



INTERGRATED COASTAL ZONE & MANGROVE 5-DAY WORKSHOP REPORT

*ENCHANCING MANGROVE MANAGEMENT
CAPACITY IN SOLOMON ISLANDS*

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Acknowledgement

I extend my deepest gratitude to the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) for its pivotal role in facilitating the Initial plans to develop a comprehensive Mangrove Policy for Solomon Islands. This initiative marks a significant step forward in our collective efforts to address climate change and environmental sustainability.

Special appreciation is owed to the KEI (Korea Environment Institute) Team, under the adept leadership of Dr. Sang In Kang. Dr. Kang and his team's unwavering dedication, insightful guidance, and technical assistance have been instrumental in achieving this successful 5-day workshop.

I am also profoundly thankful for the active participation of various Government Ministries, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and academics who attended the 5-day workshop. Your invaluable insights, collaborative spirit, and willingness to share knowledge have significantly enriched the discussions and outcomes of this workshop. The presence and engagement of each participant have contributed to a well-rounded and inclusive approach to planning and developing the Mangrove Policy, especially in capturing the capacity building aspect of it.

This collaborative effort between international experts, local government, and stakeholders embodies a model of cooperation and mutual learning. Together, we are laying the groundwork for a sustainable and resilient future for Solomon Islands, ensuring the protection of our mangrove ecosystems for generations to come.

Thank you all for your commitment, expertise, and enthusiasm. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on our environmental conservation efforts.

Table of contents

Contents

1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Scope and Purpose of Report	1
1.3 Process and Timeline of Workshop	1
2.0 Summary of Workshop Outcomes	2
3.0 Discussions	3
3.1 Government Ministries	3
3.1.1 Status	3
3.1.2 Challenges.....	3
3.1.3 Opportunities	4
3.1.4 Plans	4
3.2 Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)	4
3.2.1 Status	4
3.2.2 Challenges.....	4
3.2.3 Opportunities	4
3.2.4 Plans	4
3.3 Academics	5
3.3.1 Status	5
3.3.2 Challenges.....	5
3.3.3 Opportunities	5
3.3.4 Plans	5
4.0 Conclusion	6
5.0 Recommendation	7
6.0 References	8

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Mangrove in Solomon Islands is a resource that is mainly used by resource owners. In the Solomon Island's context, resource owners are those that own the land under the land tenure system. More than 85% of land is still under customary land tenure (McDonald, 2006) which means local people or tribes govern the activities that were carried out on their land including mangroves. Particularly, livelihoods are supported by the tribal ownership of land and all customary landholdings group members have rights to access resources for subsistence or generate income (Wairiu, 2006). Granting access by customary land system complicates the capacity building mechanism for resource management in the communities. For example, finding the right tools and developing frameworks that is inclusive at the same time successful.

Capacity building is not only important for resource management but mandatory for all domains of ecosystem including mangrove resources which are heavily threatened and exploited. Despite the existence of traditional knowledge and practices, there are important issues that are yet to be streamlined in capacity building activities for all resource users. For example, awareness of the anthropogenic impacts on the natural resources specifically mangrove ecosystems. Awareness is vital for good decision making and in the case of mangroves, local people should not be exempt. Most people are using those resources without recognizing the threats they are imposing on the ecosystem and natural resources due to lack of knowledge and skills to empower them.

1.2 Scope and Purpose of Report

This report is provided to Korean Environment Institute as part of local expert assistance in the initial planning of the development of mangrove policy for Solomon Islands. The report captures outcomes of a workshop that is executed by Solomon Islands National University and KEI with participation from various stakeholders.

Subsequently, it portrays the work that stakeholders have been doing in the building capacity space. This includes the status of what they have achieved in terms of capacity building in resource management including mangrove. The challenges that are faced, the opportunities present to do more capacity building and the plans for future activities.

1.3 Process and Timeline of Workshop

The Integrated Coastal Zone Management workshop took place over 5 days period. Stakeholders were invited to take part in the workshop. Participated were 20 representatives from Government Ministries, Non-Government Organizations and Academics from Solomon Islands National University. There were two sessions that proceeded hand in hand. Individual presentations and breakout sessions for group discussions. Question-and-answer sessions were also facilitated after every presentation.

2.0 Summary of Workshop Outcomes

Table 1: Showing the summary of outcomes of the breakout sessions.

Government Ministries		
Status	Challenges	way forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ community awareness (minimal activities) ➤ Existing partnership/collaboration between Govt ministries, NGOs and communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ E.g., SIRA, SIELA provides training & capacity building. ✓ Technical training (biodiversity surveys) ✓ Management committee training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Limited technical human resources with expertise in mangrove ➤ Minimal training for Govt staffs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide training opportunities in mangroves management and governance at all Level. ➤ SINU university to offer courses relating to mangrove
Non-Government Organization (NGOs)		
Status	Challenges	way forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide trainings e.g. Training of trainers (TOT). ➤ Networking with relevant/key stakeholders ➤ Active participations within the organization (projects sharing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is no proper distribution of training opportunities to the project staff/office staff. ➤ No specialize training on mangrove ecosystem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide specialized training on mangrove (TOT) ➤ Strengthened relationship with key stakeholders (Govt, NGO, Donors)
Academics		
Status	Challenges	Way forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No specialized are/sphere for mangrove as stands alone. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. it is always part of a course or units (minor part) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Interests in indigenous knowledge on mangrove is slowly redirected to other areas. ➤ Funding to support research/ fieldwork on mangroves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Policy framework should accommodate these areas/gaps. ➤ Provision of funding/resources to support training. ➤ Short course training e.g. rangers training (certificate to be offered by SINU)

3.0 Discussions

3.1 Government Ministries

The government through its ministries played vital role in building capacity in various sectors. From discussions, Mangrove had a complicated dynamic when it comes to implementation of projects. It is a cross cutting between several ministry and coordination is key issue between these key ministries. The key ministries that are having cross cutting work with mangrove are: Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster and Meteorological Services (MECDM), Ministry of Forestry & Research (MFOR), Ministry of Fisheries & Marine Research (MFMR).

3.1.1 Status

Ministries play a key role in delivering awareness programs. Essentially, most ministries do awareness activities with communities. For instance, community awareness on marine resource management.

Additionally, MECDM have weekly Radio program on Solomon Islands Broadcasting (SIBC) radio which aims to disseminate important information to the public. There are also projects that were implemented by the Ministries that support capacity building. An example is the Environmental Education Center that was Established at the Botanical Gardens. Despite the activities being minimal to what is expected, these activities do happen.

Moreover, there are also existing collaborations between government ministries and NGOs to implement capacity building activities with communities. Forest Example, Solomon Islands Rangers association (SIRA) in collaboration with the MECDM do trainings to support rangers. Solomon Islands Environmental Association is also doing important work in the capacity building space. For instance, provision of writeshop for grantees on how to apply and access funds. Another example of such collaboration is the Technical Training on Biodiversity surveys. Some officers received training on how to carry out biodiversity surveys which is important to do conservation and resource management with communities. There are also Management committee training courses done collaboratively to train community members on conservation practices and management.

3.1.2 Challenges

The most challenge that is faced by most ministries is lack of human resources and capacity to meet the demand. There is work overload and funding deficiency to execute community outreach and awareness that is inclusive and sustainable.

Similarly, there is limited mangrove experts to provide mentoring and train technical knowledge both to officers and communities.

Additionally, coordination is also a challenge. There are mismatches and overlapping activities between ministries when it comes to project implementation. For example, government ministries and NGOs could be doing the same thing working with the communities. There should be a framework in place to direct the progression of capacity building throughout the country. A portal or platform is also required to share knowledge and activities done in the country.

3.1.3 Opportunities

Training to be done in mangroves management and governance for both officers and communities. This is a way to enhance the knowledge presented and shorten the gap between officers and communities.

Solomon Islands National University (SINU) to create curriculum on mangrove and teach up at the university level. In terms of capacity building, SINU has major advantages and capacity to involve more in curriculum development that are localized to Solomon Islands.

3.1.4 Plans

Enhance capacity building activities within Ministries. The Ministries are working towards capacitating to enhance activities in resource management. Mangrove is a field that needs more focus, especially in communities. Continuation of support to enhance existing partnerships.

3.2 Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)

Apart from the government, there are many NGOs that are implementing projects across the Solomon Islands. Some of these projects are cross cutting with mangroves. Representing the NGOs is Live & Learn where they are doing projects with communities on Carbon Trading. Most of their work is in Western Province and they are collaborating with Nakau Program to implement these carbon finance projects.

3.2.1 Status

NGOs do have training for trainers (Training of Trainers). These activities are aimed to build capacity for communities. They train the trainers and trainers go back to their communities and train the people on what they learnt. The areas of training vary, typically it is not focused on mangrove itself.

Moreover, they also do networking with relevant key stakeholders to participate in capacity building activities. Mostly, there is active participation within organizations, for example project sharing in the space of capacity building.

3.2.2 Challenges

There is no proper distribution of training opportunities for project staff. There is a lack of proper representation of trainers. Sometimes, a few people only attend most of these training courses. Similarly, there is no specific specialized training that is done on mangrove ecosystem itself.

3.2.3 Opportunities

Mangrove is an area that needs specialized training. There is an opportunity present to focus on mangrove specialized training.

Government ministries, NGOs and donors to continue and pursue strengthening of their relationships and enhance capacity building activities in the country.

3.2.4 Plans

Currently, the NGOs are working directly with the communities. In the future, collaboration should be extended to other stakeholders and the government itself.

3.3 Academics

Solomon Islands National University (SINU) is the only National University of Solomon Islands. Most of Solomon Islanders were trained in that institution in various field of expertise. Mangrove falls under the Environment Department where they teach most of the courses that are related to the environment. Forestry plays a partial role in teaching plant taxonomy which is an opportunity to include mangroves so that students can be able to identify the various species based on scientific identification.

3.3.1 Status

The courses that are currently offered at SINU typically cover general fields in environment and forestry. Mangrove is not featured as single unit or filed of expertise that students would choose to study. Generally, the capacity building offered is for higher education only, meaning the university is more focused on teaching students instead of community outreach and awareness. There is one project under the Environment department that focused on training community conservationists in collaboration with Mai Masina GreenBelt Group, but it is still a pilot study which is yet to be completed.

3.3.2 Challenges

One of the major challenges is funding. Academics should not be limited to teaching only but involve more in research especially on mangroves. However, lack of research funding limits the involvement in research. The university should be the institution who have the data to present in the field of mangrove, unfortunately limited data is available. Additionally, interests vary as well. Even if units on mangrove are taught at the university level, it comes down to who is interested to learn and actively participate. There are a lot of pressing issues that gaining more attention and students seems to take interests in those field than mangrove.

3.3.3 Opportunities

Government to develop a policy framework that translated into SINU Policy. The policy should give mandate for SINU to develop curriculum that suited the local setting and trained local experts on mangroves.

3.3.4 Plans

Similar projects like the short training with Maimasina Green Belt need to be ongoing. This is major part of building capacity for local conservationist. Similarly, mangroves are to be integrated as part of these trainings.

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, capacity building is an important component that all stakeholders ensure is captured in their work. All organizations have work that includes capacity building either with communities or with their staff. However, most of their work are limited due to challenges that are beyond their capacity. Human resource is one of the challenges that limits their work in capacity building. Funding is another challenge that limits capacity building works that were done by the stakeholders. Limited expert in mangrove field is also an eminent issue with many organizations and lack of student's interest to pursue mangrove related study. Despite these challenges, there are opportunities present to enhance capacity building in mangroves. For instance, enhancing ministerial capacity to develop and continue with outreach and awareness activities. SINU to develop an appropriate curriculum that will boost awareness and interest in mangroves. NGOs need to keep their close connections with communities and continue to inspire people with Carbon finance and strengthen the desire to focus on conservation.

5.0 Recommendation

Ministries to enhance their capacity to transform knowledge and skill development for the communities. Either collaborate with the formal education system (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Division) or Solomon Islands National University to execute these activities.

NGOs to continue with their collaboration with the Government and the communities. However, they should strengthen their relationship in terms of knowledge sharing and policy awareness. NGOs should work in parallel with government policies to maximize output in the communities.

SINU to prioritize the development of curriculum on mangrove itself. Seek funding to develop and implement the course and advocate for young people to take interest in mangroves.

All stakeholders to coordinate and agree on common ground for mangrove to sit. All the cross-cutting issues to be addressed at a central point.

Development of a framework or guideline to streamline all the capacity building activities in the country.

6.0 References

McDonald, J. (2006). Marine resource management and conservation in Solomon Islands: roles, responsibilities and opportunities. *Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Honiara, Solomon Islands.*

Wairiu, M. (2006). 23. Governance and livelihood realities in Solomon Islands. *IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS*, 409.