



Solomon Islands Government

# NATIONAL FOREST POLICY 2020



Ministry of Forestry and Research

**Prepared by**  
Ministry of Forestry and Research  
for Solomon Islands.

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Solomon Islands Government

# **SOLOMON ISLANDS** National Forest Policy

**2020**

# FOREWORD



The Solomon Islands Government (SIG) and its people desire to maintain a long term view of the forestry sector that continues to sustain its growing economy, contribute to infrastructure development, maintain the environment and its ecosystem services, and improves the people's livelihoods. With more than 80% of the country's population living in the rural area and 90% of the land is covered with forests of various types and customary owned, the forest continue to play a vital role in the livelihoods and survival of Solomon Islanders for decades, a trend that will surely continue into the future. During the past three decades up until now, the country's economy is mainly buoyed by the forest products mainly through harvesting and export of round logs, sawn timber and veneer, contributing an average of 15-20% total government revenues, which is equivalent to 60-70% of foreign earnings.

Having recognised the progressive high fragmentations and unsustainable exploitations of the forest resources and with the determination to promote a long-term plan to manage the rainforest resources sustainably in the country, the Democratic Coalition Government for Advancement (DCGA) had mandated the development of this National Forest Policy (NFP). The NFP is purposely developed to demonstrate the DCGA commitment to address the growing problem of unsustainable practices which caused escalating degradation of the environment and forest ecosystem services that is significant to the health of our island rainforests and rural communities. Further, this NFP is important to manage and provide options to the declining trend of logging operations and monetary benefits. This NFP is a driving catalyst to promote the applications of sustainability in a holistic approach with emphasis to enable greater participation of all forest stakeholders. The NFP sets the standards for commercial logging, timber utilization, reforestation and other related activities, and allows for the development of supportive and enabling legislations to implement and enhance enforcement measures on key strategic areas.

The key strategic areas are: Forest Conservation, Forest Management, Economic and Marketing, Community Governance, Monitoring and Law Enforcement and Transparency Strategy. Hence, this Policy broadly recognises the multiple uses and benefits that the forestry sector provides to Solomon Islands as a country and society, its people and the resource owners through its many economic, social and ecological benefits. Each strategy provides a set of goals, objectives and expected results and outputs; all for which will contribute towards reaching the desired vision for the people of Solomon Islands and their forests resources.

Acknowledging that, there is a wide range of potential uses to which the natural forests of Solomon Islands can be put into. The Solomon Islands government through the Ministry of Forestry and Research is committed to promote a sustainable forest resources, through natural forest rehabilitation and plantation development that ensures sustainable wood flow which increases sustainable processing of value-added timber products, maintain and enhance environmental services benefits, research and development of non-timber forest products (NTFP), protection of biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptations through proper planning and use of forest resources.

With these commitments, I am certainly aware of the enormity of the task and the challenges before my Ministry under my leadership, however with the continuous good work, relationship built over time and space and a united effort from government ministries, development partners, and all stakeholders, I am

on that note, may I call on all Non-Government Organisations (NGO), Private Sector operators, Civil Society Organisations (CSO), Faith-based Organisations (FBO), Community-based Organisations (CBO), traditional community leaders, and all our resource owners to join efforts with the Solomon Islands Government through the Ministry of Forestry and Research to sustainably manage and utilise the forest resources in order to bring about positive changes to the livelihoods of the people of this country –through the scope of the forest sector.

I believe there is no limit to what can be achieved with a determined effort: the once and current backbone to the country's economy – forests, can continue to be wisely and sustainably utilized and restored to ensure a stronger growth path for the economy going forward as it is a renewable resource; hence we can address the short-term, medium-term and long-term desired goals and objectives at the provincial level and, national level whilst simultaneously addressing the international obligations such as the biodiversity and climate change conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Going forward, I am looking forward to the good and collaborative work of my staff members in the Ministry of Forestry and Research in continuous partnership with the development partners and stakeholders in the management, utilisation, rehabilitation, monitoring and protection of our scattered Islands' rainforests to progressively provide for the citizens of our country.

Wishing you all the very best in your undertakings.



Hon Ishmael Mali Avui, MP

Ministry of Forestry and Research



Solomon Islands is blessed with abundant natural resources equally spreading across its archipelago that benefits people of various races, cultures and traditional backgrounds. Recent assessment confirmed that forests covered approximately 90% of the land mass, equivalent to 2.24 million hectares. Because of the livelihoods of the people are intertwined with the forests, their needs and use of the forest resources varies across the country. With the introduction of logging operations in our Islands rainforests, the exploitation of forest resources had increased due to high demand for revenue by all stakeholders although it contributes to the high and progressive degradation of the forests and its ecosystem services.

The question on sustainability had been continuously asked more than ever, amid growing alarm over deforestation and the negative impacts of climate change. Recognising the increase exploitation at unsustainable rate by the logging industry and the need to addressing it, the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) had decided to transform the forestry sector into a sustainable industry; that is exploiting the forests at a sustainable rate that does not have any or have minimized detrimental impacts to the forest environment and resource owners but continues to sustainably support our economy and infrastructure development in the country. However, unsustainable practices remain a major challenge, from production to consumption.

Countries and producers with support from consumers need to mutually curb the presence of illegal wood in the markets and, at the same time, increasing the market value of sustainable products, encouraging investments and innovation in the sector, and ensure that smaller producers have the support, space and know-how they need to engage in sustainable trade.

The Solomon Islands Government (SIG) has taken the right direction, actions taken to enhance the sustainability of the forest resources as outlined in the National Forest Policy. Legislating the intentions and actions, implementing and improving monitoring should ensure compliances with good governance at all levels in the value chain and penalties to non-compliance by members of the logging industry.

Suggestions for action are mainly focussed on achieving SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 15 (life on land). While addressing these three SDG's, others would also be addressed with their continuous implementation over time and space.

Countries including Solomon Islands are moving into improved technologies and methodologies that enable innovations into high quality timber products and allows for better monitoring to ascertain where and how wood is being managed, produced and traded. The challenge now, is to translate the political will and the tools at hand into greater results on the ground to ensure and promote sustainable management of our forest resources that meets the economic, social and environmental benefits and expectations of all stakeholders. Hence, we have work to do and we must do it quickly.

Wishing you all the very best in upholding and implementing the principles of sustainable forest resource management on our scattered Islands rainforest through this National Forest Policy.

**Dr. Vaeno Wayne Vigulu**

**Permanent Secretary  
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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**Photo** : Bradford Theonomi and Gideon Solo

**Front Cover** : **Twin Mountains** - Kolombangara Island. View from Imbu Rano Lodge.  
 : **Teak Plantation** - Kolomola, Hograno, Isabel Province.  
 : **Operation (Eagon)** - Arara camp, Western Province  
 : **Woodmizer Saw** - Vonavona Lagoon, Western Province.  
 (Cutting Teak tree for Communities)  
 : **MOFR Staff** - Honiara (Marking International Forest Day, 2017)

**Back Cover (TOP)** : **MOU Signing** - Falake Community, Malaita Province  
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 : **Website Launching for plant specimen** - Honiara (Herbarium & Botanical  
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 : **Forestry Training** - Forest Development and Reforestation officers training  
 on seed technology.

**Back Cover (Below):** **Chainsaw teeth sharpening display** - Honiara (International Forest Day,  
 2017)  
 : **Forest & Community** - Forestry Officers conducting native enrichment  
 workshop for smallholder out-growers of Kolomola Village, Hograno, Isabel  
 Province.  
 : **Logs confiscated** - Utilization officer, Barton shows the Kwila round logs  
 confiscated for false declaration asrough sawn timber.  
 : **Loading of logs onboard ship for export** - Suavanao, Isabel Province.

**Design and Layout** : Bradford Theonomi

## ACRONYMS

<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organization
<b>ECD</b>	Environment and Conservation Division of the MECDM
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment
<b>EITI</b>	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
<b>FARC</b>	Forest Act Review Committee
<b>FLEGT</b>	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System
<b>ICTSU</b>	Information Communication Technological Support Unit
<b>ITTO</b>	International Tropical Timber Organization
<b>LALSU</b>	Public Solicitor's Office Landowner Unit
<b>MSME</b>	Micro Small Medium Enterprise
<b>MAL</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
<b>MCILI</b>	Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration
<b>MCT</b>	Ministry of Culture and Tourism
<b>MECDM</b>	Ministry of Environmental, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology
<b>MEHRD</b>	Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development
<b>MOFT</b>	Ministry of Finance and Treasury
<b>MOFR</b>	Ministry of Forestry and Research
<b>MID</b>	Ministry of Infrastructure Development
<b>MLHS</b>	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey
<b>MPGIS</b>	Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening
<b>NFP</b>	National Forest Policy
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>NTFP</b>	Non-Timber Forest Products
<b>PA</b>	Protect Area
<b>PSOA</b>	Public Solicitor's Office Adviser
<b>PPP</b>	Public-Private Partnership
<b>REDD+</b>	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
<b>SNRAS</b>	School of Natural Resources and Applied Sciences
<b>SINU</b>	Solomon Islands National University
<b>TLCC</b>	Traditional Local Council of Chiefs

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# 1.0 THE CONTEXT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS FOREST RESOURCES

The Solomon Islands cover a total land area of 2.8 million hectares, which spreads over a number of over 900 islands. The population is estimated at 515,870 (2009)<sup>1</sup>, with an average annual growth rate of 2.3% and only 19.8% living in urban areas<sup>1</sup>. About 87% of the land is held under customary land tenure, and the National Constitution guarantees control over the land and forests to the customary owners.

Solomon Islands vegetation is very diverse and the country has been listed under the global 200 forest ecoregions with at least a total of 4,500 plant species, of which 3,200 are known to be native (indigenous)<sup>2</sup>. Solomon Islands natural forests are classified into five main forest types:

- a. **Lowland Forests:** Forests on level or nearly level land below 200 m above sea level.
- b. **Hill Forests:** Forests between 200 m - 600 m above sea level on well-drained soils.
- c. **Montane Forests:** Forests at higher altitude ridge tops, generally >600 m above sea level.
- d. **Freshwater Swamp and Riverine Forests:** Forests on land with little relief and impeded drainage.
- e. **Mangroves and Saline Swamp Forests:** Forests on land subjected to tidal influences such as estuaries and foreshores.

Forests cover approximately 89.9% of the total land area<sup>3</sup>. The forest structure and species composition varies significantly across the archipelago. It is estimated that 51% of the natural forests are comprised of Lowland Forests, 38% of Hill Forests, 10% of Montane Forests. Only 1% are Mangroves and Saline Swamp Forests, and 0.3 % are Freshwater Swamp and Riverine Forests.

68.9% of the total forest area is estimated to be undisturbed. Montane Forests are the least disturbed forest type (nearly 90% of the area) followed by Hill Forests, with approximately 77% undisturbed area.

Montane Forests represent a globally important bird area which led to Solomon Islands being categorized as an "Endemic Bird Area" (EBA). There are 163 species of birds found in the Solomon Islands of which 69 are endemic. Terrestrial insects stand at a record of 14,511 which include 130 butterflies (30 endemic) and 31 cicada species. 19 out of 53 mammal species are endemic, and there are 80 species of reptiles and 21 identified frog species<sup>4</sup>.

A high proportion of Solomon Island's forests are not suitable for commercial logging by ground-based harvesting systems due to steep slopes and fragile soils. Around 22% of the national forest area was classified as suitable for commercial forest production<sup>5</sup>, and it is estimated that approximately 18% have and is currently re-logged<sup>6</sup>.

The recommended sustainable harvest rate is estimated<sup>7</sup> to be 250,000 m<sup>3</sup>/yr, however since 2006 the volume of logs exported has annually exceeded 1 million m<sup>3</sup>, gradually increasing in recent years and reaching the peak of logging industry at 2.7 million m<sup>3</sup> in 2018. Nearly 85% of the active felling licenses are currently operating in already logged-over forests<sup>5</sup>.

In terms of export markets, 87% of round logs exports go to China (2017), whereas sawn timber is exported mostly to New Zealand (43%) and Australia (33%)<sup>5</sup>.

The total Solomon Islands plantation area covers an estimated 35,600 ha, almost 80% of which are industrial plantations located in Western Province. The dominant industrial plantation species are Kamarere (*Eucalyptus deglupta*) and Beechwood (*Gmelina arborea*), which are used for plywood and other relatively low value industrial applications. Potentially high value species, such as Teak (*Tectona grandis*) and Mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*), are the main species grown in smallholder plantations and some minor areas of industrial plantation<sup>7</sup>.

The country currently relies on the forest sector as one of the key contributors to the government's revenue from round log, sawn timber and veneer export. The revenue from these logging accounts for approximately 20% of government revenue and for approximately 65% of the total value of export income. The logging industry provides around 10,000 jobs (both skilled and unskilled workers), which represent 20% of total employment in the country.

1 Census 2009. *Key Social Indicators*. Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2018.

2 MECDM. *The National Solomon Islands National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan, 2016-2020*.

3 FAO. *Historical Annual Forest Cover and Land-use Change in the Solomon Islands, Final Results*. Presentation at 2nd Annual National REDD+ Committee Meeting, November 2018.

4 Kool, J., T. Brewer, M. Mills, R. Pressey. *Ridges to reefs conservation for the Solomon Islands*. Australia: ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, James Cook University, 2010.

5 MOFT. *Solomon Islands Logging Sustainability Committee Report Cabinet*, 2018.

6 FAO. *Historical Annual Forest Cover and Land-use Change in the Solomon Islands, Final Results*. Presentation on 2nd National REDD+ Committee Meeting, 2018

7 Ramsi Economic Governance Pillar. *Solomon Islands National Forest Resources Assessment*, 2011.



Payments of royalties to resources owners also provide a source of revenue to rural communities, where the majority of people live subsistence lifestyles, with limited access to basic infrastructure that are located at long distances from urban centers<sup>5</sup>. For these communities, the forests continue to provide innumerable benefits such as timber and non-timber forest products, and ecosystem services.

It is estimated that 77% of Solomon Island's greenhouse gas emissions come from forestry and land-use change in recent years<sup>6</sup>. To reduce forest emissions and enhance forest carbon stocks while contributing to national sustainable development, Solomon Islands had developed a national REDD+ Roadmap under the United Nations Framework to Combating Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In 2010, the Solomon Islands joined the UNREDD Programme as a partner country and in 2014 the government established the REDD+ Unit provide for by the REDD+Roadmap.

Given the economic, ecological and social enormous benefits and challenges of the Solomon Islands forestry sector (see Annex 1), this National Forest Policy was developed to address the need for management and utilization, improvement and linkage to all stakeholders within the forest sector with connection to the sustainable logging policy. The linkage provides guidance for responsible and sustainable decision-making in the forestry sector for the future wellbeing of all Solomon Islanders.

<sup>6</sup> Climate Watch. *Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Emissions Targets, Solomon Islands, 2018*.

## 2.0 VISION

*"FOREST RESOURCES AND ECOSYSTEMS ARE SUSTAINABLY AND RESPONSIBLY MANAGED FOR THE BENEFIT AND RESILIENCE OF ALL SOLOMON ISLANDERS"*

### 2.1 - GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Solomon Islands National Forest Policy is guided by the following ten principles, which set the framework for the policy's strategies, goals and objectives, as well as giving direction for its implementation:

1. Alignment with from the Solomon Islands National Constitution, National Development Strategy and Forest Legislation;
2. Alignment with international agreements and conventions to which Solomon Islands is a signatory;
3. Mainstream the NFP strategies, goals and objectives into the strategic plans of all involved agencies;
4. Shift from unsustainable logging to sustainable forest management, thereby reversing the depletion of forest resources;
5. Develop local forest industries, commerce and trade for a stable, sustainable and inclusive forest sector economy;
6. Good forest governance, based on multi-stakeholder participation and multi-sectoral engagement, and with respect for culture and human rights;
7. Safeguard ecosystem services for the wellbeing of future generations;
8. Forest monitoring and law enforcement performed with efficiency and effectiveness;
9. Transparency in administrative processes and community decisions;
10. Commitment to sustainable forest-sector investment for long term sustainability of forest resources and ecosystems.

### 3.0 FOREST POLICY STRATEGIES

The forestry sector's long term vision, main challenges and guiding principles provide the framework for the Forest Policy Strategies. Each strategy provides a set of goals, objectives and expected results (outputs), all of which will contribute to reach the desired vision for the Solomon Islands forests.

The Forest Policy's Strategies are:

- **Forest Conservation;**
- **Sustainable Forest Management;**
- **Capacity Development;**
- **Forest Economics and Marketing;**
- **Community Governance;**
- **Monitoring and Law Enforcement;**
- **Transparency and Integrity.**

To implement these strategies, their specific goals, objectives and expected results as outlined herein, it must firmly be based upon NFP's vision as the benchmark with paramount importance to mainstreaming it into legislations, regulations, strategic plans, Ministry Corporate Plans, development programs, projects and partnerships.

This sets the foundation for well-informed decision on which the government, its agencies and key stakeholders decides constructive approach on; as and when, and which specific activities under each strategy to be implemented at short-term, mid-term or long term.



### 3.1 FOREST CONSERVATION STRATEGY

#### GOAL 1. Protection and conservation of biodiversity and forest ecosystems

Objective of GOAL 1	Expected Results
1.1 Perform comprehensive national forest inventory and remote sensing analysis to identify and map priority areas for forest conservation and restoration.	Priority areas for forest conservation and restoration are identified and mapped to guide conservation projects and programs.
1.2 Create incentives for the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded forest land in priority areas for forest conservation (e.g. water catchment areas, above 400m, etc.).	Degraded forest land in priority areas for forest conservation is rehabilitated and restored, providing enhanced ecosystem services for human well-being.
1.3 Promote seed collection of commercial and endangered native species for establishment of seed stands and tree nurseries.	Seed stands and nurseries are established, providing native seeds and seedlings for forest restoration, rehabilitation and reforestation.
1.4 Strengthen the capacity and collaboration between MOFR and MECDM to amplify government support for the establishment of terrestrial Protected Areas and forest reserves.	Capacity and collaboration between the MOFR and MECDM in promoting the establishment of terrestrial Protected Areas and forest reserves are strengthened.
1.5 Identify resource owners of priority areas for conservation and restoration, and encourage the establishment of terrestrial protected areas and forest reserves.	Priority forest conservation areas are endorsed as Protected Areas under the Protect Areas Act and established with consent from resources owners and managed in accordance with the Protected Areas management plans.
1.6 Review and simplify the application process for Protect Areas and Forest Reserves.	The application process for Protected Areas is simplified, supporting the conservation of priority areas.

#### GOAL 2. Recognition and promotion of ecosystem services for sustainable livelihood

Objectives of GOAL 2	Expected Results
2.1 Develop and strengthen potential conservation finance mechanisms for forest conservation.	Finance mechanisms for forest conservation (eg: payment for ecosystem services, conservation tax/fee, REDD+) are designed, established and available for resources owners.
2.2 Facilitate collaborative work between government agencies, resources owners and CSOs to promote and enhance REDD+ projects and conservation finance mechanisms.	REDD+ projects and conservation finance mechanisms are promoted through collaborative work between government agencies, resources owners and CSOs.
2.3 Strengthen the REDD+ Unit to steer the implementation of the National REDD+ Programme and prepare for REDD+ Readiness.	National REDD+ Programme is implemented and the preparation for REDD+ Readiness is steered by the national REDD+ Unit.
2.4 Raise awareness on REDD+ and finance mechanisms for forest conservation and encourage new projects and initiatives.	Resources owners are informed with regard to mechanism for REDD+ and finance mechanisms for forest conservation.



### 3.2 SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

#### GOAL 3. Multi-purpose forest inventory and spatial analysis for integrated landscape planning

Objectives of GOAL 3	Expected Results
3.1 Develop and implement the National Multi-purpose Forest Inventory and database for forest and landscape planning and monitoring.	The National Forest Inventory data base supports landscape planning, multi-purpose and forest products analysis and wood flow projections.
3.2 Establish a Remote Sensing Unit to build and maintain a spatial forest cover database to support analytical decisions for integrated landscape planning.	The Remote Sensing Unit provides near real-time spatial information on forest cover change and supports analytical decisions for integrated landscape planning.

#### GOAL 4. Consistent legislation for sustainable forest management practice

Objectives of GOAL 4	Expected Results
4.1 Review the Code of Logging Practice regulation to update with recognized criteria for sustainable forest management planning.	Regulations for sustainable forest management are clearly stated in the Code of Logging Practice, providing directives to forest projects and managers, including: forest management plan with pre-harvest forest inventory, re-entry logging /cutting cycle and annual allowable cut, tree dispersion maps, tree categories-seed/future/harvest, road planning and mapping, log pond distance/distribution criteria, river buffer zones, gender inclusion, social criteria.
4.2 Regulate the application and monitoring of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) for the expedition of the felling licenses.	Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) is a legal requirement for the expedition of felling licenses, reducing the social impacts of logging operations.
4.3 Regulate a fair and transparent percentage for revenue sharing between logging companies, resources owners and the government.	The distribution of logging revenue is defined in the Forestry Act ( <i>previous Forest Resources and Timber Utilization Act</i> ) and regulations (SLA) which guarantees fair and transparent benefit sharing between logging companies, resources owners and the government.
4.4 Establish technical and environmental criteria for re-entry logging and felling licenses.	Technical and environmental criteria (eg: minimum diameter, minimum tree density, biodiversity, etc) safeguard the forests ecosystem services and production potential for future generations.
4.5 Review the post-harvest enrichment regulations, incentives and monitoring system.	Post-harvest regulations and monitoring system promote enrichment planting in over-harvested forest areas.

### 3.3 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

#### GOAL 5. Development of technical skills and forest expertise

Objectives of GOAL 5	Expected Results
5.1 Promote the collaboration between the School of Natural Resources and Applied Sciences of SINU and MOFR to build local human capacity and develop research in forestry, silviculture and timber industries.	Highly qualified local professionals support the development of the forest sector.
5.2 Promote wood technology and processing training programs in accordance with forest industry needs.	Highly qualified local professionals in wood technology and processing support the development of the forest industry.
5.3 Promote and include forestry education, management of natural resources, environmental impacts and long term sustainability into school curricula at all school levels (Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary).	The basic concepts of long term sustainability and management of natural resources are understood by pupils, positively influencing the future generation towards behavioral change with regards to the use of natural resources.
5.4 Support provincial officer's capacity building to develop skills in the enforcement of forest legislation and supervision.	Provincial officers enforce, control and monitor forest legislation and regulations on the ground.
5.5 Support capacity building for forest officers and resources owners in the botanical identification of commercial tree species.	Forest officers and resources owners possess skills in the botanical identification of commercial tree species.

#### GOAL 6. Capacity building for gender equity and community empowerment

Objectives of GOAL 6	Expected Results
6.1 Promote gender inclusive technical capacity building in forest management, reforestation and sustainable agroforestry.	Local people are trained and contributing to the sustainable development of the forestry sector.
6.2 Promote gender inclusive finance and business capacity building for forestry and rural Micro Small Medium Enterprise (MSME) management.	Local people are trained in finance and business, and working in forestry and rural MSME, supporting the sustainable development of the forestry sector.
6.3 Promote gender inclusive capacity building in forest and environmental legislation and land use rights.	Local people are trained in finance and business, and working in forestry and rural MSME, supporting the sustainable development of the forestry sector.
6.4 Collaborate with educational initiatives in rural areas to strengthen environmental knowledge of rural communities.	Environmental knowledge in rural areas is strengthened, supporting informed decisions related to the use of natural resources.

### 3.4 FOREST ECONOMICS AND MARKETING STRATEGY

#### GOAL 7. Strengthen national forest industries and enterprises

Objectives of GOAL 7	Expected Results
7.1 Conduct an analytical study to assess and strengthen the value chain and markets for forest products (eg: processed timber and Non-Timber Forest Products - NTFP).	Positive interventions in the value chain and market strategies, guided by the analytical study, increase the economic performance of the forest sector.
7.2 Promote national and international market access for forest products.	Access to forest sector markets for processed wood, community forest products, agroforestry products etc., improving the local economy.
7.3 Establish sustainable rural Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSME) and associations to promote alternative economies and local business in the forest sector (eg: community forest plantations, local timber processing, agroforestry systems).	Alternative economies and forest sector businesses increased in the rural areas.
7.4 Strengthen existing businesses with technology and know-how to produce diversified wood products for national and international markets.	Increased diversification and quality of wood products produced by local businesses for national and international markets.
7.5 Conduct viability study for state and private companies to carry out forest management operations and wood processing in Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) with resources owners.	PPP between state and private companies and resources owners guarantee sustainable forest management and promote the forest industry.
7.6 Promote genuine community-private company partnerships for natural forest management, forest plantations and rural economy.	Community-private company partnerships generate new local businesses in the forest sector.
7.7 Improve rural infrastructure, logistics and business opportunities to attract genuine large-scale investors and support the establishment of Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSME) for community development.	Infrastructure in rural area is improved and allows the installation of large scale enterprises, forest-based MSME and rural businesses.
7.8 Promote the implementation of international standards for forest management compliance with market requirements (e.g: forest management certification, forest chain of custody certification, timber legality systems, etc.)	Certified forest companies are able to increase and support benefits through cost-efficient management, social services responsibility and environmental sustainability.

#### GOAL 8. Forest Plantations

Objectives of GOAL 8	Expected Results
8.1 Encourage the development of industrial and small-scale forest plantations (e.g: community/church woodlots, family plantations).	Increased area of forest plantations supports the national economy and community livelihood.
8.2 Promote market access for forest plantation products from community woodlots.	Market access for forest plantation timber and non-timber products, improving the local economy.
8.3 Promote landowners/resources owners capacity and skills for the establishment of forest plantations, silvicultural practices and forest management.	Silvicultural practices and forest management are applied in forest plantations, increasing volume and improving the timber quality.



### GOAL 9. Taxes and fund for long term sustainability

Objectives of GOAL 9	Expected Results
9.1 Implement financial incentives (e.g: tax exemption/subsidy) to encourage local wood processing and added value products.	Financial incentives encourage local wood processing.
9.2 Implement tax incentives to create an attractive economic environment for genuine, socially and environmentally responsible investors.	Financial incentives and sustainable criteria are applied to attract genuine and responsible investors.
9.3 Conduct a feasibility study on land use royalties/tax.	Land use tax creates revenue to be reinvested in sustainable development.
9.4 Conduct a feasibility study on environmental royalties/tax.	Environmental tax creates revenue to be reinvested in sustainable development.
9.5 Conduct a feasibility study on tax exemption for forest plantations and locally processed forest products.	Tax exemption promotes the establishment and management of forest plantations and locally processed forest products.
9.6 Develop an economic model to reinvest logging revenue and support the establishment of a community sustainability fund.	Community sustainability fund promotes local development and long term community benefits.
9.7 Develop an economic model to establish a fund to support initial capital for forest management, sustainable multiple use of natural resources, establishment of milling and rural Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSME).	Fund supports and encourages multiple land uses (forestry, agriculture, tourism, etc) and natural resource management, creating new business opportunities for, milling and rural MSME.

### GOAL 10. Diversification of the economy and alternative income generation

Objectives of GOAL 10	Expected Results
10.1 Promote alternative economic sectors which depend on protected forests (e.g: tourism, water) to improve livelihood and increase government revenue from sustainable activities.	Government revenue and community livelihood are improved through alternative income that contributes to protect forests.
10.2 Support biotechnology and pharmaceutical research on potential medicinal plants and forest products, promoting the recognition of the traditional knowledge and ownership rights.	Potential medicinal plants and their chemical properties are identified and recognized, supporting health services and promoting alternative livelihood.
10.3 Encourage the establishment of private partnerships between pharmaceutical and chemical industries to promote the biotechnology sector.	Pharmaceutical and chemical industry partnerships promote the biotechnology sector.
10.4 Encourage the production of bio-fuels.	Biofuel production generates revenue for government and local industries.
10.5 Promote the forest-based eco-tourism sector	Forest-based eco-tourism supports forest conservation and generates revenue for government, resource owners and private sector.
10.6 Promote the establishment of Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSME) based on seed collection and tree nurseries for forest plantations and enrichment planting.	Seed collection and tree nurseries generate alternative livelihood and promote the establishment of forest plantations.
10.7 Encourage the production of Non-timber forest products (NTFP), medicinal plants and agroforestry products.	NTFP, medicinal plants and agroforestry products generate alternative livelihood and reduce economic reliance on timber.



**GOAL 11.** Harvesting and timber export regulations

Objectives of GOAL 11	Expected Results
11.1 Align the log export volume rate with the annual sustainable yield to provide long term sustainability of the forest sector and economic stability <sup>9</sup> .	Reduction of unsustainable harvesting rates and log export volumes and maintenance of economic stability.
11.2 Regulate maximum percentage and minimum diameters for round log exports to promote local processing and reduce overharvesting of small diameter (future) trees.	Increased local wood processing, added value timber products and associated economic benefits, and reduced export of low grade and small diameter logs.
11.3 Assess the feasibility to participate in the FLEGT- Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade- mechanism and implement a National programme.	Implemented incentives to promote the production of legal timber and reduce illegal logging.

<sup>9</sup> The Logging Sustainability Policy establishes reductions targets in the timber export volume for the next 5 years (2019-2023), which shall be monitored and updated according to MOFR guidance.

### 3.5 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE STRATEGY

#### GOAL 12. Community Governance and empowerment

Objectives of GOAL 12	Expected Results
12.1 Timber rights acquisition procedures are reviewed and regulated to eliminate conflicts of interest and corruption.	Timber rights acquisition procedures promote transparency and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), ensuring that the resources owners opinions are respected in the decision making and agreements.
12.2 Recognize the traditional governance and decision making systems (e.g. TLCC- Traditional Local Council of Chiefs) in the timber rights acquisition and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes.	Traditional governance and decision making systems are recognized in the timber right acquisition process and included in the procedures.
12.3 Consolidate a recognized and efficient methodology and evaluation system for awareness-raising on logging and forest governance in the communities (e.g. adapted for rural educational levels, gender inclusive, informative on forest threats and alternative forest uses, educative on legislation and rights).	Awareness efficiently and effectively raised in the communities about the implications of logging impacts (positive and negative), alternative forest uses, forest legislation and rights.
12.4 Strengthen the Public Solicitor's office Landowner Unit (LALSU) to assist land and resources owners and communities in environmental, forest, land legislation issues.	Resources owners and communities have access to credible information and advice that supports the application of land, environmental and forest laws.
12.5 Support for communities in the establishment of benefit sharing systems and formal agreements.	Benefit sharing systems are established and drive formal, fair and transparent agreements.
12.6 Support communities to identify and map the tribal/customary land and forest area boundaries.	GIS database of tribal/customary land and forest area boundaries, supporting integrated landscape planning.
12.7 Promote the establishment of forest Community-Based Organizations (ex Community Tribal Forest Associations).	Forest Community-Based Organizations support community governance over the management and utilization of forest resources.
12.8 Create incentives for forest resource owners to participate in multi-stakeholder platforms to promote and strengthen forest governance (eg: forest associations, timber producers)	Strengthened forest governance due to enhanced participation of forest resources owners in multi-stakeholder platforms.
12.9 Support community grievance redressal mechanism for land and natural resources use.	Grievance redressal mechanism enables resources owners to challenge illegal/unauthorized forest use, and facilitates due diligence from timber buyers.

#### GOAL 13. Community Forest Management

Objectives of GOAL 13	Expected Results
13.1 Encourage tribal/clan/community-based sustainable forest management projects.	Tribal/Clan/Community-based sustainable forest management projects are established, improving government revenue, community livelihood and the forests long term sustainability.
13.2 Encourage community forest plantations (church, tribal/clan plantations and woodlots).	Community forest plantations and woodlots are increased, promoting government revenue, community livelihood and long term sustainability in rural areas.
13.3 Develop a forest management guideline for community forest management (agroforestry, plantations and natural forest).	Forest management guideline supports the implementation of community forest management and tree plantation projects
13.4 Develop community guidelines for good seed collection, nursery and plantation practices for enrichment and restoration of native forests and establishment of forest plantations.	Seed collection and nursery guidelines support the enrichment and restoration of native forests and the establishment of forest plantations.
13.5 Develop regulations and guidelines for the conversion of forests to other development purposes and uses.	National development priorities are supported through establishment of relevant guidelines and regulations for the harvesting of forests for the purpose of achieving such development. (e.g. agriculture, infrastructures, mining and others)



### 3.6 MONITORING AND LAW ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY

#### GOAL 14. Monitoring mechanism for information sharing and legality control

Objectives of GOAL 14	Expected Results
14.1 Design and implement an electronic collaborative data-sharing system for monitoring and legality control.	Monitoring and legality control are improved due to collaborative data sharing and information system.
14.2 Design and implement a system to enable communities and landowners to verify and monitor felling licenses and logging developments in customary land (e.g: rangers, community monitors).	Communities and land owners are enabled to monitor felling licenses and legal compliance of logging developments.
14.3 Strengthen infrastructure, human resources and technical capacity of the Provincial officers, MOFR GIS and Remote Sensing Unit <sup>10</sup> for forest monitoring, control and transparency.	Provincial officers, MOFR's GIS and Remote Sensing Unit <sup>10</sup> data and analyses strengthen forest monitoring, control and transparency.
14.4 Establish independent monitoring and verification system (e.g: provincial based officers, local certified experts/agents check) to control log shipments and logging companies legal compliance.	Monitoring and verification system (e.g: provincial based officers, local certified experts/agents check) ensures an effective control over log export volumes and species.
14.5 Enhance the performance of the monitoring mechanism for legality control and reporting system.	Efficient and effective monitoring for legality control and reporting system.

#### GOAL 15: Law enforcement

Objectives of GOAL 15	Expected Results
15.1 Review forest penalty regulations and enforce penalization of non-compliance with forest and environmental legislation and regulations.	Officers are empowered to control and to enforce the law, reducing breaches of forest and environmental legislation.
15.2 Enhance the control and enforcement of forest and environmental legislation and empower the officers to upscale the inspections.	Officers are empowered to control and to enforce the law, reducing breaches of forest and environmental legislation.
15.3 Improve and collaborate with MECDM for the enforcement of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the expedition of development consent and felling licenses.	EIA for logging developments are enforced, mitigating the environmental impacts of logging operations.
15.4 Establish an inspection system (e.g: local certified agents, or establish MOFR Safeguard Unit) to verify the compliance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).	The inspection system drives the compliance with EIA legislation and the reduction of environmental impacts of logging operations.
15.5 Establish an inspection system (eg: local independent certified agents; government officers inspections, etc.) to verify compliance with the Code of Logging Practice in logging planning and operations.	Compliance with the Code of Logging Practice is strictly enforced, driving the shift from unplanned logging to responsible and sustainable forest management.

<sup>10</sup> Proposed in Goal 3, Objective 3.2.



### 3.7 TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY STRATEGY

#### GOAL 16. Transparency to combat corruption

Objectives of GOAL 16	Expected Results
16.1 Establish and regulate the functions of the "Forestry Technical Committee" as the decision-making body for approval of forestry licenses (e.g: approval of harvesting and logging plans, felling license renewal, license to sell timber, etc)	Improved transparency in the decision making process regarding expedition of licenses from the Ministry of Forestry.
16.2 Establish and regulate the "Forestry Advisory Board" as a multisector platform to advise the Minister of Forestry and deliberate on the declaration of a moratorium when the need arises.	Improved transparency in the forest sector and collaboration between government agencies and CSO.
16.3 Design and implement a communication framework/system to share information between government agencies (national and provincial).	Communication framework/system improves the information sharing between government agencies (national and provincial).
16.4 Design and implement a platform for information sharing between resources owners and logging companies.	Platform for information sharing between resources owners and logging companies promotes confidence and transparency with regard of concession boundaries, responsibilities, revenues agreements, planned and harvested timber volume.
16.5 Implement an electronic system accessible to the general public containing legal documents related to the licensing, operations and inspection of logging developments.	Publicly accessible electronic system containing the legal documents related to logging developments increases the landowners control over their forest resources and improves their confidence in government and companies.



**GOAL 17: Fair, balanced and sustainable employment conditions and Schemes of Service**

Objectives of GOAL 17	Expected Results
17.1 Improve implementations of the workplace health and safety standards in line with the SIG employment conditions and guidelines.	Officers have sound knowledge and equipped with appropriate safety equipment and first aid kits and perform their duty in a safe and sound conditions. They are able to make decisions on conditions that may compromise their health and safety while doing their work.
17.2 Seek and implement adequate annual budgets from the SIG to cater for the needed logistics (e.g. OBM, vehicles, fuel, funds for accommodations and others) for officers to do their work while in the field.	Officers have access to the needed equipment, fuel and adequate funds to carry out their work on time without due influence from others including companies
17.3 Seek adequate annual budgets to establish and renovate offices and accommodations in the provinces for staffs and MoFR staff quarters.	Offices provide conducive work environment and staff houses are properly renovated and built to ensure safe standards for staffs and their families to live on.
17.4 Secure adequate budgets annually to appropriately reward staffs (e.g. OT and SDAs) and actively perform staff appraisals in line with the MPS performance management process to reward staffs in terms of increments and promotion benefits.	Staffs appropriately rewarded, morale boosted, increase work performance and outputs, staffs encouraged to do their work diligently.
17.5 Establish and implement staff development plan and maintain in the registry as a means of rewarding staffs through promotion and increments.	Staffs aware of the staff development plan and pursue career path development trainings and rewarded after successfully completing such trainings.
17.6 Implement staff discipline procedures in line with public service code of conducts and procedures.	Staffs act within the public service general order and code of conduct in performing their duties.



## 4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the National Forest Policy (NFP) aims to identify deviations from its objectives and planned actions and thus allows corrections during policy implementation. M&E is based on an annual verification (through indicators) whether the policy is achieving the desired outcomes.

A detailed M&E review will be implemented in 5 year intervals. The review will verify the achievements and analyze changes and main constraints in the forest sector context. If required, the policy strategies (and related goals and objectives), their implementation and institutional arrangements can be restructured.

M&E will be coordinated by MOFR which will prepare a Monitoring Plan immediately after the endorsement of the NFP. The framework of the monitoring plan<sup>11</sup> needs to be aligned with other executive agencies monitoring plans, and should include:

- a. **Indicators per objective:** to inform the measure and the metric;
- b. **Baseline:** to inform the most recent figures and dates, or inform when it will be assessed;
- c. **Method or source of data:** to inform how will it be measured;
- d. **Responsible and location:** to inform who will provide and analyse the data and where will monitoring be done;
- e. **When:** to inform the timeframe and frequency of data collection;
- f. **Cost:** to inform specific budget to carry out the monitoring.

<sup>11</sup> A recommended template for the monitoring plan is available in the annex document: "National Forest Policy Monitoring Framework".



## 5. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the NPF comprises a wide range of cross-cutting measures and mechanisms that need to be developed and addressed concurrently.

The NFP goals and objectives therefore need to be mainstreamed into Solomon Islands policies, legislations, regulations, strategic plans, Ministry Corporate Plans, development programs, projects and partnership in order to ensure the successful implementation of the NFP's strategies.

Sufficient funding, stakeholder engagement and SIG commitment are essential and critical to ensure the mainstreaming and successful implementation of this policy. Some recommendations to overcome these challenges are outlined in the items that follow:

### 5.1 FUNDING

A prioritization analysis can be used to indicate the short, medium and long term desired outcomes for allocating resources, as well as to prepare action plans. Options for funding are proposed below:

1. Establishment of a National Forest Trust Fund and a National Forest Trust Fund Board to prioritize and allocate government resources for NFP implementation;
2. Promote co-funding mechanisms to enable institutions, NGOs, donors and private initiatives to support the implementation of the NFP;
3. Annual SIG budget (*across all Ministries involved in the implementation*) shall include and indicate NFP goals and objectives to be worked towards;
4. SIG should pursue and tap into international funding opportunities available to the Strategies under the NFP;
5. Establishment and maintenance of regional and international development cooperation in the forest sector;
6. Establishment of bilateral partnerships between Solomon Islands and wood consumer countries (*especially China*) for implementation of timber legality certifications, and responsible international trade and investment in the forest sector;
7. Establishment of Public-Private and Inter-Agency Partnerships;
8. Private companies (*ex: forest companies*) will shift to and therefore finance sustainable forest management activities on their own in order to comply with forest laws and regulations.



## 5.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

The MOFR is the responsible agency to coordinate NFP implementation and as such plays a crucial role in maintaining stakeholder dialogue and engagement, monitoring and evaluating the progress, and communicating the achievements to the public.

Specifically, MOFR will monitor the stakeholder map and identify interested parties that will have significant impacts or influence on the NFP implementation, as well as those who are most affected by it, allowing for a better tailoring of communication strategies and engagement methods.

There is a range of forest initiatives already in place which aims to strengthen the forest sector (see list below). Nonetheless further platforms, networks and methods could be established to engage additional stakeholders groups if required (for instance: Traditional Local Council of Chiefs, Forest Associations and International Forest Committees). Information from stakeholders themselves also may indicate whether the engagement approaches need to change.

1. Provincial network initiatives<sup>12</sup>;
2. Forest Sector Working Group;
3. National REDD+ Committee;
4. Logging Sustainability Committee;
5. Forest Act Review Committee;
6. Solomon Forest Association;
7. Forestry Advisory Board (proposed under Goal 16, Objective 16.2).

Strategies to disclose information on the progress of NFP implementation should make use of a variety of communication tools, especially to overcome the geographical barriers, diversity of languages and the infrastructure obstacles in the rural areas. A communication plan should be designed which considers the following communications channels:

1. Use of interactive social media operated by government agencies and partners (e.g: NGOs, donors, associations) to reach youths and citizens in urban areas, as well as international stakeholders;
2. Use of newspaper publications to reach urban areas and bigger towns at the Province level;
3. Use of radio programs to reach rural areas;
4. Use of mobile phone message to reach rural areas;
5. Disclosure of printed material (eg: annual report) to reach rural areas;
6. Awareness raising activities in rural areas;
7. Events during special days, such: International Day of Forests (21 March), World Environment Day (5 June);
8. Annual Forest Forum/Seminar/Symposium for exhibition of forest products, scientific research, projects achievements, NFP progress, etc.

<sup>12</sup> E.g: Malaita Provincial Partnership Network and Western Province Network for Sustainable Environment.



### 5.3 COMMITMENT AND AGREEMENTS

The NFP implementation, to be effective, needs to be supported by SIG executives (ministers and key decisions makers), by the regulator (primarily MOFR) and relevant stakeholders. Official agreements need to clearly outline the responsibilities and, when applicable, consequences of non-performance.

Such agreements are important to strengthen the commitment to the NFP and shall be established during the policy's implementation, as follows:

1. Annual budgets of the SIG executive agencies, regulator and other involved agencies to implement the NFP;
2. Appointment of focal points from the government agencies involved in the implementation of the NFP;
3. Design of partnership programs and projects to actively collaborate in the implementation of the NFP;
4. Establishment of Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) and formal agreements with stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the NFP;
5. Membership in international initiatives as the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI);
6. Bilateral agreements between producer and consumer countries for implementation and enforcement of sustainability guidelines<sup>13</sup>;
7. Assess the feasibility of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), to extend its coverage to forestry.

<sup>13</sup> Relevant Chinese policies with regards the forest sector: "Guidelines for Sustainable Overseas Trade & Investment"; "Guide on Sustainable Overseas Silviculture by Chinese Enterprises"; "Guide on Sustainable Overseas Forest Management and Utilization by Chinese Enterprises".



## 6. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

The Ministry of Forest and Research is the responsible for the coordination of the National Forest Policy's implementation and monitoring. The MOFR comprises five technical divisions headed by the Commissioner of Forest and Research, which are further structured into functional Sub-Units/ Sections.

Detailed information of the main activities of each Division and Section area available in MOFR's Corporate Plan which is updated every four years.

### i. Forest Resource Management and Technical Services Division (FRMTSD):

- a) Policy Planning and Management Section
- b) Forest Inventory Section and REDD+ Unit
- c) Enforcement Section
- d) Licensing Section

### ii. Forest Industries Division (FID):

- a) Operations Section
- b) Economics Section

### iii. Timber Utilization and Processing Division (TUPD)

### iv. Forest Plantation Development and Reforestation Division (FPDRD)

### v. National Herbarium and Botanical Garden Division (NHBGD)

The institutional arrangement for collaboration between MOFR and others ministries for the implementation of the NFP is suggested as follows:

### 6.1 FOREST CONSERVATION STRATEGY:

- Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology;
- Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey;
- Ministry of Finance and Treasury;
- Proposed: Establishment of a Remote Sensing Unit (Goal 3, Objective 3.2).

### 6.2 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

- Solomon Islands National University;
- Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development;
- Public Solicitor's Office;
- Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration.



### 6.3 FOREST ECONOMICS AND MARKETING STRATEGY:

- Solomon Islands National University;
- Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration ;
- Ministry of Finance and Treasury;
- Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening;
- Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey;
- Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology;
- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock;
- Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

### 6.4 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE STRATEGY:

- Public Solicitor's Office;
- Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration;
- Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening;
- Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey;
- Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

### 6.5 MONITORING AND LAW ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY:

- Ministry of Finance and Treasury;
- Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration;
- Ministry of Environmental, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology.

### 6.6 TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY STRATEGY:

- Ministry of Finance and Treasury;
- Ministry of Public Service;
- Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration;
- Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology.



ANNEX

ANNEX

## Annex 1: Main Issues and Constraints in the Forest Sector

The main issues and constraints that threaten the Solomon Islands long term vision can be divided into six main thematic areas. These areas comprise the contributing factors that drive the loss of Solomon Islands forest cover, resources, biodiversity and ecosystem services.

As a consequence of rapidly declining timber resources due to over-exploitation the national economy could suffer severe negative impacts in the near future, thereby exacerbating the vulnerability of its citizens, resources owners and forest-dependent livelihood.

The main forest sector constraints to be addressed by the National Forest Policy, as identified through stakeholder consultation<sup>14</sup> are:

### • Lack of policies and legislation

The lack of political will and long term government commitment to improve the public agencies (in terms of budget, capacity and infrastructure) lead to inconsistent regulations and deficiencies in monitoring and control.

Outdated regulations, such as the *Forest Resources and Timber Utilization Act (1970, under review)* and the *Code of Logging Practice (2002)* do not comprehensively address good practice for sustainable forest management.

Likewise, the absence of regulations that limit the number of felling licenses, harvesting volume, cutting cycle/re-entry logging and log export rates drive overharvesting and the depletion of the commercial forest resources.

The absence of social and environmental responsibility criteria and restrictions on the investors side contributes to a lack of long term investments to improve rural infrastructure.

The described shortcomings make the forest sector susceptible to corruption, conflicts of interest and irresponsible investors attracted by weak governance and opportunities for tax evasion, low cost of investment and high profit margins.

### • Lack of monitoring and law enforcement

The lack of monitoring, control and law enforcement is an issue that negatively impacts the development of the forest sector and contributes to low transparency and vulnerability to corruption at all stages of the forest value chain.

At the community level, the absence of monitoring and law enforcement (especially with regards to the application of Environmental Impact Assessments, the Code of Logging Practice and Timber Rights Hearings) leads to social conflicts and low benefits for the majority of the resources owners.

<sup>14</sup> The information about the methodology applied for the development of the NFP is available in the annex report: "Development of the Solomon Islands National Forest Policy: methodology and stakeholder consultation".



The resources owners don't have the means and know-how to monitor the logging projects and are disadvantaged by overharvesting, harvesting beyond the boundaries, false declarations of harvesting, volumes, economic loss due to corruption and negative impacts on forest ecosystem services.

At the government level, the lack of logging monitoring prevents the establishment of a forest production data base which hampers the effective control of harvesting/export volumes and felling licenses.

This hinders collaboration and information sharing between relevant government agencies (eg: MECDM, MOFT, Customs Office) and creates incentives for investors to manipulate log export declarations and evade taxes.

- **Unsustainable forest management and uncertain future wood supply**

The lack of implementation of sustainable forest management practice drives the forests of the Solomon Islands to a status of ever-increasing degradation. The absence of regulations and enforcement of sound harvest planning leads to poorly executed logging operations and the associated negative economic, social and environmental impacts.

From the perspective of a logging project, the absence of sound forest harvest planning regulations impedes the application of a sustainable cutting cycle and annual allowable cut, making the forests vulnerable to overharvesting.

The absence of commercial pre-harvest inventories leads to a lack of forest data to map tree dispersion (harvest trees, future commercial trees, seed trees) and no-felling zones, increasing the damage over the remaining stand during logging operations.

The lack of sound forest management planning and absence of a Forest Management Plan also leads to the installation of a damaging and inefficient forest road and skid trail network, harming river buffer zones and other ecologically sensitive areas while increasing forest degradation, loss of ecosystems services and susceptibility to deforestation.

The current uncontrolled and grossly unsustainable harvesting rates seriously jeopardize future timber supplies and associated government and community income.

From the national perspective, the lack of a national forest inventory and reliable, up-to-date forest resources data makes it impossible to predict the future wood supply, preventing the design and application of economic and strategic forest sector plans.

In addition, the absence of a multi-purpose national forest inventory and the lack of identification of conservation areas make it difficult to design a conservation finance mechanism to protect and restore priority areas.



• **Low investments into the forest sector**

Despite the low diversity of the Solomon Islands economy and heavy dependence on forest resources, significant investments into the forest sector have been neglected.

The sustainable development of the Solomon Islands forest sector is hampered by a lack of value chain analysis and economic incentives to attract genuine, socially and environmentally responsible investor sand the lack of a mechanism to promote local timber processing and improve the infrastructure in rural area.

These factors create a favorable environment for the establishment of irresponsible investors who neglect social and environmental standards, over-harvest forest resources and, practice tax evasion (e.g. through forged log volume declarations and transfer pricing)

The establishment of local /rural business initiatives is hampered by obstacles to local investors and resources owners to access initial capital to start up Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and the low level of skills in business finance.

Agroforestry systems, forest based tourism, community forest management, and innovative opportunities such as bio-diesel and pharmaceutical products are not receiving adequate economic incentives to generate income for forest dependent communities.

Likewise, large scale industrial and community forest plantations have not been sufficiently promoted while many obstacles related to land ownership and partnerships between private companies and communities need to be overcome.

• **Low level of education**

The low rates of literacy and education in the rural areas of the Solomon Islands are a challenge for the development of the forest sector. These factors contribute to the lack of awareness about the scope of negative social and environmental impacts from logging developments and contribute to the lack of effectiveness of timber rights hearings.

In addition, the low rates of education, especially among women, and the lack of forest projects that recognize traditional knowledge and promote capacity building on alternative rural economies hampers the interest for sustainable development in remote areas.

- **Community vulnerability and lack of governance**

The Solomon Islands high population growth and cultural changes are influencing the transition from a subsistence economy to a semi-subsistence and commercial / cash economy. The complex situation created by the need for cash, low levels of education, lack of developed skills, few employment opportunities and the aspiration for improvements in the rural infrastructure contribute to a high vulnerability of communities to the pressure from logging companies.

Lack of information and knowledge with regards to the negative social and environmental impacts of unsustainable logging leads to a lack of prioritization of long term sustainability, and leads many communities to readily accept proposals and informal agreements with logging companies.

The communities vulnerability also increases due to the weakening of the traditional decision making system (council of chiefs), leading to weak leadership, corruption and social disruption.

For instance, there are many situations where the decisions from the timber rights hearings do not reflect the community opinion. The lack of information and legal advice often makes communities vulnerable to unsustainable logging, loss of ecosystem services and loss of wellbeing.



## GLOSSARY

<b>Agroforestry</b>	A complex of trees within an area that is broadly characterized as agricultural or as an agro-ecosystem <sup>15</sup> .
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Biological diversity; The variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems <sup>16</sup> .
<b>Buffer zones</b>	Area excluded from harvesting as follows: cultural areas including village areas, gardens; shorelines, lagoons, lakes and water storage areas; landslip areas; designated watercourses; specific wildlife habitats and areas containing endangered species <sup>17</sup> .
<b>Conservation finance mechanism</b>	Mechanisms by which conservation finance can be approach, as debt-for-nature swaps, conservation trust funds, mitigation banking or biodiversity offsets, payment for ecosystem services, REDD+ <sup>18</sup> .
<b>Customary owners</b>	Traditional or customary ownership means that the land belongs to a tribe (communal ownership) or an extended family grouping or clan. The family is the basic social unit; members of extended families live together in hamlets and villages as clans. This traditional or customary ownership is a form of private rather than state ownership. This is in contrast to many other countries whose natural forests are in public ownership and therefore under the jurisdiction of the government to manage in the national interest <sup>19</sup> .
<b>Deforestation</b>	The conversion of forest to another land use or the long-term reduction of the tree canopy cover below the minimum 10% threshold <sup>20</sup> .
<b>Forest Degradation</b>	The long-term reduction of the overall potential supply of benefits from the forest, which includes carbon, wood, biodiversity and other goods and services (FAO, 2007), whilst maintaining a tree canopy cover above 10% <sup>20</sup> .
<b>Endemic species</b>	Native species restricted to a particular geographic region owing to factors such as isolation or in response to soil or climatic conditions <sup>16</sup> .
<b>FLEGT</b>	FLEGT stands for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade. It is an EU mechanism that aims to reduce illegal logging by strengthening sustainable and legal forest management, improving governance and promoting trade in legally produced timber <sup>21</sup> .

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16 CBD. *Convention on Biological Diversity. Definitions*. 2018. <https://www.cbd.int/forest/definitions.shtml>

17 FAO. *Planning Guidelines for Harvest Exclusion Areas*. 2018. [www.fao.org/docrep/004/AC142E/ac142e0a.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/004/AC142E/ac142e0a.htm)

18 *Global Forest Atlas. Finance for Forest Conservation & Payment for Ecosystem Services*. <https://globalforestatlas.yale.edu/conservation/finance-forest-conservation-payment-ecosystem-services>.

19 WAIRIU M. *Forest Certification in Solomon Islands. Symposium: Forest Certification in Developing and Transitioning Societies: Social, Economic, and Ecological Effects at Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, 2004* apud *Solomon Islands Government. National Forest Resources Assessment. Project Report, 2003*.

20 FAO. *Forest and Climate Change Working Paper n° 5: Definitional Issues Related to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries*. 2007.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Forest</b>	Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 meters and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or urban land use <sup>22</sup> .
<b>Forest biological diversity</b>	Forest biological diversity means the variability among forest living organisms and the ecological processes of which they are part; this includes diversity in forests within species, between species and of ecosystems and landscapes <sup>23</sup> .
<b>Forest Enrichment</b>	The planting of desired tree species in a modified natural forest or secondary forest or woodland with the objective of creating a high forest dominated by desirable (local and/or high-value) <sup>24</sup> .
<b>Forest Plantation</b>	A forest established by planting or/and seeding in the process of afforestation or reforestation. It consists of introduced species or, in some cases, indigenous species <sup>24</sup> .
<b>Forest Rehabilitation</b>	A management strategy applied in degraded forest lands that aim at restoring the capacity of a forest to produce products and services <sup>24</sup> .
<b>Forest Restoration</b>	A management strategy applied in degraded primary forest areas. Forest restoration aims to restore the forest to its state before degradation (same function, structure and composition) <sup>24</sup> .
<b>REDD+</b>	Climate change financing mechanism developed by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It creates a financial value for the carbon stored in forests by offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. Developing countries would receive results-based payments for results-based actions. REDD+ goes beyond simply deforestation and forest degradation and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks <sup>25</sup> .
<b>REDD+ Readiness</b>	Countries implement REDD+ through a phased approach which can take several years to complete. In the REDD+ readiness phase, countries develop a national strategy for implementing REDD+. To do this they draw upon broad stakeholder input and on research, such as studies on the drivers of deforestation or on legal reforms. Countries also develop the institutional framework to achieve the strategy. This framework encompasses the policies, capacity, infrastructure and institutions needed to put REDD+ into practice, demonstrate that REDD+ activities are effective, and manage payments for results <sup>26</sup> .
<b>Reforestation</b>	The direct human-induced conversion of non-forested land to forested land through planting, seeding and/or the human-induced promotion of natural seed sources, on land that was forested but that has been converted to non-forested land <sup>27</sup> .

21 EU FLEGT FACILITY. *What is FLEGT?* 2018. <http://www.euflegt.efi.int/what-is-flegt>

22 FAO. *Forest Resources Assessment Working Paper n°180: FRA 2015 Terms and Definitions*. 2012

23 ITTO. *Policy Development Series No 13. ITTO guidelines for the restoration, management and rehabilitation of degraded and secondary tropical forests*. 2002.

24 CDB. *FAO Definitions: Forest Resources Assessment*. 2000. <https://www.cbd.int/forest/definitions.shtml>

25 UN-REDD Programme, 2018. <https://www.unredd.net/about/what-is-redd-plus.html>

26 EU REDD Facility. *REDD+ readiness*, 2018 <http://www.euredd.efi.int/implementing-redd>

27 FCCC. *Decision 11/CP.7 Land use, land-use change and forestry*. 2001. <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/11cp7.pdf>

<b>Forest Reserve</b>	Purpose of conserving water resources within Solomon Islands, to protect the forest or other vegetation in any rainfall catchment area <sup>28</sup> .
<b>Secondary Forest</b>	A secondary forest is a forest that has been logged and has recovered naturally or artificially. Not all secondary forests provide the same value to sustaining biological diversity, or goods and services, as did primary forest in the same location <sup>29</sup> .
<b>Sustainable Forest Management</b>	The process of managing forest to achieve one or more clearly specified objectives of management with regard to the production of a continuous flow of desired forest products and services without undue reduction of its inherent values and future productivity and without undesirable effects on the physical and social environment <sup>30</sup> .
<b>Sustained Yield</b>	The production of forest products in perpetuity, ensuring that the harvesting rate does not exceed the rate of replacement (natural and/or artificial) in a given area over the long term <sup>30</sup> .
<b>Timber Rights Acquisition</b>	Any person who wishes to carry on business in Solomon Islands as a timber exporter or sawmiller, and desires to <b>acquire timber rights</b> on customary land shall make application to the Commissioner in the prescribed form and manner and obtain his consent to negotiate with the appropriate Government, the area council and the owners of such customary land <sup>31</sup> .

28 LAWS OF SOLOMON ISLANDS. Chapter 40. Forest Resources and Timber Utilization. Part VII, 24. Forest Reserves. Rev. Edition 1996.

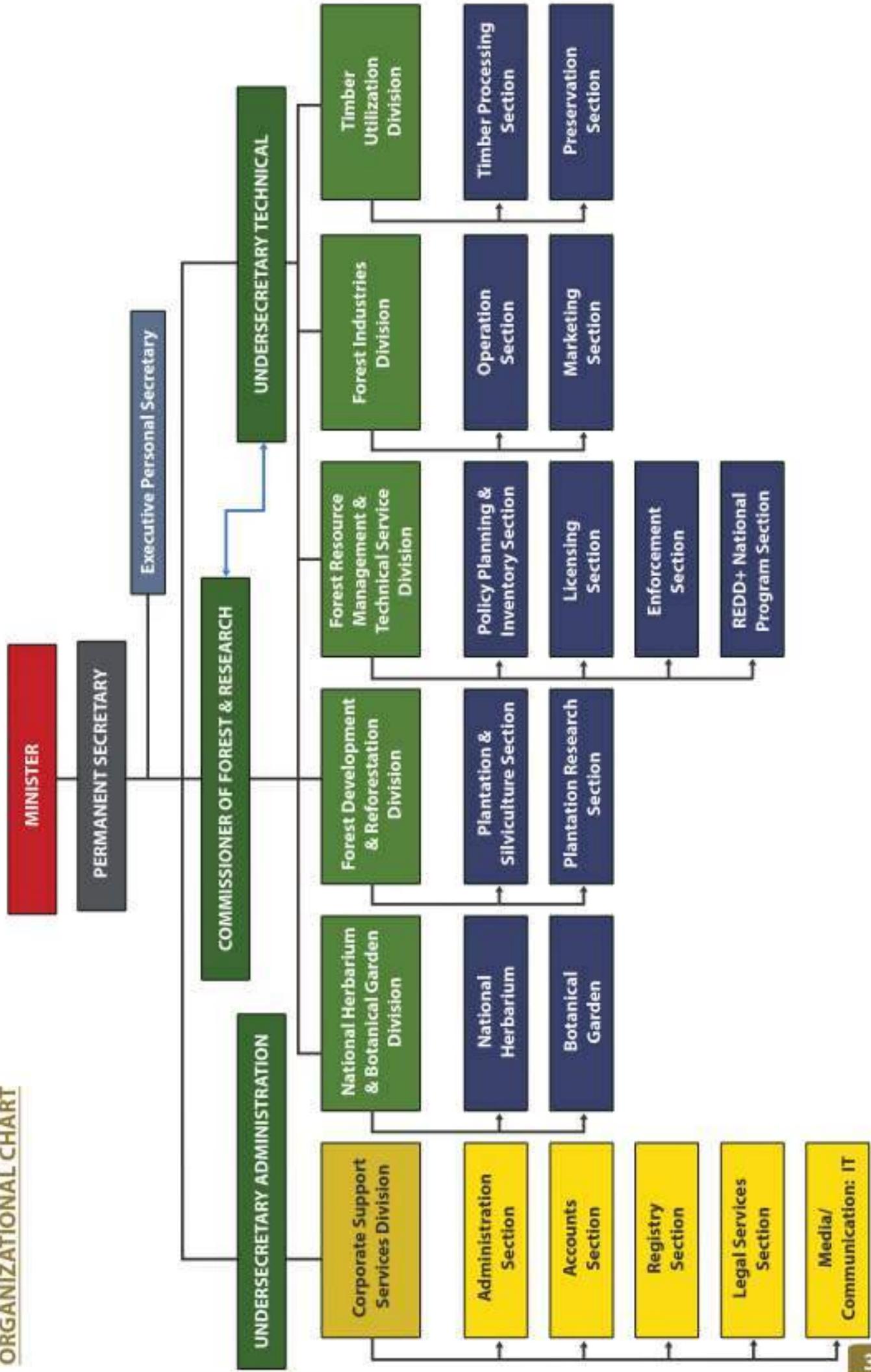
29 CBD. Convention on Biological Diversity. Definitions. 2018. <https://www.cbd.int/forest/definitions.shtml>

30 ITTO. Policy Development Series No 13. ITTO guidelines for the restoration, management and rehabilitation of degraded and secondary tropical forests, 2002.

31 LAWS OF SOLOMON ISLANDS. Chapter 40. Forest Resources and Timber Utilization. Part III, 7. (1) Approved timber agreements affecting customary land. Rev. Edition 1996.



**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



## CONTACTS

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