected Areas Initiative
WSB	-	Wan Smol Bag

1. Executive Summary

This Final Evaluation of the Landholders Conservation Initiatives Project (LCIP) was conducted during the period of 1st – 28th February 2010 by John Liu, a local consultant, from the Liuservice Consultancy, after the Project ended in December 2009. Somehow this work was delayed due to set backs encountered with financial arrangement for the Evaluator to visit the 3 project sites, locating appropriate documents such as second KAP survey report, final Coordinator's report for 2009 and contacting various PFOs, stakeholders, and appropriate feedback from etc.

The approach taken was based on researching relevant reports, plans, minutes and studies generated by the Project as well as meeting and talking to some immediate stakeholders, including the Project Coordinator, Vanuatu Environment Unit (VEU) staff and partners. The evaluation tried to be evidence-based by using the stated information reported about the expected outcomes, goals and objectives and their verifiable indicators and merged these with results and impacts, articulated and expressed by other reviews. Unfortunately due to lack of funding the Evaluator was not able to tour the project sites and get first hand information. The lessons learned were achieved through general consensus regarding incidents and good practices of LCIP for future priorities. During the course of the mission, preliminary findings were discussed with the ex-Project Coordinator and other VEU staff.

In summary, the Project, have had profound impacts on the future of Conservation but needs to continue to expand to include endemic species and incorporate biodiversity of national and international significance as well as the immediate internal reasons of; resource management and the expression of traditional custom.¹

At the environment and biodiversity conservation workshop with the Penoru community CA in September of 2008 there was emphasis on the importance of the significant species for conservation. An outcome of this was the production of Penoru T - Shirt covering various endemic species of Penoru CA. Similar event like this took place in Tanna with posters of Tanna endemic species, booklet and T-shirts carrying conservation messages on their significant plant species (Donna Kalfatak).

There is also a DVD documentary produced by Stevenson Liu on the three LCIP sites on Tanna, Santo and Gaua about the LCI project. The impacts of the awareness activities towards the end of the project have seen Tanna set a goal to "build environmental pride" at the end of 2008. Example of this was seen by the way the communities embarked on replanting of endemic species. It was reported that the people are now showing pride with their internationally recognized species like coconut crabs and other endemic species.

Threats that have been identified in the GEF documents to biodiversity management are: weaknesses in the civil society and local governance; people's motivation;

¹ Project Design document page 5

environmental pride and commitment to biodiversity; capacity to address or contain local threats to biodiversity, etc.²

The Project document stated six strategies to mitigate the identified threats to local level biodiversity conservation:³

- a) Develop an understanding of the community level environmental governance in the Vanuatu context, and work to strengthen the effectiveness of community level governance
- b) Build bridges between traditional and modern environment governance systems
- c) Foster cooperation and community responsibility for biological resources
- d) Promote awareness, pride and understanding of international significant biodiversity and foster commitment and motivation to address international conservation priorities
- e) Build capacity to address the management of specific local national resources and the conservation issues. This, includes the invasive species, control of livestock, promotion of stable agricultural sites and land use practices, and enabling alternative sustainable livelihoods
- f) Build capacity at government, community and individual levels.

Importantly, the full impacts of these can only become reality by the persistency of the landholders and their communities to conservation over a period of time. It is encouraging however, to notice preliminary evidence, of potentials and opportunities toward this direction highlighted by the project. Here are two examples of this positive evidence:

- a) The Landholders commitment is seen in the way they provided their land in their respective communities for conservation. The total land used for the current conservation purposes on the three project sites, have not been mapped out, except for Penoru that has 1092 hectares. The total land area in other conservation sites is not yet possible to specify as the total amount of land that had been used have not been mapped.
- b) The benefits of the conservation of biodiversity are to mitigate the poverty in Vanuatu and to increase the opportunity for wealth through an integrated approach, to conservation and development.

2. Introduction

The Project was conceived as part, of the external financial intervention to articulate and improve the local high value on conservation of land and biological resources. The traditional purposes of this strong community level conservation are both for resource

² Ibid page 5

³ Ibid pages 5 & 6

management and as the expression of traditional custom. This intervention, however, is to expand conservation purposes beyond this local commitment to encompass species of national and international significance.⁴

2.1. Basic Concept and Design

The basic concept design raised the limitation that the formal institutions have, to venture into large scale conservation involvement, in relation to the land issue. *“The Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu provides for inalienable traditional tenure. Consequently biodiversity conservation can only occur with the support, understanding and commitment of landholders.”*⁵ This is the basis for the involvement of landholders in this Conservation Initiatives as highlighted in the project design.

The concept also sets the project objectives and their corresponding activities to address the threats that limited the current local capacity for biodiversity management namely; *“weaknesses in the civil society and local governance, people’s motivation, environmental pride and commitment to biodiversity; capacity to address or contain local threats to biodiversity.”*⁶

⁴ Project Design document page 5

⁵ Ibid page 5

⁶ Ibid page 5

2.2. Project Development and Duration

The LCI project was designed three years prior to its official signing on the 24 February 2005 and the first disbursement of funds dated the 8th of April of the same year.⁷ However the actual implementation activities only started in early August with the recruitment of the Project Coordinator followed by the Administrative Assistant on the 29 August. The Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator began work on 14 November and the Field Officers in late November and early December 2005.⁸

This long delay between the signing of the project, submission and the actual release of funding and implementation of project took approximately 11 months. This delay, caused uncertainties in the recruitment of personnel and procurement of equipment, because project funds were needed to purchase equipment and pay salaries of staff. The second difficulty with this is its implication on the budget to cater for the increasing gap, between the increasing costs of activities due to the internal inflation and/or, external devaluation of the foreign currency used in the project.⁹

One important matter that was left out of the project development design is the UN systems dealing with the UN Conventions. These are such things like the UN Convention of Biodiversity (UNCBD); UN Convention Framework on Combating Climate Change (UNCFCCC); UN Convention to Combat Land Degradation (UNCCLD); and the Carbon Credit (CC).

There is nothing in the project design to cater for compensating landowners for the use of their land for multifaceted purposes of biodiversity conservation. One of the project conservation scopes is to encompass the development of national and international significant species at the expense of the land owners. Fortunately, this time there is nothing being raised by the landowners about compensating them for the benefits of their land to the wider communities at large.

2.3. Problems that the project seeks to address

The problems that the project seeks to address are stated in the Project Design document as *“to overcome the capacity weaknesses that currently limit the effectiveness of local conservation activities such as; weaknesses in the civil society and local governance, people’s motivation, environmental pride and the commitment to biodiversity; capacity to address or contain local threats to biodiversity”*.¹⁰

⁷ Sam Sesega, 26 April 2008 Independent Mid-Term Evaluation page 12

⁸ Quarterly Progressive Report as at 31 December 2005

⁹ John Liu of Liu-Service Consultancy November 2009 Lessons Learnt Environment Project of Landholders Conservation Initiatives

¹⁰ Project Design document page 5

Some of these problems, evidently remained as challenges, faced by implementers of the project in their respective areas of operation. These are highlighted in the minutes of their six monthly meeting of 31 October – 3 November 2006. This meeting took place almost a year into the implementation of the project in all the three sites of Tanna, Santo and Gaua. Here are some of the challenges reported in the meeting.¹¹

a) Diversities: This is a real challenge to the Central office staff in Vila and the Field Officers who needed to device or implement solutions that can facilitate those diversities. There cannot be one solution that applies to all. This is evident in all project sites through awareness campaign in the areas of social, economical, geographical, political, religious and attitudinal sectors of the community. This diversity exists also between UNDP and the Government of Vanuatu in terms of financial accounting and reporting systems.

One of the important advantages of this diversity is that it had shaped the LCIP into becoming more flexible and adaptable and yet resilient and efficacious. This has been widely appreciated as one of the strengths of the LCI project that is able to integrate diverse conservation and development concepts into a workable and effective benefit to the communities.

b). Lack of understanding: Initially, there was a lot of talk about endemic significant national and international biodiversity during the commencement of the project. This was a new level of conceiving the environment and its biodiversity as they were more used to conceiving subsistent living, and a small proportion of this to generate income from marketing of their biodiversity to supplement their subsistence living. This is highlighted in the Project document that stated, that the immediate local reasons for conservation are, for *“resource management and, an expression of traditional custom”*¹²

This initial level of understanding varies, in each of the three selected project sites. For example in Tanna, it is to protect the environment with its endangered species caused by over exploitation on the natural resources that are of economic values. On Gaua, the focus was more on the conservation of the marine resources, e.g., clam shells, fish, turtles, prawns, etc., and Santo has terrestrial conservation sites only with no marine site. As the LCI project progressed on with its implementation the understanding however, this took shape and began to focus on endemic biodiversity with its national and international importance. Howbeit the focus on biodiversity management and traditional values continues as seen.

¹¹ VEU Minutes for the Six Monthly Meeting, 31st October to November 3rd 2006 @ Vasanoc Conference Room

¹² Project Design document page 5

The expansion of understanding from local to national and international conservation level is one of the Project's anticipated impacts. This initial lack of understanding also affected the conservation management as it also included knowing the environmental laws, and the enforcement thereof. The challenge to local community leadership, especially local chiefs, church, women and youth, is to incorporate these to their local and traditional concept of management.

One major contribution that the LCIP had done to mitigate the lack of understanding was to conduct several awareness programme in various LCIP sites in 2007 in Torba and 2008 at Penoru in Santo. These awareness programme were to familiarize community leaders and members of existing Legal Framework, in the Environment Management and Conservation Act 12 of 2002. Within this Act there are the Fishery Act (Cap 276) and the Forestry Act (Cap 135).¹³

The community awareness articulated the need for a review of the existing Legal Framework. A national Retreat was convened in September 2008 on Epau, North Efate to discuss this and review a draft Process and Procedures to be included in the Environment Management and Conservation Act of 2002. This was drafted by a Peace Corp Volunteer earlier on in 2003. A subsequent meeting was followed in April 2009 on Emao at Marou Village to further work on this to include in the Act.

These local leaders who have undergone awareness, felt a lot more confident now and are seeking to register their conservation areas so they can have more control in the legal enforcement to protect their conservation initiatives.

c). Land Ownership: Blanket statement is often made and heard about indigenous ownership of land. It is stated in the project design document that “...*biodiversity conservation can only occur with the support, understanding and commitment of landholders.*”¹⁴ One of the major frustrating factors, on the island of Gaua is to do with unclear ownership of land, especially around the waterfall and Lake Letas areas.¹⁵ This often resulted in disputes of land that hampered major development projects on land. At Tanovusvus, on the West coast of Santo, dispute over land had prevented the initiative taken to set up the coastal forest and marine conservation in that area.¹⁶

¹³ Chris Rarumae, Consultation Report on Local Communities Views on Village Environmental Bye-Laws April 2009 pages 14 - 20

¹⁴ Project Design document page 5

¹⁵ VEU Minutes for the Six Monthly Meeting, 31st October to November 3rd 2006 @ Vasanoc Conference Room

¹⁶ VEU Quarterly Progress Report 1 April – 30 June 2008 VEU Quarterly Progress Report 1 April – 30 June 2008

Identifying true land owners can be a difficult exercise and requires understanding, contributions and cooperation from numerous players like chiefs, landowners, community members, etc. Some land ownership systems that uphold clan ownership over individual are easier to identify and retain than that of individual ownership system. Having said that, it is encouraging to note that, both the chiefs and the Land Tribunal are generally encouraging and assisting in identifying and settling of land ownership in most of the LCIP conservation areas.

d). Shift to Market and Monetary Economy: A lot of economic transactions in the rural areas of Vanuatu are based on the sales of natural biodiversity like crabs, fish, shells, prawns, coconut crabs, birds and timber for logging, etc. As these commodities are not farm for marketing purposes, they have suffered significant depletion. However, there are clear evidences of the return of wild life as land owners have said, “We can now see all kinds of birds, wild fowls, pigs, fish, trochus, clam shells, etc.” The good news is that, the LCIP assisted landowners, trialing on traditional prawn farming at Penoru on Santo and the marine resources on Gaua.¹⁷ Sustainability of these trialing and its subsequent provision of biodiversity by the landowners can increase the provision of sustainable resources for income purposes.

Monetary economic shift was also triggered by external economic enterprises like logging and construction, tourism, copra, cocoa, coffee, kava and beef export industries. As these required vast areas of land for planting and beef grazing; they have direct impact on the natural habitations for traditional, national and international biodiversity. Loanamilo is undergoing difficulties with logging and demolition of trees for a coffee planting project. Big hotels and restaurants in the capital of Port Vila and Luganville required regular supplies of things like flying foxes, sea and water prawns, fish, coconut crabs, lobsters, beef, etc. Apart from beef, all the others are harvested from natural habitations instead of culturally farmed for marketing purposes.

As tourism is gradually moving into rural areas, more local building materials like natangura¹⁸ leaves for thatch roofs and local bush timbers for posts as tourists love to live in local bungalows built with these local materials. Therefore, it can be said that most of the biodiversity for expression of traditional custom are now being exploited commercially for tourism purposes.

All this external intervention of cash economy into the rural areas of Vanuatu has diluted the people’s concept and affected their value orientation. It is quite common to see people from the rural areas dig into their natural biodiversity like

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Local Palm leaves use for making leave roof for houses

coconut crabs, logs, and so on to sell and buy radios, dvd players and screens, portable generators to operate these, mobile phones and their regular credit refilling and so on.

The Outcome 1 in the project Log frame states to: *“Strengthen traditional and local mechanisms to conserve biodiversity on Gaua, Tanna and Santo”*.¹⁹ The purpose of this strengthening of traditional and local mechanism is to see greater and more effective application to conserve national and international significant biodiversity. This is outlined in the corresponding Objective to, *“Greater and more effective application of local and culturally appropriate mechanisms to conserve Vanuatu’s internationally significant biodiversity.”* The verifiable indicators for these did not include the local fragmented perspectives of the people caused by the clamor of the monetary value over the subsistent livelihood values. This is being considered as one of the major local mechanisms for the perspective of the people.

e). Break down in the Community Social Values: Penoru, Pelmoli and Tanovusvus on the West Coast of Santo came to realize this as causing problems with conservation efforts, and included it in their action plan to address respect ²⁰ which is one of the pillars of the community sustainability. Lack of respect caused illegal intrusion into conservation areas, illegal deployment of biodiversity, removal of traditional tabu notices and weakness in management practices. The first KAP Report showed that *“...before environment was in good condition because people respect their chiefs. Today it is different that respect does not exist any more. Tanna still has custom fees when someone shows no respect for the chiefs or breach a rule authorized by the chiefs.”*²¹

The final KAP survey was undertaken in September 2009. Unfortunately the data was never analyzed so no report had been written. This causes difficulty in assessing KAP progress in the 4 years of project implementation. This final KAP is included in the project document to confirm the impact of activities undertaken for the 4 year period. If a report was done it would have given us a clear picture or changes from the beginning of the project on the impact of LCI project on the project sites along those areas mentioned above. The former PC informed that this was not done due to lack of funding to pay someone to do it.

This breakdown is indicative of the changes taking place in the community that are causing major imbalances in their perspectives. KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and

¹⁹ VEU Sam Sesega, 26 April 2008 Independent Mid-Term Evaluation page 39

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ VEU Minutes for the Six Monthly Meeting, 31st October to November 3rd 2006 @ Vasanoc Conference Room pages 17 – 21

Practice) survey was one of the activities of the project to ascertain the level of the knowledge, attitude (perspectives) and practices of the members of the communities. The level of their knowledge can be adjusted by adequate and appropriate awareness program, which according to the report; there were 41 awareness programs altogether that had been conducted.

Their attitude is more ingrained and difficult to change than their knowledge because it involves their emotions, values and beliefs which are the basis for their customs and traditions. Often times the attitude is unconsciously intact and becomes the dynamic factor in their practices, normally called habits. Knowledge and attitude are intangibles and comparatively, not easy to change as tangible mechanisms. It is important for the sustainability of any project that the human beings and their perspectives or attitudes be given adequate attention. At this stage this is mainly being done through abstract realization of potentials or laxities but no concrete attempt given to materialize the potentials and rectify the laxities except in the area of training. Other project sites also replicated the action that the three communities of Penoru, Pelmoli and Tanovusvus on West Cost Santo did to include this into their action plan to address it.²² This is a step forward into this direction and need to be replicated elsewhere and encouraged and re-enforced.

2.4. Objectives and Outcomes of the Project

The Project Design document sets one project objective and four project outcomes²³ as was highlighted by Sam Sesega.²⁴ These are:

- a) Objective:** *“The greater and more effective application of locally and culturally appropriate mechanisms to conserve Vanuatu’s internationally significant biodiversity.”*

This objective had been well catered for during this phase of the LCI project. The video documentary on the 3 project sites, which was produced by Stephenson Liu of the Television Blong Vanuatu (TBV) for the Environment Unit, showed the following:

- Revival of traditional leadership of chiefs, church, women, youth, etc, to provide management to the project activities in all the 3 sites.
- Use of traditional tabu signs to protect the conservation areas, e.g., namele and nakaria branches and leaves²⁵ placed on coastal points to protect coastal conservation areas from fishing on Gaua and Tanna, etc
- Identification and allocation of land by landowners as conservation areas

²² VEU Quarterly Progressive Report 1 April to 30 June 2008

²³ Ibid

²⁴ VEU Sam Sesega, 26 April 2008 Independent Mid-Term Evaluation page 12

²⁵ Namele & Nakaria plants or leaves are traditional tabu plants or leaves.

- Identification of the natural biodiversity and the articulation of their importance nationally and internationally

All these provided the local and cultural mechanisms or environment where all the significant national and international biodiversity are being identified, harnessed and promoted as indicated by the Outcomes 1 – 4 below.

b) Outcome 1: *“Strengthen traditional and local mechanisms to conserve biodiversity on Gaua, Tanna and Santo.”*

The indicators of this outcome were lumped together with that of the above objective and involved 5 indicators and their equal corresponding End-Of-Project-Targets. These were rated by the Mid-Term-Evaluator as: 4 satisfactory, 1 regarding the achievement of 60% of respondents who believe local activities to look after biodiversity is effective, not assessed. This point is still not being assessed in this final evaluation due to the current Evaluator not able to visit any project on site. However, by talking with the field officers, and from information collected, this ranked “Satisfactory” by the current Evaluator (see Table 1).

c) Outcome 2: *“Provide an enabling environment and strengthen government capacity to support community-based conservation initiatives and replicate successes in other areas of Vanuatu.”*

There are two main factors raised in this Outcome that needed concerted efforts by the concerned people to achieve an enabling environment as spelled out in the indicators. They are the governments, both national and provincial who lack capacity to understand the role of community conservation and to support the management with technical and material resources.

The PCU had conducted training and awareness in 2008 on the Provinces of Sanma and Torba on relevant natural resource and environment related national laws and legislations. There were two retreats held in September 2008 and in April 2009 that addressed the gaps in the principle environment act by developing regulations for registration of the community conservation areas so to legally support community initiatives or efforts in biodiversity conservation.

Secondly, is that of the replication of successes, to other areas outside the LCIP sites. It was reported that the training provided by the Agriculture Department on Tanna in May 2008 on Sustainable Agricultural Techniques is being replicated on other islands outside the LCIP areas. This is necessary in areas where there are not enough dark bushes left for gardening and people have to cultivate the same area annually. Although this is not directly related to conservation per se, it still assisted in conserving whatever dark bush there is, and optimize subsistence farming in small areas. Some of the periodical reports (progressive reports) covered activities done under this outcome.

- d) Outcome 3:** *“Monitor the impact and effectiveness of landholder based conservation activities to inform and direct work to adapt and strengthen traditional conservation approaches.”*

This outcome deals with the impact and effectiveness of the conservation activities of the landholders with the purpose of strengthening the traditional conservation approaches used or are being used. The process should be thorough at all levels of the project implementation. There are six indicators and their corresponding six End-Of-Project-Targets, marked: 4 Satisfactory, 2 Highly satisfactory for the target regarding number of community based monitoring activities supported by the project, 6 on each of the project island sites; and 1 not assessed by the Mid-Term external Evaluator.

- e) Outcome 4:** *“Effective and efficient administration and management of Project activities.”*

These are further diversified into four indicators or activities and means of verification. The progress towards achieving the End-Of-Project-Targets marked “Satisfactory” by the Mid-Term external Evaluator.²⁶ Unfortunately due to funding constraints, this current Evaluator was not able to physically tour the project sites to gauge the end of project status.

The Annual Progressive Implementation Report (PIR) reports were never been produced for the period ending 2008 and 2009 for some unknown reasons, this is under the TOR of the project coordinator. Such reports give us some of the indicators of the outcomes. Even the six monthly monitoring activities were never being picked up after end of September 2008 due to advice from UNDP to the project coordinator to reduce monitoring reports.

2.5. Project Main Stakeholders

The following table from the MTR presents the full range of stakeholders of the LCIP up to the completion stage. These stakeholders were consulted and/or directly engaged in PDF activities thereby contributing to project design.²⁷

Stakeholders Role in the Project

²⁶ VEU Sam Sesega, 26 April 2008 Independent Mid-Term Evaluation page 42

²⁷ Ibid page 13

No	Stakeholder	Role in Project
1	Traditional landholder families	There are several traditional landholder families in the targeted communities with varying characteristics and dynamics. Support of both landholders and chiefs is inherent to conservation success
2	Traditional chiefs holding authority over the landowners' community and lands	Traditional chiefs have responsibilities and rights to make decisions regarding the use of resources in the Project sites. They also provide valuable contact points for the LCIP.
3	Others within their communities	Others in the target communities with resource access rights are inherent to the Project design, as potential beneficiaries of successful conservation and resource management activities.
4	Vanuatu Environment Unit (VEU)	VEU is the lead agency for the MSP and is responsible for advising the Government and Ni-Vanuatu on matters to do with the environment. VEU works in association with a range of other government organizations and non-government organizations to implement the project.
5	Government agencies	The key agencies are Forestry, Fisheries, Quarantine & Agriculture, Tourism, Geology and Lands Department. LCIP works closely with government agencies and draw on their capacity and skills as appropriate.
6	Vanuatu Cultural Center (VKS)	VKS is responsible for the documentation, protection and practice of culture. The Project will help build VKS's capacity in traditional resource management (TRM).
7	Wan Smol Bag (WSB)	WSB has significant capacity in community awareness raising for conservation and maintains a network of Vanua Tai Monitors. They will contribute to LCIP by advising and complementing awareness raising components of the Project.
8	Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific Vanuatu (FSPV)	FSPV's Voices and Choices Project will partner the LCIP to strengthen and educate for good community governance.
9	Other established development NGOs working on the islands	These include NGOs like World Vision and Save the Children Fund and church affiliated groups active in some of the areas targeted by the Project. The Project endeavors to work cooperatively with these groups.
10	Vanuatu Protected Areas Initiative (VPAI)	VPAI has recently received funding to try and formalize a network of people in conservation areas. It will partner the LCIP in networking communities with local conservation interests This has ended before LCI even began.

This current Evaluator was not able to visit project sites to verify or add to this report by the MTR Evaluator for the reason stated above.

3. Review

3.1. Objectives

There are numerous Monitoring and Evaluation requirements set out in the project document Part IV in pages 8 – 13. Most of these are to be done by the project staff, whereas the Mid-term Evaluation and Final Evaluation are to be done by independent Evaluator(s). Notes under the Final Evaluation has this to say, *“An independent Final Evaluation will take place three months prior to the terminal tripartite review meeting, and will focus on the same issues as the mid-term evaluation”*. Unfortunately this evaluation is not independent as the Evaluator got all his information from sources related directly with the project. The Evaluator was not able to visit project sites as mentioned elsewhere in this report (see 3.3, g page 19). Under the Mid-Term Evaluation section, the focus highlighted there, are, *“to determine progress being made towards the achievement of outcomes, and will identify course direction, if needed. It will focus on the effectiveness, efficiency, and timeliness of project implementation; will highlight issues requiring decisions and actions; and will present lessons learned about project design, implementation and management”*.²⁸

Additionally, *“the Final Evaluation will also look at impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development and the achievement of global environment goals. The Final Evaluation should provide recommendations for follow-up activities”*.²⁹

3.2. Key Questions and the Scope of the Evaluation

As highlighted in the purpose above and the Evaluation TOR, the key questions and scope of this Final Evaluation are summarized in the points cited here:

- a) Progress being made towards achieving the set outcomes, and the achievement of the global environment goals
- b) Identify the course direction being taken
- c) Highlight issues requiring decisions and actions including constraints, and the participation of the communities and beneficiaries
- d) Present Lessons learned from the project design, implementation, management practices, or specific project improvement actions and the manners by which the project attracts attention towards getting support and co-financing

²⁸ Project Design document page 13

²⁹ Ibid

- e) Capacity development towards achieving the objectives of the projects and the global environment goals
- f) Sustainability of these impacts - likelihood of the outcomes and benefits to go on after the funding is complete
- g) Level of public involvement, whether they were appropriate to the goals of the project
- h) Relevancy of resources including finances

3.3. Methodology

- a) Evaluation was done by the Evaluator, beginning with a five day reading up on documents such as the Project design, quarterly reports, minutes of Team meetings, mid term review reports, talking with Project Coordinator, staff and Field workers in June and viewing and learning from a documentary DVD produced on the three project sites, etc. The final DVD documentary was produced several months after the Project ended in December 2009. The shooting was done on the field while the field officers are still at their work base in September to October 2009.
- b) The field officers operations were terminated on 31st Oct 2009 while the Project Coordinator and Finance Officer stayed on until 1st January 2010.
- c) This report was a little too early as it did not allow for the situation to settle down into reality, after the field workers had finished and moved out of the routine project conservation activities. This time the gap between the implementation and the sustainable operation of the project is insufficient, to measure the real impacts of the project. One year period would be more adequate.
- d) The approach was based on the Terms of Reference between the Vanuatu Environment Unit (VEU) and Liuservice Consultancy. Particular attention was given to assessing the project's results, impacts and the sustainability of these results and impacts in the communities. Secondly, to identify lessons learned and make recommendations to use these in future projects.
- e) The Evaluator chose to make the evaluation process, as participatory as possible in order to build consensus on lessons learned and future priorities. Interim findings were discussed with the Project Coordinator and other members of VEU staff and stakeholders. Significant time was spent reviewing the project goals, objectives and indicators and activities with the actual outputs and their results, and impacts.
- f) Preliminary findings were shared with VEU staff on July 2010. The focus of this was to generate feedbacks and discussions on the objectives and outputs that

have been achieved, as well as subsequent lessons learned and recommendations. This took quite a while for feedbacks to come from VEU staff, FPOs and stakeholders. When feedback came it generated some fruitful discussions and valuable information, which have been taken into account when finalizing this report.

- g) One of the key weaknesses in the methodology is that none of the three project sites were visited by the Evaluator due to lack of funding. This prevented face-to-face consultation with the landholders and community members, who are the beneficiaries. There was no actual observation done on the status of biodiversity in the conservation areas, after the project fund ended. This subsequently affects the independency of this report as all the information that formed the basis of this report is obtained from the project staff reports, documents and people who were directly linked to the LCIP.

4. Findings of the Evaluation Review

4.1. Results achieved

During the Project Team Meeting of 23 – 27 October 2007 the FPOs reported the following comments from the three project sites regarding their respective conservation sites:³⁰

- a) Tanna:** (Translation from Bislama to English is mine)
 - People are beginning to respect custom tabu that existed long before the project began at Nusumetu and Loanamilo
 - The community at Emayo has taken initiatives to develop a demonstration or model site to plant all the trees special to Tanna and marine biodiversities including Naura (freshwater prawn), fish and namarae (eel fish)
 - That when she first went to Loanamilo on Tanna, there was only one type of bird found there but now there are 5 different types
 - A lot of wild fowls are inhabiting the area at Loanamilo once again
 - There is a change in people's attitude towards respecting the environment and taking pride of their special endemic trees
- b) Santo:** (Translation from Bislama to English is mine)

³⁰ Minutes of the Meeting

- A lot of Santo rural people have some knowledge of the importance of having the tabu sites for the sustenance of the environment. So the respect for this is now beginning to return.
- The people are now showing respect to look after internationally recognized species like coconut crabs.
- There is a big improvement in the number of live animals that live in the water, dark bush, saltwater at Tanovusvus, Pelmoli and Penoru

c) Gaua: (Translation from Bislama to English is mine)

- All landholders are showing respect and are exhibiting capacity to decide and keep the tabu to look after the resources on their 20 sites on Gaua
- All landholders are showing interest to learn new and improve ways such as new technologies and knowledge to look after their land, salt water, etc
- There are evidences (shrubs covered the road) to show that landholders are using the roads less frequently to get water resources like prawns and namarae (eel) at Lake Letas.

d) Nationally:

- Policy regarding registration of conservation area was drafted and presented for approval
- Vanuatu Environment Unit developed into the Department of Environment and Conservation
- The development and implementation of the Coconut Crab project at Penoru on Santo

4.2 Activity and Outcome Ratings

Table 1 Rating of Outcomes' Main activities

Outcome 1: "Strengthen traditional and local mechanisms to conserve biodiversity on Gaua, Tanna and Santo."		
Main issues	Rating	Reasons for the rating
1. Threats to local biodiversity	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Santo sees the increase of birds, coconut crabs, freshwater prawns both monoculture & integrated, local significant species ▪ Tanna likewise sees the increase of Shear birds, plants, coconut crabs, etc ▪ Gaua witness the increase of reef species like fish, trochus, turtles, green snails, etc
2. Local Conservation Capacity	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In all three project sites, Landowners learned and implemented their conservation sites ▪ Combination of traditional and modern conservation practices are being used ▪ Revival of traditional leadership of chiefs, church, women, youth, etc, to provide management to the project activities in all the 3 sites.
3. National and international Conservation Priorities	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of the natural biodiversity and the articulation of their importance nationally and internationally ▪ Landowners quickly caught on the national and international priorities ▪ Book was printed on Tanna regarding endemic species ▪ Celebrations were done on all 3 project sites with printing of T shirts and string band competitions ▪ Some replanting of trees on Tanna and Santo of endemic species such as trees. ▪ This is now linking in with ecotourism projects on Tanna and Gaua
Relevance:	Satisfactory	<p>The relevancy of the project is seen in the achievements above as well as the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Created conservation models on the landholders land that can be now registered in their ownership ▪ Implanted conservation knowledge and skills in the local people of both the traditional and the western conservation values and practices
Effectiveness:	Satisfactory	<p>The actual project in achieving the Project Outcomes and expectations through completion of the projects outputs stated.</p> <p>Areas that probably needed some attention are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More stringent project and financial management to focus more on output implementation and objective achievement, eg., completion of final KAP analysis, viamen of project funds
Efficiency:	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Outputs completed in time ▪ Local initiatives like farming prawns, crabs, went very well

Outcome 2: “Provide an enabling environment and strengthen government and non government capacity to support community based conservation initiatives and replicate successes to other areas of Vanuatu.”		
Main issues	Rating	Reasons for the rating
1. Capacity weakness of VEU and other relevant agencies to support community conservation	.Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For further information on this see outcome 4 below Establishment of the Department helped
2. The use of IEC for on-going conservation on local and national and international biodiversity	. Highly Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEC materials were highly used with clarity and impact on all 3 sites Others like school children were able to use People were able to understand information and learn
3. KAP	Moderately Unsatisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first KAP survey was done and analyzed The second KAP survey was done but information was never analyzed Progress cannot be realistically determine
Relevance:	Highly Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the LCIP outputs are relevant and have the potential of meeting the Conservation needs
Effectiveness:	Moderately Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are all effective, especially the IEC for awareness The Provincial level needs to be more effective as well as the final KAP survey
Efficiency:	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outputs where completed within the timeframe
Outcome 3: “Monitor the impact and effectiveness of landholder based conservation activities (to inform and direct work to adapt and strengthen traditional conservation approaches).”		
Main issues	Rating	Reasons for the rating
1. Increasing the knowledge and skills of the community members to monitor their own resources	Highly Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In all 3 sites community members are doing the monitoring checks School children were also involved
2. Local Conservation Capacity	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In all 3 sites local landowners established their own conservation They set up their own management bodies and systems They implemented local with introduced conservation and management strategies

Outcome 3: “Monitor the impact and effectiveness of landholder based conservation activities (to inform and direct work to adapt and strengthen traditional conservation approaches).”		
Main issues	Rating	Reasons for the rating
3. National and international Conservation Priorities	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All sites developed pride in their national and international biodiversity ▪ Celebrations were done in both Tanna and Santo with publication of their endemic species ▪ A book was printed on endemic species on Tanna
Relevancy	Highly Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the Outcome requirements stated above
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had made impacts as stated above
Efficiency	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeframe was met
Outcome 4: “Efficient and effective Administration and Management of Project Activities.”		
Main issues	Rating	Reasons for the rating
1. Capacity strengthening of PC and Admin. Officer to take on additional responsibilities	Satisfactory	<p>The reasons for this rating are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff turnover caused additional responsibilities to be taken up by staff beyond their capacity
2. Effective financial administration	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the UNDP finance and reporting format causing workloads to be learned by staff • Due to finance and administration management the project stopped 3 – 4 months earlier
3. On-site Assistant Coordinator	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No on-site Assistant, as this was allocated to EUV staff and those in the Field sites
Relevance:	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be more appropriate to blend the financial system with the Government and national financial systems
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial system is foreign but manages
Efficiency	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed in the timeframe

4.3 Assessment of Project Results

Table 2 Assessment of Project Achievement

Objective/Outcomes	Project Life Indicators	Outputs	Outcomes
Objective: The greater and more effective application of Vanuatu's international local and cultural application mechanisms to conserve significance biodiversity			
Outcome 1. Strengthen traditional and local mechanisms to conserve biodiversity on Gaua, Tanna and Santo	a) Local conservation capacity weaknesses have been reduced to 75% b) Local capacity to contain threats have been reduced & threats are now reduced by 30% c) 2/3 people in the participating communities will demonstrate knowledge of awareness of 5 national and international conservation priorities present in their local community and demonstrate one practice that address a priority d) The impacts and effectiveness of the range of capacity building tools deployed in the project will be monitored to document the effectiveness of participatory conservation tools e) Establishment of local level strategies to continue to reduce barriers to biodiversity conservation at participating localities such as: - Locally endorsed management plan on Gaua - Catchment and area level conservation plans for high priority area on Tanna	Santo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Awareness on Freshwater, Marine, Forest biodiversity & Resource management Good use of environment IEC materials Conducted Workshop on Conservation management Demonstration on Prawn farm techniques Printing and exhibition T-shirt on endemic and significant species on 12/06/09 at Penoru Established a Community Resource Centre – opened 12/06/09 Integrated moral & traditional values into the Kindy plan to teach to younger kids 	Santo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandalwood replanting by some locals on West Coast Santo Penoru kindy now teaching respect & values to children Community Resource Centre opened at Penoru on 12/06/09 & is being put into good use by members of the community Community Council formed at Pelmoli to strengthen Chief's role Members of the communities were touched by the viewing of the Sandalwood DVD and decided to begin planting sandalwood in their land
		Gaua <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted management training and consultation on Gaua Facilitated establishment of management committees Conducted awareness and training on: 	Gaua <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 sub management committees were established on Gaua Survey management shifted from LCIP staff to team leaders around Gaua

Objective/Outcomes	Project Life Indicators	Outputs	Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operating network between conservation activities on Santo and Tanna <p>f) Local capacity to recognize and apply traditional measures to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity Local capacity to recognize and apply traditional measures to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distributed and display notices on tabu sites ▪ Environment Education Lesson Plan was developed by Peace Corp Volunteer and presented for integration • Conducted environment education with Primary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing ownership of reef checks from Team leaders and members who freely did the survey - 4 notices on Gaua - Two primary schools on Gaua are involved in Environment Education - All 6 Gaua conservation areas have draft management plan which is pre requisite for registration of conservation areas
<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Continues</p>		<p>Tanna</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular follow-up visits to project sites to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessing community training needs - Community commitment to project ▪ Management training workshops ▪ Awareness also was made regarding registration process of their conservation sites ▪ Provide workshop on eco-tourism at Loanamilo project site ▪ Training for Management Committee at Loanamilo on 7th April ▪ Telling successful stories during 6 monthly meeting at different places ▪ IEC materials & SITG activities building pride on Tanna ▪ Development and erection of Tabu notices/signs 	<p>Tanna</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interest in conservation is growing high e.g, Lounapau (not a project area) offered to freely host marine resource workshop - All conservation sites now have their own draft management plan as required for the registration for their conservation sites - Eco-tourism tour Guidelines developed for Loanamilo and negotiation carry on with Bangalows - Loanamilo Management Committee developed with Work plan for them to follow - 4 new areas (Latun, Lamak, Lamapnuan & Tau Numake) adjacent to Loanamilo replicated conservation they learned and observed

Objective/Outcomes	Project Life Indicators	Outputs	Outcomes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant changes in capacity building and triggered off conservation attempts in new areas - There are 16 replicate conservation sites on Tanna³¹ - Notices were erected on Tanna
<p>Outcome 2.</p> <p>Provide an enabling environment and strengthen government and non-government capacity to support community based conservation initiatives and replicate successes in other areas in Vanuatu</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Capacity weaknesses of Implementing Agencies to support community have been reduced by 50% from the NBSAP baseline data of 2002/3 b) Having in place the monitoring records of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. extend and support given by the VEU to landholders ii. timeliness of responses/satisfaction with the information exchange that has occurred c) Existence of a pool of appropriate IEC resources for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ongoing use of local institutions to integrate national & international biodiversity conservation priorities into local conservation efforts ii. Records of the social marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convened the Second National Retreat where representatives from Government, NGOs, and Community Conservation areas attended at Emau on April 2009 to: ▪ Finalize the draft CCA Registration Regulation Documents that were drafted in September 2008 at Epau Retreat containing CCA's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registration Application Form - Applicant Verification Statement Form - Annual Reporting Form - Site visit Assessment Form - Cancellation/Amendment Form - Registration Information Package ▪ Discussed parts of the Environmental Management and Conservation (EMC) Act No 12 of 2002 to be amended, especially Part 4 Division 2 containing provision of CCA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of Community Conservation Areas (CCA) Registration Application Forms - CCA Applicant Verification Statement Form - Annual CCA Reporting Form - CCA Site visit Assessment Form - CCA Cancellation/Amendment Form - CCA Registration Information Package - Draft management Plans for 6 Gaua Marine Conservation Areas - Draft management plan for Tira River tabu at Pelmoli, Santo - Penoru drafted Resource management plan - 4 Tanna Island Resource Management plan - 2 Santo Resource Management plan

³¹ Quarterly Report Narrative November 2008 – May 2009 page 7

Objective/Outcomes	Project Life Indicators	Outputs	Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Information and awareness activities conducted and their impacts as determined by pre & post KAP surveys iv. Local level strategies to continue to reduce barriers to conservation of national and international level biodiversity priorities v. Pool of appropriate capacity building resources including training frameworks and self directed learning activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presented the documents for amendment to FPO and had it discussed with community reps at Gaua in May 2009. ▪ The final stakeholders meeting on July 29 accepted the draft document and presented it on for the COM approval ▪ Conducted management plan workshops on Gaua from 12 – 15 May 2009 and Santo in June 2009 ▪ Researched into Audubon Shearwater significant bird species on Tanna 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 Gaua Resource Management plans ▪ Registration Documents for 2 Santo CCAs, 6 Gaua Marine CCAs ▪ Community have legal support system in place ▪ One more LCI terrestrial conservation site was established at Penoru and another non-LCI marine & terrestrial CCA registration application form ▪ Identification of other ea birds roosting with Shearwater on Tanna that are under the Life International Red List
<p>Outcome 3.</p> <p>Monitor the impact and effectiveness of landholder based conservation activities to inform and direct work to adapt and strengthen traditional approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Monitoring activities to describe impact, effectiveness and efficiency of local resource management initiatives to meeting biodiversity objectives b) Indicators of conservation adequacy finalized during first 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trained community to monitor species that they can carry out themselves in August 2009 ▪ Conducted the final KAP survey ▪ Developed draft monitoring form for Tanna and other sites ▪ Verified birds species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring form is in place in LCIP sites and is being used - Regular monitoring is being done by community members on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Audubon Shearwater & other birds, coconut crabs on Tanna ➢ Reef checks on Gaua ➢ Water prawn, fish and coconut crabs at Penoru, Santo ➢ Terrestrial endemic biodiversity - KAP survey forms returned but not analyze

Objective/Outcomes	Project Life Indicators	Outputs	Outcomes
Outcome 4. Effective and efficient administration and management of project activities	1) Activities conducted as per work plan 2) Reports produced when scheduled 3) Good financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Held six monthly meeting, last one on Gaua ▪ Attended Result Based Management (RBM) workshop conducted by UNDP ▪ Worked with KPMG to audit 2008 LCIP finances ▪ Verified assets not in operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Reporting format developed and began to use - Some difficulties adapting the new reporting format both finance and progressive - Audit completed, fee paid directly from UNDP MCO Fiji - Closed audit gap of 2007 and 2008

4.4 Assessment of Sustainability of the Project Outcomes

For each of the Outcomes, present assessment on the following as well:-

Table 3 Sustainability Outcome Rating

Outcome 1	Rating	Reasons for rating
Financial resources:	Likely:	A good number of resources conserved are of high value like trees, forest, marine sources, etc. A Lot of Conservation areas, like in Tanna are linking up or combine with eco-tourism that can generate income for financial sustainability
Sociopolitical:	Moderately Likely:	This is likely, but depended a lot with current political drives and where those drives come from and in whose interest. There are family, island, church, party, gender drives, etc. Currently this is very divisive and discriminatory, but can be change into a cohesive sustainable outcome
Institutional framework and governance:	Likely:	This is currently in placed due to the LCIP output. There is conservation management systems put in place and are functioning well. Institutionalization of conservation areas through registration, etc.
Environmental:	Moderately likely:	This depends a lot on the consistency of landowners, management committees, Provinces and collaboration of various Government Departments like Forestry, Fisheries, lands, Agriculture, etc.

4.5 Catalytic Role

There is no clear strategy in the actual project regarding replication of conservation of biodiversity in other areas outside the three allocated sites. There are, however, several activities alluded to replication, as cited in the various reports during the project's four year period. They are foundational to replication and they include:

- a) **LCIP extensive awareness programs.** The awareness program of LCIP is extensive and was done by all the FPOs, PCU and community members like school children and peer groups. They did this through variable means like face-to-face contacts, development of posters and DVDs and photos. It is extensive because it was done to a wide range of people both in and outside the LCI

Conservation areas. It is reported that ponds for freshwater prawns were dug by workshop participants. Similar stories are cited on both Tanna and Gaua where 16 new ponds were dug³².

- b) *Networking with other stakeholders.*** Awareness was not only done by Staff of the LCIP project but in collaboration with other bodies like, the Government Departments of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Quarantine, Tourism and Lands, etc. Other NGOs like FSPV, WSB, VPAI, etc, including the CBOs - non registered entities like the Council of Chiefs, churches, women and youth, and school children, etc., in the project zones. A good number of people have seen, heard and experienced what LCIP is and its benefits have gone out and further replicated these activities in their own areas. After an awareness workshop on Santo five landowners returned and conserved their montane forest at Tabwemasana.
- c) *Documenting lessons learned.*** Lessons learned from good practices, benefits, policies, experiences, hazards, and others. It is now required that these be regularly done in Quarterly Progressive reporting. This consultant had done a full report on Lessons Learned and presented it to the DEC in November 2009.
- d) *Recording of successful stories.*** Along with the lessons learnt, successful stories were also noted and documented to be read or used in training and workshops as case studies where participants can learn from. These successful stories are great motivation to people in communities to get involve so conservation can spread. While these practices or activities were being conducted, with the focus on the members of the project sites, they are not exclusive but inclusive to be learned and replicated where appropriate. What is probably needed here is some definite strategies put in place during the design phase to bring this out more directly with allocation of resources and attention to make this one of the final results of the project.

4.6 Assessment of the Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

- a) Monitoring and Evaluation Systems are well established within the LCIP design as set out in table 4 below.³³

Table 4 Project M&E

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMEFRAMES
1. Drafting Project	Vanuatu Environment Unit (VEU), with Vanuatu	During project design

³² LCIP Quarterly Narrative Report, November 2008 to May 2009

³³ Government of Vanuatu, United Nations Development Programme

Planning documents; Prodoc, Log frame (including indicators)	Department of Economic and Social Development, Department of Foreign Affairs (Aid Administration), UNDP/GEF staff and other stakeholders	stage
2. Participatory M&E Plan	Project staff , VEU, with Government UNDP/GEF staff, project development specialists and other stakeholders	During project design stage
3. Inception Report	VEU and project staff	At the beginning of project implementation
4. Work Plan	VEU and project staff	Annually
5. Annual Programme / Project Report (APR)	The Government, UNDP FIJI , VEU, Project staff, UNDP/GEF Task Manager, and Target Groups	Annually
6. Tripartite Review (TPR)	UNDP Fiji	Annually
7. Tripartite Review Report	UNDP FIJI	Annually immediately following TRP
8. Project Implementation Review (PIR)	UNDP FIJI , UNDP/GEF headquarters, Project staff, GEF's M&E team, UNDP/GEF Task Manager	Annually, between June and September
9. Independent Mid-Term Review	VEU , Project staff and UNDP Fiji, participating communities	Late in year 2 of the project, immediately preceding a 6 monthly team meeting
10. Independent Final Evaluation	VEU , Project staff and UNDP Fiji, participating communities	Year 4 quarter 2, immediately preceding a 6 monthly team meeting
11. Ex-post Evaluations	Project staff, UNDP/GEF headquarters , UNDP/GEF Task Manager, PCU	Ex-post, about two years after project completion
12. Terminal Report	UNDP Fiji , UNDP/GEF Task Manager, PCU	At least one month before the end of the project
13. Audit	VEU, Government Audit Office , UNDP Fiji	Annual Audit

The table above specified types of monitoring, delegation of responsibilities and a given timeframe for to accomplish these.

Quality of M&E design and implementation. From the various progressive reports, including the MTR report shows that the M&E progress very well and meeting the project Objective and Outcomes.³⁴ From these M&E reports, the evaluation purpose of guiding the management to identify issues that needed support and take necessary adaptive steps to improve the implementation approaches and concepts, had been achieved.

- b)** After the MTR report however, the quality of M&E seem to decline from what it was. In the Quarterly Narrative Report of October – December 2008 and November 2008 – May 2009, the report consisted of the Tanna Shearwater and the KAP to take place. The consultant was told that the final KAP survey that took place had never been analyze due to lack of funding to recruit someone to analyze it. Towards the end some project activities had to be trimmed back and one of them is the M&E. UNDP staff responsible, advised that M&E should be given minimal attention. It was during this time also, that the UNDP changed the reporting format that was used for the Reporting Period of October – December 2008 which also caused disruption to reporting quality.
- c) Monitoring of Long Term Changes.** It was also discovered that the final KAP survey that was done in September and October 2009 has never been analyze to be reported on the findings. This left us wondering what the long term Changes are to measure the growth that the LCIP had moved forward in. However, the following information was highlighted:
 - Knowledge and skills gained from training on all aspects of conservation was validated by practice on the conservation areas and are currently observed
 - Impacts on local populations in terms of the materialization of the conservation initiative into the integration of traditional and global conservation model
 - Consolidated benefits of the conservation initiative on the people and their environment (e.g. increase in the number of individual endangered species, improved water quality, increase in fish stocks, birds, biodiversity and the reduced greenhouse gas emissions),
 - Replication effects as the people who attended training and observed were able to do things in their own areas
 - Other local effects of benefits on the local environment, biodiversity and general wellbeing of landholders.

³⁴ Independent Mid-Term Evaluation, Sam Sesega April 2008, page 34 - 36

These are potentials for long term change that people have and what they now need is the right motivation to prompt them to utilize these for sustainable long term changes. This is where proper entrenchment into the Provincial Governments framework should assist.

The Provincial Government should provide some assistance in monitoring of the long term changes. One of the shortcomings of this project is to convince the Provincial Governments of Torba, Sanma and Tafea to commit themselves to support the Conservation initiative and to establish a monitoring system to monitor and promote the long term changes of the project.

5. Lessons Learned

A research done by John Liu of Liuservice Consultancy in November 2009 from the reports of the Project Field Officers (PFO), Project Independent Mid term evaluation, Team Meeting Reports etc. highlighted the following lessons learned from the conservation biodiversity initiatives in the 3 project sides.³⁵

5.1. Project Delay:

The long delay between the project design and submission and the actual release of funding and implementation of the project was 11 months. This delay caused uncertainties to recruitment of personnel and purchase of equipment because funds were needed to procure equipment and pay salaries of staff. Secondly, its implication on the budget to cater for the increasing gap in the cost of activities and the project budget either by internal inflation or external devaluation of the foreign currency used in the project.

5.2. UNDP Financial Systems:

The UNDP financial systems are not known by the local staff and the auditors, therefore it is important that the LCI project staff equip themselves with good understanding of the UNDP financial reporting processes in order to correctly submit the FACE Forms to avoid delays in the release of funds. Familiarization training needs to be conducted for all the staff to be updated with the UNDP systems.

5.3. Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) Capacity Needs:

³⁵ John Liu November 2009 Lessons Learnt, Environment Project Of Landholders Conservation Initiative page 5 - 8

We have learned that the DEC has capacity problem of staffing, sourcing, and other regulatory systems like in the other Government Departments to empower it to adequately manage, implement, monitor and evaluate project like the LCI. This upgrade needs to be done urgently, along with, the consideration for another project.

At the time of this report writing the Unit has been upgraded to a department and regulatory systems for managing conservation efforts are now in place.

5.4. “Stand Alone”:

We also learned that the LCI program activities is a “stand alone” and need to be integrated into other departments’ activities to ensure sustainability of the project. It is important for the DEC to organize a workshop where all the stakeholders can do this integration. It is important to establish and maintain strong networking amongst government departments from the onset of project to ensure collaborate environmental effort. The Project needs to be tailored and mainstreamed into the Provincial Government plan to get them feel responsible for its implementation, utilization and monitoring to ensuring long term sustainability.

Penoru Conservation Area has been given the second attention through the government Programme of Work on Protected Area for another two years (PoWPA) until August 2011. It will be registered under the EMC Act during this project phase. The second recognition for this site is by the GEF/FAO Forest biodiversity conservation project that will commence this year for another three years.

Tanna sites have won UNDP small grant funding for specific conservation activities particularly on international significant species, Coconut Crab monitoring and management for a couple of years.

5.5. LCI Machineries and Equipment Difficulties:

- a) We learned that motor bikes are not altogether good investment for some places where the road conditions are bad. Santo had problem getting to the project areas like Pelmoli and Tanovusvus on the bike because of bad road conditions which can only be accessed by a 4 wheel drive vehicle. Another problem with a motor bike is, getting the right parts both in country and even ordering from overseas to repair in time for work to progress undisturbed.
- b) We have learned that resources are very useful for our work, but proper attitudes and systems need to be put in place to safe guard problems as well as to ensure better maintenance, to minimize delays in the operation to implement project activities. This capacity limitation also caused some hiccups to the implementation of the project in the three project sites.

5.6. People's Expectations:

We learned that people often have their own agenda regarding benefits, when they agree to participate in the conservation initiatives. Economic benefits seem to rank high over the others. This is a transitional shift from a subsistence economy to a monetary economy. It is vitally important to articulate these and involve strategies to materialize these to meet their expectations.

5.7. Multifaceted Community Obligations:

We have learned that Vanuatu communities are not single based but rather are multifaceted, because they have multiple demands that needed multiple solutions. We also learnt that there is need to be flexible but resilient, when working with communities. The community work plans are in regular need for adjustment to accommodate for things like traditional functions, community obligations and festive seasons which are of great importance to the members of the communities. If these are not managed properly, they can have serious adverse impacts on the progress of the project.

5.8. LCI Sustainability:

- a) The lesson learned here is that sustainability is an inherent potential value in every human being that needs to be recognized, harnessed, cultivated and utilized. There is nothing that is sustainable on its own because it is feeding on numerous other ingredients such as relationships, values, practices, etc. It is very important to do a thorough baseline study on the community or communities, in order to establish a conceptual framework on their perspectives. This will assist in setting up proper vision/goal, strategies and project activities that can be mainstreamed into the social structures of the communities, directly addressing sustainability ingredients.
- b) The lesson we learned about sustainability in the provinces is that it is generally, more promising when the local authorities are involved, especially the Provincial government. This is shown in the reports of the Tanna project site. In order to encourage more involvement of the provincial governments, it is advisable to involve them right in the inception and design periods so the project will be owned by them through acknowledging the values of conservation and validate that by good relationships with the community networks, values and practices.

5.9. Human Resources Importance:

- a) That staff which consists of human beings is different from all the other resources made up of materials. They are subjected to all sorts of physical, mental, moral and spiritual frailties and strengths. Because of this, they need to be specifically focused and attended to. In most projects, if not all, attention is given only to their mental capacity because this is the only prime interest of the donors or project proponents. Some expanded the focus a little more to include physical and provided health insurance and good pay packages. The areas mostly neglected are their moral and spiritual compositions. Attention should also be given to their individual values and beliefs as Stephen R Covey's puts it, "Treat me kindly, Use me creatively and pay me fairly"³⁶
- b) We have learned here that the safety and well being of field officers and staff is a very important issue, given that some officers are stationed in rural and isolated locations and not easily having access to good health facilities or transport to those facilities.
- c) That the human resources of the project who are invaluable dynamics of the project have no insurance coverage which leaves them at high risks. For example, when a plane crashed on the West Coast of Santo involving members of the Forestry Department sent by the LCI project (and including the LCI Santo field staff who is still facing some medical complications after the 1.5 years ago crash), there were lots of problems, regarding the life compensation. Similarly, with the terminated LCI Santo, Field Officer whom he had injuries caused by an accident with the project's motor bike.

5.10. LCI Awareness and Advocacy:

- a) Awareness and advocacy regarding environmental issues including LCI should, include multifaceted nature of the community, preservation and the multiplication of the environmental species and biodiversity. These can then be used to advocate the benefits of the pride of the people, increase in the dietary variables and the generation of income for the people. The LCI has helped the communities find other alternatives to earn income while continue to conserve the species in the CA....if I am right...Too the CA's has access areas and or management rules for harvesting resources in the wild for dietary and income purposes like, Penoru terrestrial CA and Gaua marine sites.

³⁶ Stephen R Covey The 8th Habits 2004 page 23

- b) Also in the awareness talk, try to avoid as much as possible all the “scientific jargons” that do not mean anything to the local members of the communities. But to put those scientific jargons into a simple understandable language. This was the point raised by the FPO on Sanma.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The LCI Project had made remarkable impression of what can be done by properly utilizing local conservation mechanisms to facilitate large scale local, national and international environmental biodiversity conservation initiatives. A lot of lessons learned from the conservation concepts and practices that can be replicated both within and outside the project areas. It is evident that local people within the project sites are demonstrating the environmental pride over the repopulation of their almost depleted environmental species. These, they have been relaying on for their subsistent livelihood in terms of consumption, income generation and cultural heritage. Further to these, with the LCI project they are able to identify biodiversity resources that have national and international values. This build up environmental pride and they were able to demonstrate these in pictures, book, films and ecotourism industry in their local areas.

People in the local areas have so much to be thankful for from the LCI project as the dawn of new possibility awakening them to see the significance of their environment and its national and international valued biodiversity. What was once perceived insignificant has proved its global significance. This is the beginning of a long journey they are now embarking on. They need to move on but need support from the Government of Vanuatu, international communities, donors and their own communities and growing population. It would be now futile exercise to begin the awakening and never fully materialize it into reality.

The following recommendations are some proposed steps to continue this long journey. They are, by no means, exhaustive list as there are more to be done to help the people along this journey.

Recommendations:

Second Phase of LCI Project

One of the major things discovered in this evaluation of the last LCI project is that, there are lots of things yet to be done with environmental conservation that were articulated by the last project needed to be perused into future development. It is therefore recommended that, *the second phase of the LCI project be developed for another 4 years, to focus on incorporating the Provincial Governments’ involvement in the environment development, and to have them take responsibilities for it under the supervision of staff from the DEC.*

System of Social Cohesion and Solidarity in the Multifaceted Society

The local community is very supportive to any development work that benefited them, but often times they have a lot of other social obligations that they must attend to. These are part of their social capital and they invest a lot of their time and resources to it for their future benefits. To ensure viability of any project in the community, it is important to know that the people are living in what is called multifaceted society. It is recommended therefore that, *this multifaceted nature of the local community, be taken into consideration in the next project design, and that a system of social cohesion and solidarity, be put in place to ensure proper integration, development and utilization of environmental consciousness throughout the indigenous multifaceted community.*

Human Empowerment Capacity

It is an obvious reality that in any project or work, human beings are the most important element that can accelerate growth or fate. The composition of a human being is intricately made to respond to things differently from other mechanical devices. It is therefore important and thus recommended that, *the human resource needs of the project be carefully analyzed and appropriately addressed to ensure fair allocation of responsibilities and holistic motivational dynamics for human performance and personal and professional capacity development.*

Staff Insurance

The Staff or employees are always susceptible to unpredictable health and life hazards either at work places or during work business like the plane crash and motorbike accident in the last LCI project. It is vitally important that staff security be put in place to assist them in those times. It is therefore recommended that, *an Insurance Coverage for Project employees be considered, and put in place in the next project to protect them from likely accidents incurred during work.*

Fluctuation of Foreign Currency and Local Inflation

The fluctuation of foreign currencies and the annual local inflation often cause financial difficulty with project budget, especially when it is devaluation of the foreign currency. This was one of the problems with the last LCI project. In order to ensure adequate funding for the long term project for up to 4 years, it is recommended, *that, a long term rate allowing for the unpredictable devaluation and the annual internal inflation of 3% be allocated for the next project.*

Department of Environment and Conservation

The Government had already established the Department of Environment and Conservation the Director had been appointed but this department is yet to be developed into its full potential. In the last LCI project, the VEU or LCI project was on its own without effective support from the department, thus causing much stress with the staff of the VEU. It is, therefore, recommended that, *the current DEC be developed into its full potential and capacity as department, and the director and appropriate staffing properly empowered with resources to fully support the DEC.*

Sustainability Assessment

The sustainability of a thing or project is important not only to the tax payers who gave the funding but more so, to the beneficiaries and stakeholders of the project. In this LCI project, some sustainability strategies were drafted into the project design but it is yet too early to determine the viability of these strategies. It is important that a study be done on these to identify the long term durability of these strategies and make suggestions for improvement. It is therefore recommended that, *a sustainability impact assessment of the LCI, be conducted after 12 - 16 months period on the three project sites to assess the short and long - term impacts of the project in order to identify sustainability strategies.*

Funds for Independent On-Site Final Evaluation

This current Evaluator was not able to visit the project sites to make independent assessment from the beneficiaries of the project due to lack of funds. The Evaluator understands that there was a budget for Final evaluation, but that this fund was used up following immature decision making on project activities implementation and no close monitoring of the project funds by PCU over the last year of the project. This caused difficulties to make accurate Termination assessment report of the successes and failures of the project. It, therefore, recommended that:

- a) *In the future, mature decisions making on project activities to ensure proper spending of funds be maintained for close monitoring of project funds by the PCU so the Evaluators can visit the project sites and assess the process and results of outputs and to gauge the immediate stakeholders' status and attitudes.*
- b) The PCU be more critical and make substantiated decision on the project activities that will contribute to project outputs and expected outcomes. (Some activities implemented over the last year of the project were not in line with project activities or were in line but the outputs were not achieved).

- c) Recommendation to UNDP that they should also keep a closer monitoring of the project funds and regularly update PCU on how much fund is left 3 or 6 months earlier over the last year of the project so we know what remaining activities that are important to round them off and making sure there is sufficient fund to cover terminal reports and evaluation, etc.

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Appendix