Rainforest Protection Thanks to Indigenous Communities in Solomon Islands

Kolombangara river (Choiseul) in the morning, flowing through the protected rainforest areas. Photo: Wilko Bosma

This climate protection project avoids deforestation of the pristine rainforest in Solomon Islands and instead promotes alternative income opportunities. The conservation of the rainforest prevents carbon emissions and at the same time promotes Women's Savings Clubs and protects biodiversity.

The Babatana Rainforest Conservation Project aims to protect the rainforest and finance the ongoing maintenance of forest protection whilst delivering livelihood benefits to the Babatana people. In parallel, the project secures the land and resource rights of the communities and reduces their vulnerability to climate change. As a result of the project, the areas within the project are gaining registration as the first legally recognized terrestrial protected areas in Solomon Islands since the Protected Areas Act (PA Act) came into force in 2010. The project puts a stop to large-scale deforestation and the extraction of raw materials, and also secures the tribe's land rights and provides critical alternative livelihoods. The conservation of this natural carbon store generates CO2 certificates that will financially compensate for the lack of income from the timber industry. These funds will be used to finance conservation activities and promote community businesses initiatives such as Women's Savings Clubs.

Rainforest is a key biodiversity area and home to endemic species

The rainforest in the Babatana Area in Solomon Island has remarkable and unique biodiversity due to its isolation and biogeography and is home to the Sirebe tribe. The project is part of the Kolombangara to Mount Maetambe River Corridor and is officially recognised as a Key Biodiversity Area. The pristine rainforest supports a diversity of endemic rainforest plants and animal species such as the Solomon's Bare backed fruit bat Dobsonia inermis or Solomon Flying Fox (Pteropus rayneri) as well as

Project type:
Land Use and Forestry

Project location:
Babatana Area, South-West Choiseul, Choiseul Province, Solomon Islands

Project status:
In operation, credits available

Annual CO₂ reduction:
17,423 t

Situation without project
Deforestation, loss of biodiversity, increased natural disaster risks

Project standard

Partner

Impressions

Young ranger doing tree measuring. Photo: Wilko Bosma

vulnerable and rare trees.

The benefits we get from carbon trading in the area we conserve is to have access to rich clean water and that there are rare species of flora and fauna which our Pikinini (children) in the future can see in our forest.

Bartholomew Qalo, Sirebe Chairman, Solomon Islands

The forest provides vital ecosystem services for the indigenous people, including flood protection, providing pristine water quality for the people and for the rivers thereby also making the fringing coral reefs more resilient towards climate change. The forest is a fundamental part of their cultural identity and they rely on the forests as source of food, building materials and resources that support their economic development.

**Alternative livelihood activities and Women's Savings Club**

Thanks to a benefit sharing system, the project makes funding available to families to take up new livelihood activities such as cultivation of cocoa, kava and noni and enables access to new and emerging markets. Community members also have the opportunity to establish small businesses such as stores or invest in tools and equipment to provide services in carpentry for local building projects.

The Women's Saving Club has helped me a lot. With my savings I am able to pay for my children's school fees every year. It is great to be a member of the club and be part of this programme.

Joy Poloso, Garasa Tribe, 50 years, Panarui Village, Choiseul, Solomon Islands

The project has a particular focus on supporting women's livelihood development through Women's Savings Clubs. The Women's Savings Clubs are an important and culturally appropriate approach to ensure that women and marginal groups can benefit from the project and participate in the community's financial decision making. So far, several financial management training for the Women's Savings Clubs have been conducted with the intention to finance activities such as children's school fees, small community projects and livelihood opportunities.

Employment is provided to community rangers, who are paid to monitor and protect the rainforest. The rangers have been provided with training and resources to increase their skillset in land management and conduct forest inventories and biodiversity monitoring. A local conservation organisation will support the rangers to increase their capacity to monitor and protect the protected area by using mobile devices to collect data about the areas biodiversity, land management and carbon.
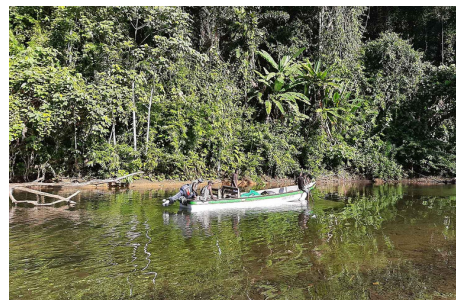
Project workers travel across the Kolombangara River in Choiseul by boat. Photo: Wilko Bosma
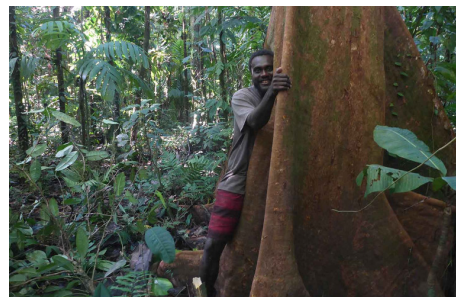
NRDF (Natural Resource Development Fund) staffmember Cornellius Qagara huggging a giant tree during forest inventory. Photo: Wilko Bosma

During the validation audit, a community ranger re-measures a part of the inventory of the Sirebe protected area. Photo: Wilko Bosma

This project contributes to 9 SDGs (as of end 2022):

Find out how myclimate reports these SDGs in our FAQ.

The following SDGs are verified by Plan Vivo:

1 NO POVERTY — Investments into the community via the Sirebe Tribal Association.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION — 10 water tanks installed

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH — 6 rangers employed and 20 people trained in land management (including men, women & youth) as well as 1 business manager employed

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES — Women's Savings Club supported with more than 20 members

13 CLIMATE ACTION — CO2 emissions avoided

15 LIFE ON LAND — 836 Ha of forest legally protected under the PA Act and Conservation Management Plan developed and implemented

These SDGs have been approved by myclimate:

4 QUALITY EDUCATION — 50 participants in climate change education / awareness activities

5 GENDER EQUALITY — 40 women trained through Women's Savings Clubs

2.8 km of river protected