

REDD+ FREE PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT GUIDELINES

GOROKA, EASTERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCE FIELD TEST REPORT

Abstract

The national reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, including forest conservation, sustainable management of forest and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+) free prior informed consent (FPIC) Guidelines provided safeguards for the forest owners participating in the REDD+ implementation. Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in the Conference of Parties (COP) session sixteenth in Cancun, Mexico, in 2010 decided in Decision 1/CP.16 that Parties “have been encouraged while implementing REDD+ activities must develop policies and measures that safeguard the implementation processes but also the rights of forest dependent people under the Social and Environment Safeguards (SES)”. The Government of Papua New Guinea (GoPNG) through the Office of Climate Change and Development (OCCD) has been developing different REDD+ policies and guidelines to ensure that its REDD+ process meets international standards and align existing policies, laws and regulations, one such is the national REDD+ FPIC Guidelines. The National REDD+ FPIC Guidelines have over the last four years gone through a tedious process, from drafting to consultation and validation but its key stakeholders have requested that further field testing should be done before it is finalized.

During the 19th – 23rd October, 2015 the OCCD field testing team carried the final field testing of the Papua New Guinea REDD+ FPIC Guidelines at the Velotige Conservation Project within the Goroka District of the Eastern Highlands Provincial Administration in partnership with the Eastern Highlands Provinces (EHP) Natural Resources Division, the Conservation Partners of Papua New Guinea and the Customary Landholders of the Velotige Conservation Project with the support of the PNG UN-REDD Programme. This field test basically reinforced the findings of the previous field testing but more so highlights the importance appreciating the existent Matrilineal and Patrilineal societies within the rural areas of Papua New Guinea. Additionally, this report highlights important considerations for Project Proponents and their role in project development. All in all, the field test has confirmed the practicality, relevance and effectiveness of the national FPIC guidelines within the Velotige Conservation Project. As with the earlier field testing, the results shall be factored into a synthesis FPIC field testing report which shall ultimately guide the final revision of the National REDD+ FPIC guidelines.

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Acknowledgment

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This report specifically acknowledges the efforts of Advisor to the Natural Resources Division of the EHP Administration; Mr. Frank Wangnapi and also the following assessment team members from OCCD and the Conservation Forum of Papua New Guinea, namely, Joe Pokana, Sonia Baine, Kenneth Nobi, Leilani Kambuou, Deborah Meana and John Ericho respectively and for his invaluable translation skills during field testing, Mr. Robert Gaizako.

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1. Introduction

Background

The Goroka field test of the Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) Guidelines was a joint effort between the Goroka Provincial Administration, Velotige Conservation Project Proponents (Conservation Forum Papua New Guinea) and The Office of Climate Change and Development with support from UNDP through the Papua New Guinea UN-REDD Programme. These efforts follow a major recommendation during the FPIC guideline validation workshop in July 2014- to have the guidelines field tested to ensure they are both practically and theoretically sound, before final endorsement is sought from the National Executive Council (NEC).

The Goroka field testing is a continued effort by the Government of Papua New Guinea (GoPNG) to prepare itself for REDD+ implementation in order to achieve its ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction target¹. FPIC recognizes the crucial role of indigenous peoples and forest dependent communities to the long-term sustainability of REDD+² (hereafter called customary land holders).

Purpose and Objectives of this Report

The purpose of this report is to;

- Provide an analysis on the current FPIC practices within the Eastern Highlands Province.
- Highlight FPIC's degree of relevance and effectiveness to the local and customary landholders.
- Align the FPIC process to existing consultative and participatory processes.
- Ensure insertions of Customary considerations

Limitations

This report is a component of the FPIC testing which was initiated at the beginning of this year (2015). Results of this particular field test will be compared and then collectively integrated into a summary report.

FPIC is a progressive consultative and participatory process. It is also important to note that, it would be near impossible to test the whole content of the guideline chronologically matching step by step with either the National, Provincial and Project level- *unless testing was carried out in line with the initiating of a new REDD+ project*. Therefore, as with the 2 previous field tests, the Operational Framework (Part B³) within of the FPIC guideline was tested, specifically subsection 5.6.3 *Section C Implementing FPIC at the Project Level*.

¹ According to Vision 2050; 50 percent reduction in GHG by 2030

² UN-REDD Programme Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent; 2013

³ Guidelines on FPIC for REDD+ in Papua New Guinea; Part B: Operational Framework

FPIC Defined

Free Prior Informed Consent, as yet, attains no internationally agreed definition. However, its elements have been defined by the “UN-REDD Programme Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (2012),” which was built on a definition of FPIC endorsed by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2005.

The Guidelines for FPIC in Papua New Guinea provide the following description was derived from the Forest Stewardship Council guidelines for the implementation of FPIC (2012);

“The rights to participate in decision-making and to give, modify, withhold or withdraw consent to an activity affecting the holder of this right. Consent must be given, obtained prior to implementation of such activities and be founded upon an understanding of the full range of issues implicated by the activity or decision in question...”

2. Methodology

a) Preparation

Initial contact with the Eastern Highlands Province (EHP) was made through Mr. Frank Wangnapi, the current Advisor for the Natural Resources Division which led to a series of interactions regarding the specifics of the field test.

Selection Criteria for field test site

Table 1.1 Proposed Selection Criteria

Individual site criteria	Considerations
Commitment from provincial, district and local level governments and implementing partners	The EHP administration has showcased considerable advancements toward achieving the countries higher order policies for climate change, having already established a Provincial Climate Change Committee to oversee relevant activities
Institutional and technical capacity of implementing partners to facilitate and document consultation and participation process	Both technical and institutional capacity of the EHP administration and its stakeholders can be deemed as reasonable
Geographical accessibility to minimize travel costs and time while enabling on-site technical assistance, monitoring, evaluation and documentation	Access to the province by Air and land transport to and from the project site
Absence of, or minimal social conflict, either within clans, or between clans and external actors such as private companies or government institutions	Social conflict within field test site within clans, or between clans and project proponent observed to be absent.
Presence or absence of forestry, conservation or activities with potential collaboration by or direct involvement of landowners	Customary Landholders ultimately attain rights to the Velotige Conservation project site
Previous or existing awareness raising activities	Previous awareness activities related to forest

related to forest conservation and climate change	conservation and climate change carried out at Akameku.
Collective Criteria	
Variation in social structure and landownership	The communities within site displayed variation in social structure

Meetings

The testing of FPIC guidelines was carried out at the Velotige Conservation Project area, located within ward three (3) of the Mimanalo Rural Local Level Government in the Goroka district of the Eastern Highlands Province.

Prior to the carrying out the FPIC field test Preparatory Workshop, a meeting was held between the Conservation Forum PNG, the Natural Resources Division of the EHP Administration, a representative of the Customary Landholders and the OCCD FPIC field test team on the 20th October 2015. This meeting basically served to provide the three stakeholders of the Velotige Conservations Project with an overview of the field test and confirm logistical and reporting arrangements.

REDD+ ToT & FPIC Field test Preparatory Workshop

Before the field testing of the FPIC guidelines, the field team sought to build the necessary background knowledge on Climate Change, REDD+ and its safeguards. Hence, a REDD+ Training of Trainers (ToT) was facilitated by the team and led to a Preparatory FPIC Field Testing Workshop which was specifically aimed at the Velotige Conservation Project Community Project Proponents.

The FPIC preparatory workshop aimed to provide stakeholders in Goroka with an insight the to the PNG FPIC guidelines. A series of presentations were carried out by the team, most of which was articulated in “Tok pisin” which covered;

- The development of the guidelines
- The Key Principles of FPIC (Normative framework)
- The Sections of the Operational framework

Preparatory Workshop Breakout session

The breakout session was aimed at having the participants align an identified project to the guidelines and plan forward- basically aligning further implementation of their respective project with the steps within the operational framework of the guidelines.

Four (4) main groups were formed which included;

- 1) Velotige Conservation Project
- 2) Provincial Administration
- 3) Foresters

Field Test

The Field testing of the FPIC guideline served to align the phases and steps within the guidelines⁴ with actual activities on-the-ground (*that have-been or will-be undertaken by the project proponents*), basically to test out the practicality and degree of relevance. Hence, during the field testing exercise, the OCCD team played an observation role.

The field test was held on the 22nd October, 2015 at the Velotige Conservation Project site within the Akameku Community. The activity was led by the Conservation Forum PNG and supported by the Natural Resources Division and sought to verify and test Section C (*Implementing FPIC at the Project Level*) Phases 1 & 2.

The OCCD team played an observation role, so not to influence any outcome or interaction between the project proponent and the Customary Landholders.

Analysis of field test results: Velotige Conservation Project FPIC Field Test

The Mimanalo Rural Local Level Government (LLG) consists of four (4) wards which consist of more than 52 villages within which are the two key stakeholders to the Velotige Conservation Project; Akameku and Kamusi village. The project site has a total of **6, 073 hectares** in total and attains a total of five (5) major clans with defined boundaries⁵. Areas of significant biological importance have also been captured in a Biodiversity Survey report⁶ by the Papua New Guinea Institute of Biological Research and a need assessment report⁷ has also been compiled which encompasses Phase 1: Project Establishment.

Key observation points

The Velotige Conservation project is observed to be in Phase 2, with reference to section C: Implementing FPIC at Project Level. The OCCD team's collective observation is presented in the table 2.1 below concerning the field test exercise observation.

Table 1.2 Collective observation of the OCCD field test team.

Field Observation
Imbalance of Gender Representation within the Management committee
Women were not very vocal during the meet; it was mainly dominated by male, probably due to cultural barriers and respect for men.
Everyone were very co-operative with their elders and spokes person
There were no inter-community conflicts discussed or mentioned
The community understood climate change and REDD+ issues
The community was well organised and knew their rights
They had very strong and reliable leaders, due to the fact that conserving their land is becoming a reality.
All agreements were reached through thorough consultations in family units.

⁴ Specifically 5.6.3 Section C: *Implementing FPIC at the Project Level*

⁵ Refer to Annex 2: Velotige Clan Boundaries

⁶ Refer to Annex 3: Mini Biodiversity Survey report

⁷ Refer to Annex 4: Velotige Needs Assessment Report

Agreement and consent was given by the village before the area was declared as a conservation area or site.
Land boundaries have to be mapped out precisely in close consultation with the people in order to avoid any differences among neighbouring villages, as land in PNG is customary owned.
Managing expectations of the communities is very vital as villages focus more on a short term basis and villages may lose confidence, trust and interest.
A grievance and review mechanism should be established to cater for complaints about the Conservation area.

Observed Challenges in field testing

Conservation Partners Forum

- The Velotige Conservation Project was initially conceived as a conservation project; currently attaining a 40 year conservation deed from the Conservation and Environment Protection Agency (CEPA), hence, steps taken in their FPIC process would not have been specifically aligned to that of the PNG REDD+ FPIC guidelines.
- Previously lacked of capacity in the Papua New Guinea FPIC process.

OCCD

- If the FPIC process is not understood properly, it will be seen as a separate process rather than a more structured method toward enabling effective consultation and participation during project development.
- An ideal testing of the FPIC guideline steps would involve alignment with a newly initiated REDD+ project, testing could only be aligned to existing projects and their current progress and plans.
- Language barrier- during field testing, a degree of uncertainty remained toward how the articulation of the initiative was delivered by the translator to the community.

Eastern Highlands Provincial Administration

- As the authorizing body for the Project level, an understandable level of caution observed- so not to raise expectations within the concerned communities; however presence adamant in field test.
- Currently facing unstable administration, this affected the timing of the field testing.

3. Comparative analysis of field test results

Key emerging findings

<i>Consideration</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Proposed insertion</i>
Project Proponent		
Being mindful of the common occurrence that most Project Proponents are approached by Customary Landholders	<p>It may be advisable to include an insert note to the Project Proponents of their financial obligations. I.e. ILG certificates for customary landholders.</p> <p>It may also be advisable to give lee-way for revision of the engagement between the project proponent and the customary landholders (<i>if feasible</i>) rather than the direct "termination of engagement." Possibly a second round of consultation and to review (<i>again if feasible for both parties</i>) before termination. Perhaps "Proceed" "review" or "terminate."</p>	Insert during final steps of Phases in Section C.
Gender Issues		
What is viewed as "gender imbalance" is a result of the Matrilineal and Patrilineal societies with PNG. Within the Velotige Conservation Project Area, this can be attributed to the strong patrilineal society practices within, or the "Big-man" society.	Being mindful not to imply that gender inequality takes precedence over decision making within the country. Strong consideration should be given to the country's norms and customs- especially within the rural areas where strong ties to customary practice still linger.	Perhaps to make note during the introductory statement (5. Operational framework) or to specifically within the introductory statement in Section C: Implementing FPIC at Project level. This will safeguard the FPIC process during Evaluation by an independent reviewer.

4. Recommendations

Immediate steps

- i) Submission of the Conservation Partners Forum FPIC Field Test Report.
- ii) An FPIC field test synthesis report to be developed and compiled by the OCCD team.
- iii) Considerations to be inserted into a revised FPIC document and circulated among the field testing stakeholders, then to the REDD+ TWG for further comment.

ANNEX 1: FPIC Test Site Selection Criteria

Criteria to Select Sites to Test National Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent for REDD+ Implementation in Papua New Guinea

1. Background

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is set to be one of the first countries in the Asia-Pacific region to introduce National Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for REDD+ Implementation. The Working Final version of the guidelines was the culmination of three and a half years of development that began in 2011, with over thirteen consultations, and three full revisions, led by the Office of Climate Change and Development (OCCD), with support from the UN-REDD Programme in PNG.

The guidelines build on the country's National Constitution, and National Goals and Directive Principles by providing greater clarity to implement REDD+ activities on the ground. It recognizes that REDD+ programs and activities may affect landowners' rights to lands and resources within their boundaries. As such, it helps to design and implement robust consultative and participatory processes where FPIC is required. In addition, the guidelines also assist the Government of PNG to address and respect the safeguards listed in Appendix 1 of the Cancun Agreements (Decision 1/CP.16), agreed during the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Cancun, Mexico 2010.

Prior to submission to the National Executive Council for endorsement, OCCD will test the operational steps outlined in the guidelines to ensure they are applicable and practicable across different social structures. Lessons learned will be used to improve the guidelines. As such, the selection of suitable sites is imperative in contributing to an effective and functional set of guidelines.

2. Objective

This note proposes a set of criteria that will assist OCCD to select sites to test the working final of the guidelines. For testing purposes, a site refers to a geographical area where a program or a set of activities is under consideration or implementation.

3. Duration

The testing phase is expected to run for eight (8) months, from August 2014 to April 2015.

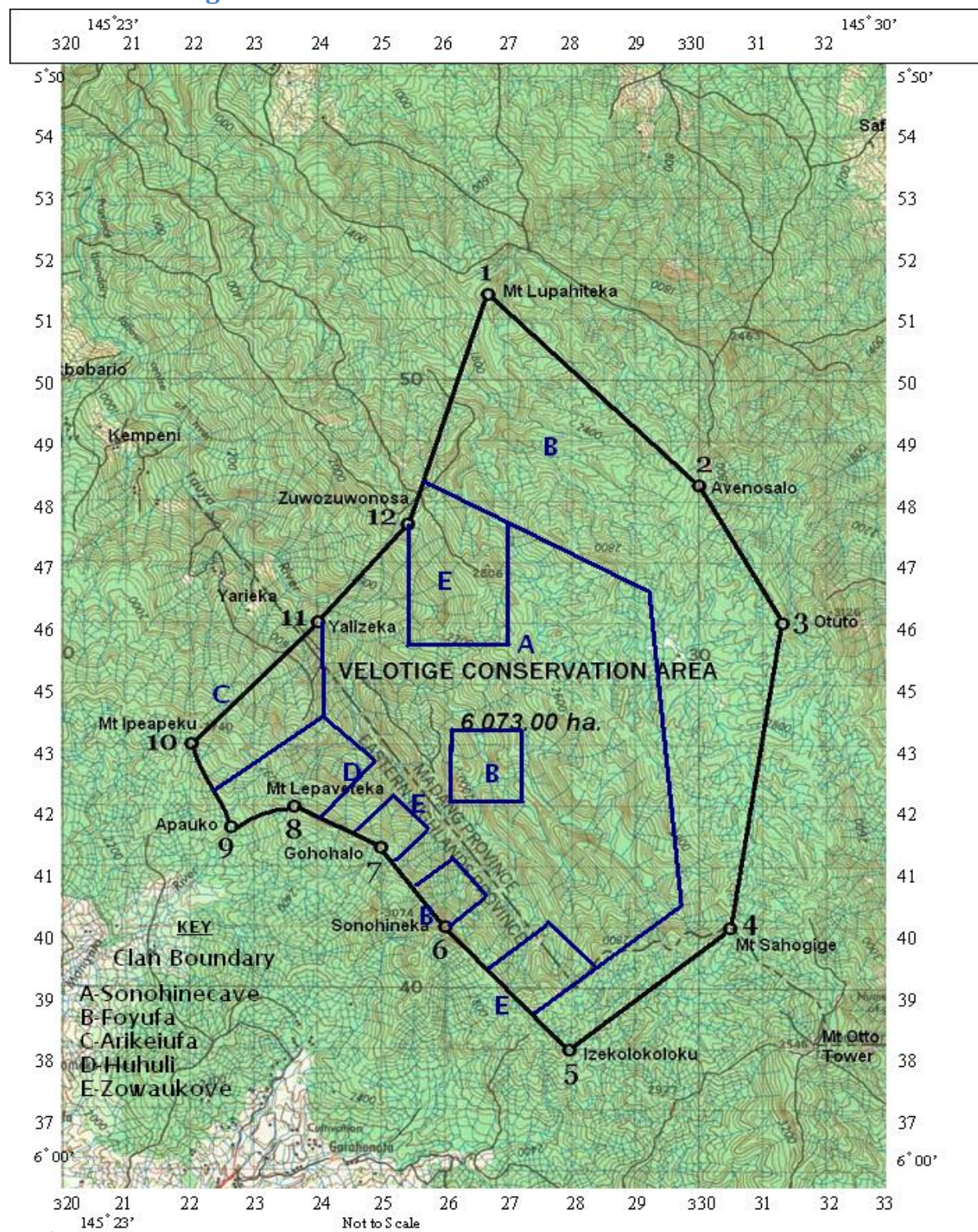
4. Proposed selection criteria for test sites

i. Individual sites

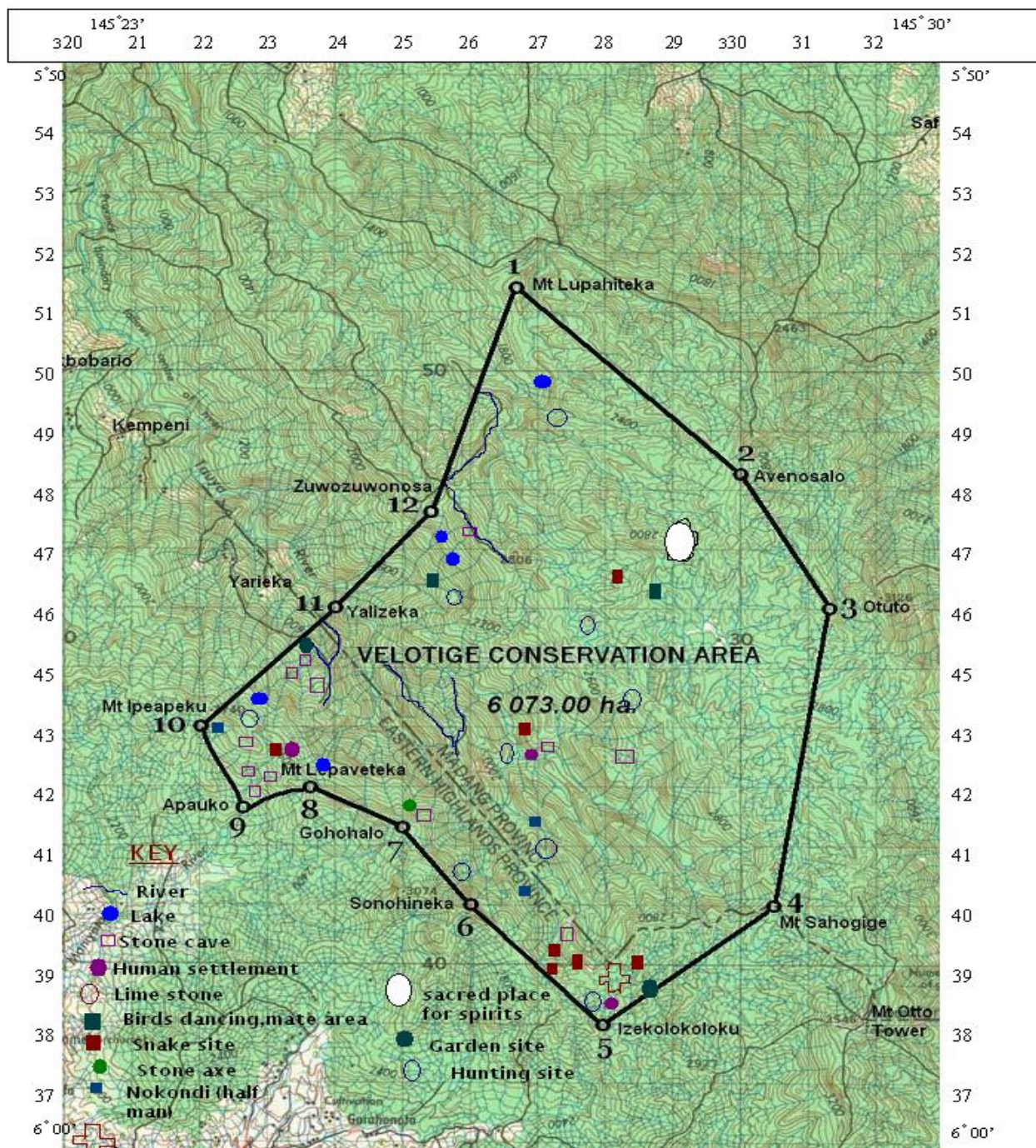
- Commitment from provincial, district and local level governments and implementing partners.
- Institutional and technical capacity of implementing partners to facilitate and document consultation and participation process.
- Geographically accessible to minimize travel costs and time while enabling on-site technical assistance, monitoring, evaluation and documentation.

- Absence of, or minimal social conflict, either within clans, or between clans and external actors such as private companies or government institutions.
 - Presence or absence of forestry, conservation or equivalent programs or activities with potential collaboration by or direct involvement of landowners.
 - Previous or existing awareness raising activities related to forest conservation and climate change.
- ii. Collectively**
- Variation in social structure and landownership, for example patrilineal and matrilineal societies.

ANNEX 2: Velotige Clan Boundaries



ANNEX 3: Velotige Cultural Significant Sites



ANNEX 4: Mini Bio-survey Report



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Velotige Conservation Area Mini Biodiversity Assessment Report

This is a brief report of the mini biodiversity that was conducted by PNG Institute Biological Research with Conservation Forum of PNG in Velotige Conservation Area, Akameku, Eastern Highlands Province.

The survey was conducted over a three (3) days period, 7th – 9th of December 2010 on three different taxa. They are mammals, plants and birds. The survey was conducted between the altitudinal range of 1, 500 to 2, 800 meters above sea level.

It took us four (4) hours to walk from Akameku village to the camp site. We camped at the base of Mt. Velotige which is to the North side of the mountain.

7th - 9th December 2010:

General

On behalf of CF PNG one of its staff thanked PNG IBR team for taking this initiative to assist the community in gathering biological information for the purpose of submitting applications for the gazettal of Velotige CA project.

The locals and the team were made aware of necessary safety tips so that everyone takes care of themselves while in the field. They were also told to be responsible for their own rubbish and especially the non-biodegradables. They should be collected and taken back home and dumped into rubbish pit.

The locals were organised and assigned a task each for the period in the field. Two assistants each were attached to each taxa, in which a total of six (6) assistants were hired for the three days survey.

1. Mammals

A total of 28 Small Elliot Traps were laid out at an altitude of 1, 600 m.a.s.l. They were baited with Museli cereal. A total of four (4) mammals were caught recorded over the three days and nights period of survey. One rodent, one bat and two cuscus. They were processed and released back into the nature. There were no catch on the first night of trapping. However, the mist netting was open during the night for bats which caught one species.

Opportunistic search was also conducted in places where locals hunt for mammals especially. Two cuscuses were caught using this method.

2. Birds

A total of eight (8) 12 meters mist nets were set up at an altitudinal range of 1, 600 – 2,000 m.a.s.l. A total of fifty one species of birds were recorded which is dominated by forest floor dwellers such as Fantail, Flycatchers, Honeyeaters, Wren, Whistlers, and Warblers etc... Those species caught were processed and released into the forest.

Opportunistic search was also conducted by hearing the calls and writing down names of the species. Species names were recorded in local dialect and identified using the Birds of New Guinea field guide book with the help of the local knowledgeable informants.

3. Plants

Generally, plant specimen were collected using opportunistic survey method along the altitudinal range of 1, 500 – 2, 800 m.a.s.l. Most of the specimens collected were with flowers or fruits. The specimens were pressed and will be taken to Lae FRI Herbarium for identification and storage.

Conclusion and recommendation

The result that will be obtained will be attached with the CA application document for gazettal which is one of the requirement Under the Conservation Area act. However, the result may not reflect the true representation of the site due to inadequate time for survey; the area is a disturbed forest and of course is a disturbed forest (human activities). If ample time is planned for this then a fair representation of biological elements will be recorded to make a fair conclusion for the area.

Therefore, it is recommended that a bigger and better biodiversity survey be conducted for the conservation area over a good period of time for all taxa groups (mammals, plants, birds, insects, reptiles, orchids, aquatic fauna and flora, fish, crustaceans, etc...). There is so much to discover in that part of the country as vast forest area is uninhabited and unstudied.

Report prepared and submitted by,

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