



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 2019: Appointment of Short-Term Expert Team and the Fourth JCC Meeting

The Project was joined by a short-term expert team consisting of seven experts, and activities for 2019 began. The first dispatch of the team occurred in January, with the appointments of Mr. Haraguchi, Mr. Takahashi and Ms. Narahara. Along with this, the Fourth Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) Meeting was held, where the team explained the Work Plan and the revised version



Presentation by Mr. Haraguchi on the Work Plan at the Fourth JCC Meeting

of the Project's Plan of Operation was approved by JCC members. The short-term expert team is collaborating mainly on the development of the Forest Information Tool and support the Ministry of Forest & Research (MOFR) in carrying out Pilot Activities.

February 2019: Pilot Activity Launch Meeting

Mr. Kato and Ms. Narahara, who are in charge of supporting the Pilot Activities, visited the Komuniboli Community in Guadalcanal Province and the Falake Community in Malaita Province, which were selected as the Project's Pilot Sites for Pilot Activities. A Pilot Activity launch meeting was held, where they explained the 2019 Activity Plan and received consent from the communities. Before the meeting, they conducted an introductory training (in workshop format) for MOFR Forest Officers stationed in Guadalcanal and Malaita, to learn about basic attitudes about supporting the inhabitants and communities.



Introductory training for MOFR Forest Officers by Ms. Narahara

March 2019: Boundary Survey of Pilot Site Forest Areas



Boundary survey using GPS by MOFR staff



MOFR staff marking boundaries on trees

The communities selected to be Pilot Sites implement Pilot Activities for Sustainable Forest Resource Management (SFRM) with the support of the MOFR until the end of the Project term. In 2019, the Project plans to carry out the Pilot Activity planning and the surveys necessary for planning. The first step is to conduct a boundary survey of the forest areas allocated for the Pilot Activities. The boundary survey is done by using the Global Positioning System (GPS). This is a

survey that can accurately measure the geographical information of the forest (target) areas in which the communities, having in advance investigated and decided in consultation with each other, want to manage forest resources. In this boundary survey, the position information for the target area boundaries, which had been confirmed beforehand, is verified and boundaries are marked by painting the trees. In addition, the acquired GPS boundary position information is incorporated into the map of the Geographic Information System (GIS) and used to measure the area of the target sites. Next, the Project plans to conduct a drone survey and forest resource survey to confirm the amount of forest resources in the target areas.

April 2019: Fourth Forest-Sector Technical Working Group Meeting

The Fourth Forest-Sector Technical Working Group Meeting was held in April. Approximately 40 people participated. A new attempt was made at the meeting, in which all the participants had an open discussion about the financial feasibility of the Forest Certification System. The lively discussion was appropriate for a Forest-Sector Technical Working Group Meeting. Although it is a good system, the discussion concluded that the Forest Certification System is unlikely to be economically feasible in the Solomon Islands.



Group photo of the Fourth Forest-Sector Technical Working Group

May-June 2019: Drone Survey and GPS Transect Walks for Pilot Activities

A drone survey and GPS Transect Walk were conducted at the Pilot Site communities. Mr. Takahashi was in charge of the drone survey and analysis, with drones used to confirm how, at that time, forest and agricultural land allocated for Pilot Activities was being used, and to check the state of the forests. Mr. Takahashi flew the drone to an altitude of about 200 m and took hundreds of photos from the sky. The photo data were then analyzed with dedicated software to create three-dimensional images. The images created will be used to create Land-Use Plans for Pilot Activities.

The GPS Transect Walk is another survey method to confirm the location information of resources within a specific area using GPS, tablets, and large satellite image maps. The aim of the GPS Transect Walk is to foster a common awareness of resources and map information within the communities and among MOFR staff, as part of “Integrated Map Making Activities”. Prof. Kaneko explained to the Pilot Site communities the purpose and significance of the GPS Transect Walk and

the specific activities involved, incorporating some of the methods of “Participatory Monitoring” as a preparatory step for community formulation of the Land-Use Plan. Prior to the GPS Transect Walk, the Project staff reviewed the resource map the communities had created, and the communities wrote the resource information onto a large satellite image map.



Drone survey by Mr. Takahashi



Drone training by Mr. Takahashi



Resource Map Review



Prof. Kaneko giving instructions on using tablet devices and the Avenza Maps

July 2019: The Fifth JCC Meeting and Third Country Training

The fifth JCC Meeting was held in June, at which the progress of activities conducted in the first half of 2019 was reported and the activities for the next year approved. The community activities at the Pilot Sites were reported to be proceeding apace; other ministries were very interested in these activities. The Project received high praise for the activities that had been implemented thus far at the Pilot Sites. In addition, all participants recognized anew the importance of securing the budget and personnel because of the continuity and expandability of community activities in the future.

The Third Country Training was held in Papua New Guinea (PNG), with the participation of the Permanent Secretary, two Assistant Secretaries, and the MOFR Mapping staff. They learned a lot about the Forest Information Tool from the JICA-PNG Forest Project, and



A newspaper article about the Fifth JCC

exchanged views with the PNG Ministry of Forest and PNG Forest Authority. It is important for the two countries, which have similar forest conditions, to continue to cooperate closely. JICA is expected to serve as a bridge connecting them.



The Permanent Secretary giving a speech at the final seminar of the Third Country Training



Trainees visiting Varirata National Park in Papua New Guinea

July-August 2019: Capacity Building Training on Forest Resource Survey and 2019 Counterpart Training

The Project, MOFR and the German development group, GIZ, jointly held the “Capacity Building Training on Forest Resource Surveys”, as both the Project had included forest inventories in the Pilot Activities, and GIZ had planned a forest inventory training in its project. This two-month training was successful and greatly improved the capacity of MOFR staff. In this training, MOFR staff, the Pilot Site communities, and Project staff surveyed the entire forest at both of the Project’s Pilot Sites; however, there had not been any forestry operations carried out at either site that would be considered ordinary. Generally, it is not easy for communities to work continually on Solomon Island forests, because even when the forests deteriorate to some extent, they grow and recover very quickly. The communities will take the initiative in implementing appropriate forest operations at the Pilot Sites in the future, but sufficient preparation and support from the Project is necessary.

The Project conducted the Counterpart Training for 2019 with the participation of the Director of Forest Resource Management & Forest Technology Division



Soil survey from the capacity building training on forest resource surveys



Practical training during the capacity building training on forest resource surveys

and four staff members from the MOFR. In the first three weeks of the training, they learned about drones, 3D analysis, the Satoyama Initiative, public-private partnerships, conservation activities for water source forests, wildlife monitoring, and issues and methods in Japanese forest tree breeding. Participants then went to Hokkaido and learned GIS/remote sensing. Participating MOFR staff evaluated this Counterpart Training very highly, saying that it was very meaningful.



Plot map created for the capacity building training on forest resource surveys



Practical training during the capacity building training on forest resource surveys



Trainees learn the outline and examples of the Satoyama Initiative in the Counterpart Training



Trainees learn GIS/remote sensing in the Counterpart Training

September 2019: The Fifth Forest-Sector Technical Working Group Meeting, Socio - Economic Survey, Marketing, Agroforestry Survey, and GPS Transect Walk Feedback

In September, the Fifth Forest-Sector Technical Working Group Meeting was held with 41 participants. The Solomon Islands government established diplomatic relations with China, while the high level of interest in this Working Group, which focuses on donors, resulted in the participation of the New Zealand High Commission, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), the Sawmill Association, and the Timber Association. At the beginning of the meeting, a representative of the MOFR gave a careful explanation of the current state of Solomon Island forests using numerical data. A representative of a CBO said that, "The owners of the forest resources and land are neither the province nor the government, but local people

who are not well-educated. Therefore, in developing policies, it is necessary to formulate them from the viewpoint that the locals are the main actors for implementing forest management.” This meeting provided a glimpse of the interests with respect to the Solomon Islands’ valuable forest resources. The Project reaffirmed the need to further strengthen cooperation among stakeholders in the Solomon Islands’ forestry sector.

A survey implemented by a participatory forest monitoring expert, socio-economic analysis expert, agroforestry expert, and marketing/value chain analysis expert was presented and the GPS Transect Walk feedback was given. Their survey activities were delayed occurring about 1.5 years after those of the long-term experts, so several survey periods overlapped in September. Nevertheless, the activity plan was carried out in the community and intensive survey activities were carried out, with the aim of creating the Project baseline data. In addition, the feedback on the results of the GPS Transect Walk was provided to the communities as a preparatory step for community formulation of the Land-Use Plan. In the future, the Project plans to create a large map that describes site information in order to provide information to the communities in a way that is easy to understand and use.



Group photo of the Fifth Forest-Sector
Technical Working Group



Prof. Kaneko following
up on the results of the
GPS Transect Walk



Hearing about understanding and practice of
agroforestry from Dr. Yamauchi



Ms. Narahara conducting a socio-economic
analysis survey

【October 2019】 Formulation of Land-Use Plan and Follow-Up to Counterpart Training

In response to the feedback from the GPS Transect Walk results, given to both the Falake and Komuniboli Pilot Site communities, the communities took the initiative in formulating the Land-Use Plan. First, a follow-up to land use planning was made at both Pilot Sites. Subsequently, the Project provided support to the communities, using digital technologies such as drone images and satellite images while discussing current land use conditions and the future Land-Use Plan. Following this, the Land-Use Plan was then developed.

The Counterpart Training was followed up with a review of the Forest Monitoring Training, which uses GPS and tablets, and with a workshop held to study specifications related to the Forest Information Tool. At the workshop, screen specifications and business workflows were examined using a demo version of the Forest Information Tool. The introduction of Forest Information Management is expected to be somewhat difficult, because the person in charge of mapping technology at the MOFR is busy with daily work. However, in order to strengthen the capacity of the MOFR, the Project will continue to implement drone training and plans to continue the workshop.



Mr. Kato following up on the Land-Use Plan



Land use planning in Komuniboli



Land use planning in Falake



Follow-up to Counterpart Training by Dr. Yoshimura and Mr. Takahashi (GPS)



Follow-up to Counterpart Training by Dr. Yoshimura and Mr. Takahashi (demonstration of Forest Information Tool)

November 2019: Drone and Agroforestry Training

In November, drone training was conducted at the MOFR. Drone training was also part of the follow-up to the Counterpart Training and had been highly requested during that earlier training, so it was held again. Along with this drone training, a workshop on the Forest



On-site drone training by Mr. Takahashi

Information Tool was also held. At the workshop, the Project shared the screen specifications, documented the workflow, and documented the basic design of the tool.

An introductory training on agroforestry was conducted at both the Falake and Komuniboli Pilot Sites. As a preparatory step for developing a detailed plan for agroforestry activity, instruction was provided on how to obtain a baseline so that the communities can prepare a seasonal calendar and monitor the activities. In addition, in the agroforestry introduction training, it was once again explained that the main actors of the Pilot Activities is the community, and that physical and financial support from the Project is limited.



Forest Information Tool workshop
by Mr. Haraguchi



On-site drone training by Mr. Takahashi



Agroforestry introduction training
by Dr. Yamauchi in the Falake
Community



Agroforestry introduction training by Dr. Yamauchi
in the Komuniboli Community

January 2020: The Sixth Forest-Sector Technical Working Group Meeting and Sixth JCC Meeting

The Sixth Forest-Sector Technical Working Group Meeting was held this month, with approximately 40 stakeholders participating. The Solomon Islands' interest in the forestry sector continued to be high, and with the participation of new donors such as the US Millennium Challenge Corporation and the European Forest Institute, there was a lively exchange of opinions on future collaboration. As secretariat of the Working Group, the Project proposed to the participants operating rules and outlines for the group; it also proposed to continue working as the secretariat of the Working Group for the next two years. This was then approved by the participants. As in the

past, the Working Group will continue to strengthen cooperation between the MOFR and the relevant parties.

The Sixth JCC Meeting was also held in January. The progress of activities in the latter half of 2019 was reported and then the activities for the next year were approved. The short-term expert team tentatively decided the official name of the Forest Information Tool at this JCC Meeting, shared the report of the finalized marketing/value chain analysis, and reported to the MOFR on the change of socio-economic analysis expert. In addition, along with the Sixth JCC meeting, a session was held at which participants in the Counterpart Training and JICA-training gave a report about what they learned in Japan.



Group photo of the Sixth Forest-Sector Technical Working Group



Group photo of the Sixth JCC



Counterpart Training reporting session by training participant

February 2020: Formulation of the Forest Management Plan and Training on GIS, Mapping, and the Forest Information Tool

Mr. Sato supported the formulation of the Forest Management Plan at the Komuniboli Pilot Site and Falake Pilot Site. Both sites have an approach for its forest management; the Komuniboli Pilot Site is using the shared forest concept, while the Falake Pilot Site uses the concept of a forest union. Consequently, the need to use different approaches for each Pilot Site presents difficulties. The agroforestry expert and socio-economic expert have also resumed surveys at both Pilot Sites in preparation for detailed planning for the Pilot Activities.

The remote sensing/GIS expert and remote sensing/drone analysis/GIS expert conducted the Second GIS/Mapping/Forest Information Tool Training for staff of the Forest Development and Afforestation Division, MOFR. In addition to creating a GPS utilization manual, a training on a basin boundary/HCV map, which is one of the contents of the Forest Information Tool, was carried out, and the mapping system was established.



GPS training by Dr. Yoshimura



UAV training by Mr. Takahashi

March 2020: Formulation of Livelihood Improvement Plan including Agroforestry and Completion of the “Corporate Plan 2020-2022”

Based on the Land-Use Plans prepared by the communities, a detailed Agroforestry Planning Workshop was held at both Pilot Sites. At the workshop, the Project selected species for planting and crops, and set up the agroforestry plot sites. In addition, the Project also began work on a detailed plan for an alternative Livelihood Activity Plan for things other than agroforestry. In this, wealth ranking was introduced and standards and indicators were set after obtaining agreement from both Pilot Site communities.

The MOFR requested the creation of a “Corporate Plan” that incorporates the new government’s “Democratic Coalition Government for Advancement (DCGA)” policy into the “Corporate Plan 2019-2022”, which was finalized in December 2018. In response to this request, the Project has started to revise the “Corporate Plan 2019-2022”. The Project gathered executives from the MOFR and conducted two reviews to finalize the “Corporate Plan 2020-2022”.



Dr. Yamauchi setting up agroforestry plot sites



Agroforestry Workshop by Dr. Yamauchi



Wealth ranking workshop by Mr. Fukuyama



Corporate Plan 2020-2022 cover