



THE PROJECT ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

A TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROJECT FUNDED BY JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY (JICA) IS HENCE HIGHLY RELEVANT AND NECESSARY FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS' NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY. THE PROJECT FOCUSES ON THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF FORESTRY AND RESEARCH (MOFR), SO THAT MOFR SHALL BE BETTER AND READILY EQUIPPED WITH SKILLS AND STRATEGIES TO PLAN, IMPLEMENT AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE COUNTRY.

NEWSLETTER



January 2018: The First Joint Coordination Committee Meeting

The First Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) Meeting was held in January 2018. In addition, the Five-Year Project Plan (Plan of Operation) and the Annual Working Plan for 2018 had already been approved by the JCC members. The Project is to be managed in cooperation with Project members from the Solomon Islands and Japan.



Newspaper article on the
First JCC Meeting

February 2018: Counterpart Training and Papua New Guinea Study Tour

For ten days in February 2018, the Project's Counterpart Training, part of the "Project on Capacity Development for Sustainable Forest Resources Management in Solomon Islands", was held in Japan. In addition, three key members of the Project — the Permanent Secretary (the Project Director), the Commissioner of Forestry (the Project Manager), and the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Forest & Research, Solomon Islands — participated in the training.

A study tour was conducted to observe a Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Technical Cooperation Project underway in Papua New Guinea and to learn precedent cases of Sustainable Forest Resource Management (SFRM) and environmental conservation in the Pacific region. The Ministry of Forest & Research (MOFR) witnessed a step-by-step approach from a neighboring country and reaffirmed that the development of laws and strengthening of management capacity and improving the management system for deforestation was an urgent issue.



Counterpart Training in Japan
(Gifu Prefecture Tree Breeding Center)



PNG Forest Authority
(PNGFA) courtesy call

March 2018: Establishment of the Forest-Sector Technical Working Group



Group photo of the First Forest-Sector
Technical Working Group

The Solomon Islands Forest-Sector Technical Working Group was established in response to calls from the MOFR and the Japanese Experts of the Project. The members of the Working Group are the MOFR, Solomon Islands National University, donors and NGOs that operate in the forest-sector in the Solomon Islands, including the members of their projects. At the first meeting held in March 2018, discussions were had about the role of the Technical Working Group and the frequency of its meetings and about expanding membership in the future; a mailing list was started to promote communication among members. It was also decided that the Project would serve as the secretariat for the subsequent two years to operate the Technical Working Group in cooperation with the MOFR.

April-June 2018: Preparation for Project Pilot Site Selection

Through Pilot Activities, the Project supports MOFR initiatives that explore the feasibility of “Community Participatory Sustainable Forest Resource Management”. The activities aim to improve the ability of the MOFR to support communities, on the assumption that there are various ways of conducting SFRM that are suited to the unique culture and social climate of each community on the multiethnic and multicultural Solomon Islands. Therefore, MOFR staff is required to take the initiative in a series of activities starting from gathering information about communities, selecting Pilot Sites, consensus-building with the communities to carry out activities, creating a Forest Resource Management Plan with communities, and implementing and monitoring the Forest Resource Management Plan. The Project Experts have supported the establishment of the system that enables MOFR staff to carry out this series of activities.

The Project worked on preparation for selecting the Pilot Sites — which are the examination of the direction of MOFR initiatives on “Community Participatory Sustainable Forest Resource Management”, the creation of a list of candidate Pilot Sites and the collection of information about them, and the examination of the selection process and schedule based on criteria previously agreed upon by the MOFR and JICA.

June 2018: Second JCC Meeting and Second Forest-Sector Technical Working Group Meeting



Group photo of the Second JCC



Group photo of the Second Forest-Sector Technical Working Group

The MOFR, the implementing agency of the Project, formulates a Corporate Plan (Ministry of Forest & Research Medium-Term Plan) as a business plan every four years. Since the current Corporate Plan 2015-2018 will end in 2018, after reviewing this plan and analyzing its issues, the Project is supporting the formulation of the next plan, the Corporate Plan 2019-2022, for the realization of more SFRM.

At the Second JCC Meeting held in June, reports were made on the draft preparation work for the Corporate Plan 2019-2022 and progress made in selecting the Pilot Sites. In addition, the Project Activity Plan for the second half of 2018 was approved. The finalization of the Corporate Plan 2019-2022 and the Pilot Sites selection will be completed by the end of 2018.

After the Second JCC Meeting, the Second Forest-Sector Technical Working Group Meeting was held. A new member was welcomed, the Solomon Islands Timber Processing and Export Association, which is organized by sawmill companies and timber export companies. This addition was made to involve private sector stakeholders, a move that had been proposed at the first meeting. In addition, the activities of each member being brought together in the Project — shared at the First JCC Meeting — were outlined, and the Forest Sector Support Activity List — arranged in accordance with the framework of the National Development Strategy, a high priority development plan of the Solomon Islands — were also announced and approved. This was done to enable the MOFR and participating members to understand what activities and projects in the field of forestry were being developed at that time, as well as which organizations were engaging in them. The Forest Sector Support Activity List will be updated regularly in the future.

July-October 2018: Pilot Site Candidate Selection

During this period, based on information collected together with MOFR staff, the Project narrowed down multiple Pilot Site candidates from those recommended by the MOFR. Six communities with a high probability of success were selected and then visited by the Project staff. At that time, the Project carried out awareness-raising activities on SFRM, gathered information using participatory methods and tools, and created community profiles (basic information) for the communities with the aim of strengthening the capacity of MOFR staff to support them.



Mapping work by a woman's group



Educational activities related to Sustainable Forest Resource Management

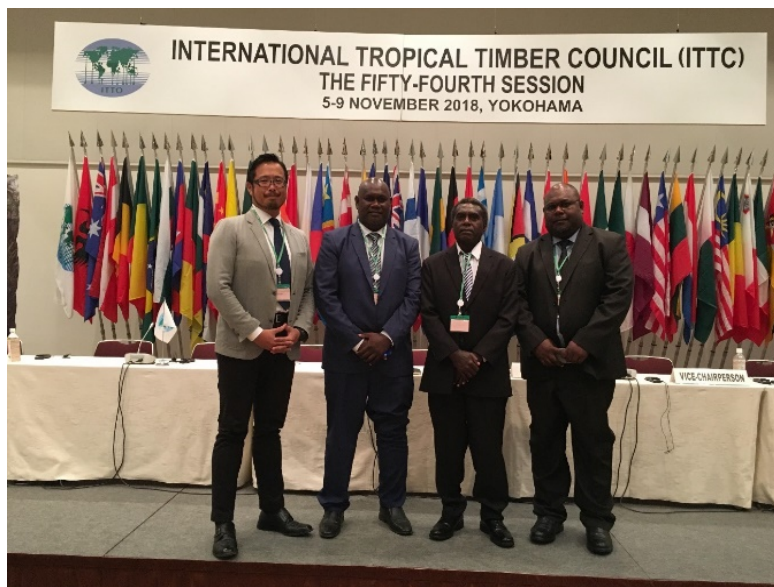


Mapping work by a woman's group



Presentation of a created seasonal calendar

November 2018: Observer Participation in the International Tropical Timber Organization General Meeting



Executives of the Ministry of Forest & Research and Project Expert Mr. Kato participated as observers at the ITTO General Meeting

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), an international organization headquartered in Yokohama, promotes the conservation and sustainable management and use of forest resources in tropical regions such as the Solomon Islands, and the expansion and diversification of sustainably and legally managed tropical water resources. The ITTO holds a General Meeting every year, at which participating tropical timber-producing countries and timber-importing countries come together. However, the Solomon Islands had not participated prior to November 2018 because they were not a member of the ITTO, despite being a timber-producing country.

When MOFR executives attended the Counterpart Training and visited Japan the previous February, they paid a courtesy call to the ITTO Secretariat. After gaining a deep understanding of the ITTO's efforts on SFRM and trade in tropical regions, the Solomon Islands government started to consider joining the ITTO. In addition, because the MOFR received a letter from the ITTO Secretariat requesting participation as an observer at the General Meeting, the Permanent Secretary of the MOFR and the Commissioner of Forest & Research participated in the ITTO General Meeting for the first time in November 2018, as representatives of the Solomon Islands Government. The Opinion Statement on ITTO Membership, prepared by the MOFR executives who participated in the ITTO General Meeting, was submitted to the Solomon Islands Cabinet.

November-December 2018: Determination of Pilot Sites, Third JCC Meeting, and Third Forest-Sector Technical Working Group Meeting

The draft of the Corporate Plan 2019-2022 (Ministry of Forest & Research Medium-Term Plan) was completed in early November with the executives of the MOFR and finalized at the Project Meeting. In the selection of the Project Pilot Sites, Komuniboli Community in Guadalcanal and Falake

Community in Malaita were judged to have the highest potential for Project success among the narrowed-down Pilot Site candidates. They were selected for SFRM. An Expression of Interest was submitted to the MOFR and a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the implementation of Pilot Activities was signed between the communities, the MOFR, and the Project. The finalized Corporate Plan 2019-2022 and the result of Pilot Site selection were officially approved at the Third JCC Meeting held in December.

In November, the Third Forest-Sector Technical Working Group Meeting was held. Eagon Pacific Plantation Ltd, which manufactures veneer and is one of the two private afforestation companies in the Solomon Islands, participated in the meeting and presented an overview of its business. In addition, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), which at that point had been engaged for nearly 10 years in breeding research and wood processing support for small foresters in Western Province, also participated in the meeting as a new member and gave a presentation on its project work.



Project explanation by Chief Advisor Nishikawa at the Corporate Plan meeting



Community signing a Memorandum of Understanding



Project overview presentation by Dr. Brumfield of the ACIAR Project at the Third Forest-Sector Technical Working Group Meeting