

Sustainability Matters

*Driving Growth and
Resilience in Solomon Islands'
Guadalcanal and Central
Provinces' Tourism Sector*

OCTOBER 2025



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Abbreviations and acronyms

Term	Definition	Term	Definition
ADB	Asian Development Bank	GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
ALTIF	Accessing Land for Tourism Investment Facilitation	Ha	Hectare
CBMA	Community-Based Management Area	IBAT	Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool
CBRM	Community-Based Resource Management	IFC	International Finance Corporation
CBT	Community-Based Tourism	IFC PS	IFC Performance Standards
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019	IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
Cm	Centimeter	IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
°C	Degrees Celsius	JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
ECD	Environment and Conservation Division	KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	Km	Kilometer
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement	km²	Kilometer-squared
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal	LMMA	Locally Managed Marine Area
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War	LTA	Land and Titles Act 2016
E&S	Environmental and Social	M	Meter
ESDS	Environmental and Social Diagnostic Study	m²	Meter-squared
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework	MACBIO	Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Management in Pacific Island countries project
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance	MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment	MCILI	Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour, and Immigration
ESS	Environmental and Social Standard	MCT	Ministry of Culture and Tourism
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent	MECDM	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology
GBVH	Gender-based violence and harassment	MFMR	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	MLHS	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery	mm	Millimeter
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining	MMA	Marine Management Area
GIIP	Good international industry practice	MNPDC	Ministry of National Planning and Development Cooperation
GIS	Geographic Information System	MOFR	Ministry of Forestry and Research

Term	Definition	Term	Definition
MPA	Marine Protected Area	SITHP	Solomon Islands Threshold Program
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office	SITIIP	Solomon Islands Transport Infrastructure Investment Project
NGO	Non-Government Organization	SIWA	Solomon Islands Water Authority
NIIP	National Infrastructure Investment Plan	SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
PACCAPP	Pacific Australia Climate Change and Adaptation Planning Program	SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
PROP	Pacific Regional Oceanscape Program	SPTO	Pacific Tourism Organisation
PS	Performance Standards	SUMA	Special and/or Unique Marine Area
SARS-CoV-2	Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2	TMCC	Tiaro Marine Conservation Committee
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment	UNEP-WCMC	United Nations Environment Programme - World Conservation Monitoring Centre
SEAH	Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment	United States	United States of America
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan	USMC	United States Marine Corps
SIG	Solomon Islands Government	UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
SIIP	Solomon Islands Infrastructure Program	WBG	World Bank Group
SIISLAP	Solomon Islands Institutional Strengthening of Land Administration Project	WDPA	World Database on Protected Areas
SINSO	Solomon Islands National Statistics Office	WWF	World Wildlife Fund
SINTDS	Solomon Islands National Tourism Development Strategy	WWII	World War II (two)

Glossary

Term	Definition
Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)	A tool used for community fisheries management. In Solomon Islands, this is supported by legislation which allows communities to develop and implement their community fisheries management plans in consultation with the Director and Provincial Executive. The CBRM section of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources supports resource users and owners through awareness-raising activities, development of community fisheries management plans, trainings and monitoring.
Contextual level risks	IFC considers “inherent E&S risks related to a particular sector as well as the context of a business activity’s setting.” Contextual risks—from a private sector, E&S perspective—are defined as risks in the external environment (at a country, sector, or subnational level) that the client does not control, but which could negatively impact a project’s or private sector client’s ability to meet IFC’s Environmental and Social (E&S) requirements.
Corridor or study corridor	Denotes the study area, encompassing the 31 shortlisted sites. Corridor-level information is specific to the entire study area, based on regional-level factors, such as environment, history, governance, industry development and infrastructure. In this study, the corridor encompasses areas across two provinces (Guadalcanal and Central), but does not cover the entire area of each province.
Good international industry practice	Is “defined as the exercise of professional skill, diligence, prudence, and foresight that would reasonably be expected from skilled and experienced professionals engaged in the same type of undertaking under the same or similar circumstances globally or regionally.”
Identified sites	Sites with registered titles and identified by IFC as having potential for tourism development (31 sites).
<i>Kastom</i>	A Solomon Islands <i>Pijin</i> term (see below) that can refer to shared traditions, but also to contemporary ideas and institutions perceived to be grounded in indigenous concepts and principles. Thus, <i>Kastom</i> is not, as is often supposed, synonymous with the English word ‘custom’, which is typically conceived as Melanesian ways from before Europeans’ arrival in the islands. In addition to its usage in everyday language, anthropologists have analyzed and debated <i>Kastom</i> ’s meanings. Particularly in its political uses, <i>Kastom</i> is often closely tied to Indigenous means of dispute resolution, or ‘ <i>Kastom loa</i> ’, set in opposition to state or ‘government law’ (Solomon Islands Historical Encyclopedia, 2020).
Landscape-level assessment	A geographically-based assessment of a defined landscape area. It includes: • identifying components of the landscape • characterization and mapping of the landscape to differentiate areas that are distinct from one another based on relevant criteria and evaluation of the landscape • ranking or prioritizing areas that require protection or management. A landscape-level assessment provides a high-level indication of wider landscape matters that can underpin informed site selection for development. Further detailed investigation of a chosen site can then be undertaken.

Term	Definition
Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA)	Nearshore waters and its associated coastal and marine resources that is largely or wholly managed at a local level by coastal communities, land-owning groups, partner organizations or collaborative government representatives who reside or are based in the immediate area. An LMMA differs from a Marine Protected Area (MPA), in that the former is characterized by local ownership, use or control, and in some areas follows the traditional tenure and management practices of the region. In contrast, a MPA is typically designated via a top-down approach with little local input. LMMA can be used interchangeably with CBRM, also a term commonly applied in Solomon Islands.
Pijin	The common local language spoken in Solomon Islands. It is used in everyday life.
<i>Tabu</i>	As adopted into the English language, <i>Tabu</i> has come to mean 'set apart as sacred or accursed or forbidden by social convention'. <i>Tabu</i> can also be thought of as meaning something is forbidden, usually with spiritual sanctions, and as such emphasizes the religious significance of the term (Burt, 1988).
The Tensions	A period between 1998–2003 when civil unrest in Solomon Islands was characterized by fighting between different ethnic militant groups.
<i>Wantok</i>	People of an extended family and/or people from the same language group or community.

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Executive summary

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE ESDS

The Solomon Islands Government (SIG) has recognized that tourism offers a pathway for broad-based economic growth, industry diversification, and inclusive development.

The SIG, through the Millennium Challenge Corporation's (MCC) Accessing Land for Tourism Investment Facilitation (ALTIF) project together with private sector and development partners, is promoting a coordinated approach to strengthening tourism investment in Solomon Islands. The ALTIF project sits under the MCC's Solomon Islands Threshold Program (SITHP). The provinces of Guadalcanal and Central have been identified as the highest-potential regions after Western Province for expansion of tourism investment. This selection is based on their existing tourism infrastructure and upward trends in visitor numbers, coupled with community support and the appeal of their respective tourism assets, such as natural and cultural features.

Whilst there are clear opportunities for tourism to act as a catalyst for inclusive economic growth, strategic tourism sector documents recognize barriers to attracting and sustaining investment for tourism in Solomon Islands. As such, International Finance Corporation (IFC), in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) and two on-the-ground partners, DT Global and Tetra Tech, is delivering the MCC ALTIF project from January 2022 to January 2026 to enhance the enabling environment and address key sectoral, systemic, and market challenges to facilitate private sector investment in tourism.

This Environmental and Social Diagnostic Study (ESDS), as one of the actions under the broader ALTIF project, was prepared to undertake a landscape-level assessment of the environmental and social (E&S) and natural hazard risks associated with potential tourism development across the study corridor and sites identified as having high potential for tourism.

The purpose of this ESDS is to inform key stakeholders of the landscape-level E&S and natural hazard risks and opportunities for tourism development across the study corridor and the 31 individual sites identified in Guadalcanal and Central provinces.¹ The focus areas of this study were the West and East Guadalcanal regions, Nggela Islands, Buena Vista Islands, and Russell Islands.

STUDY USE AND METHODOLOGY

This ESDS report provides guidance for the SIG, at both national and provincial levels, to enhance the investment environment and support the growth of tourism as an industry. The ESDS is also a resource for stakeholders – including donors, business groups, non-government organizations (NGOs) and communities – to identify constraints and opportunities, and to consider recommendations for inclusive and sustainable tourism development that maximizes benefits for local communities.

Developers and investors can also use this study to plan tourism development projects, activities or establishments by referring to the identified individual site risks, along with the broader risks and opportunities at contextual and corridor levels. The study sheds light on key business considerations, including access to land and natural resources. It also explains the social and cultural context of operating a tourism business in Central or Guadalcanal Province. This will allow potential investors to plan the scale and nature of their proposed business and where this fits within the broader tourism market.

The following key steps were taken to develop this ESDS:

Desktop review of existing information and Geographic Information System (GIS) data:

The review examined information on the general E&S conditions in the study corridor within the Guadalcanal and Central Provinces and nationally, including the country's legal and political framework. This included gathering available GIS data, previous environmental and ecological assessments and social research and reporting.

Inception plan: Information gaps were identified to inform the approach to research, site assessments and stakeholder consultations.

Stakeholder engagement: Following the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan that identified key informants for the study, targeted consultations were undertaken to understand the opportunities and risks for tourism development in Solomon Islands, particularly the study corridor.

Site visits: Visits to each identified site were conducted to collect primary E&S data through walk-over field assessments and consultations with community members.

¹ The 31 sites were shortlisted through the ALTIF project following detailed analysis of each site's land tenure, access and tourism potential. See Section 1.1 of this report for further details.

Analysis of findings: A review of all data was undertaken to consider both the opportunities and risks of tourism development in the study corridor and at each site within the national context.

Risk assessment: This assessment characterized the key E&S and natural hazard risks and developed measurement criteria for each aspect. Measurement of mapped and

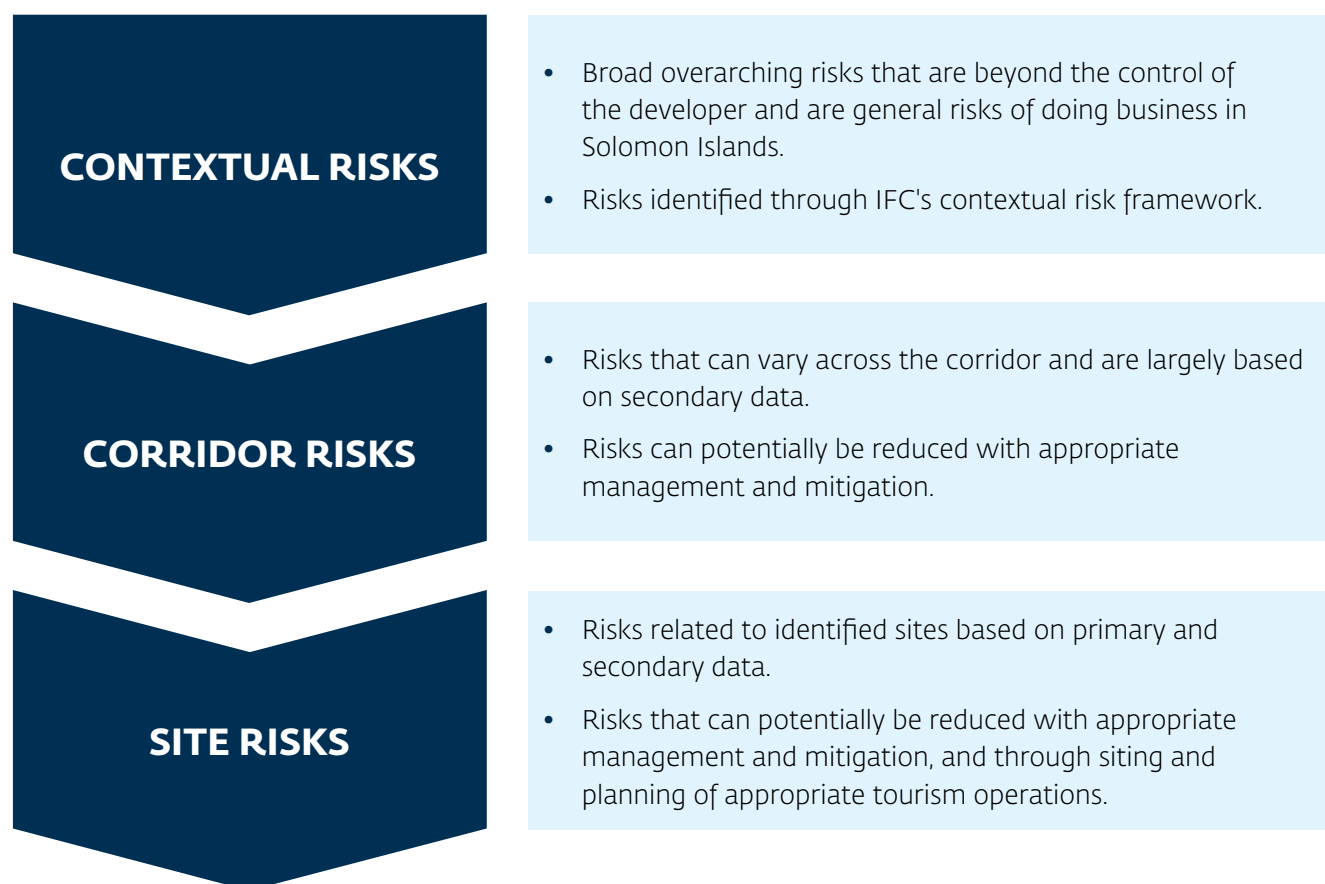
collected data against the relevant risk assessment criteria produced ratings (“high”, “moderate” or “low”) for areas along the corridor and for each of the 31 identified sites.

Recommended actions: Actions for both the SIG and potential tourism investors are provided at contextual and corridor levels, considering both the risks and opportunities to realize development of sustainable tourism.

RISK ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The risk assessment was undertaken at three levels as shown in Figure 1, with the risk assessment methodology guided by IFC’s Environmental and Social Performance Standards (IFC PS).

Figure 1: Risk assessment methodology framework



Contextual risks

Contextual risks refer to those in the external environment (at country, sector, or subnational levels) that an investor does not control, but which could negatively impact a project or private sector entity's ability to meet IFC's PS. The study team used IFC's Contextual Risk Framework to assess each country-level risk in relation to the tourism sector. Data pertinent to contextual risks was collected and validated during stakeholder consultations and site visits.

Corridor risks

Corridor risks relate to E&S and natural hazard risks that occur across the study corridor. Measurement of corridor-level risks was primarily based on national and provincial data with information supplemented by findings during the field assessments. Risks were categorized based on environmental, social and natural hazard indicators and where possible, mapped spatially using GIS to present "low", "moderate" and "high" ratings.

Site risks

Potential E&S and natural hazard risks were identified through stakeholder consultations and field surveys, supplemented by secondary data. Site risks were assessed through a multi-criteria analysis, based on qualitative and semi-quantitative data. A linear scale of 1–10 was utilized to categorize the risks into "low", "moderate" and "high" ratings (1–3 low risk, 4–6 moderate risk, 7–10 high risk).

BASELINE DATA

Baseline data is presented for Solomon Islands and the study corridor. Given the geographic spread of the corridor, some data is presented according to hubs within the corridor, namely West Guadalcanal, East Guadalcanal, Nggela, Buena Vista and Russell Islands. The following sub-section provides a summary of the baseline data that reflects the current situation in relation to tourism opportunities and risks.

Tourism in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces

While the tourism industry is in its infancy nationally, it presents significant opportunities particularly through nature-based experiences that harness the unique biodiversity of Solomon Islands. Both Guadalcanal and Central Provinces offer highly sought-after tourism experiences. The culture of Solomon Islands is also a rich asset that can be

showcased to visitors, with benefits flowing to communities promoting traditional art, music, food, and warm hospitality.

In Central Province, key attractions include historical sites and unique diving attractions, including famous WWII wrecks, reef dives, pinnacles and drop-offs. The island of Tulagi also has a rich history and heritage with its previous status as the capital of the British Protectorate from 1896–1942.

The West Guadalcanal region is rich in historical and cultural sites and has strong potential for marine activities, such as scuba diving to view its diverse marine life, and famous WWII wreck-diving sites at Iron Bottom Sound to explore. East Guadalcanal is known for its turquoise waters, scenic islands, and coastal areas. However, there are accessibility challenges for East Guadalcanal, with a land dispute over the customary land portion of Marau Airport resulting in the suspension of flights since January 2022.² It was reported during consultations that the disputing parties have signed a memorandum of understanding to resolve the issue, with the SIG highlighting the integral benefits of this infrastructure to the broader community. It is expected to re-open sometime in 2025.

One key issue raised during stakeholder consultations was limited government funding for the tourism sector in Solomon Islands compared to similar Pacific Island destinations. This places a constraint on the development of a unified and cohesive vision with the appropriate resources for implementation.

Political context and legal framework

While Solomon Islands has coherent government structures, legislation and law enforcement, customary ways of life continue to play a significant role in various sectors in the country, particularly in terms of land tenure, ownership and utilization of land and natural resources.

The SIG has gazetted and implemented various policies, legislation, and strategies relevant to tourism development, as outlined in Appendix B of this ESDS Report. However, the country faces several challenges pertaining to land tenure, administration and ownership, with varying perceptions of land title legitimacy fuelling disputes over some sites. The Constitution states that customary land ownership should take precedence over commercial-related transactions, with

² See Section 3.2.2.1 of this report for further details of a land dispute between local landowners and the airport trustee. See article at <https://sbm.sb/airlines-suspends-services-between-honiara-marau-due-to-land-dispute/>

these rights protecting tribes, local communities, and families. This presents a challenge to the SIG and potential tourism investors. To address this development challenge, ongoing customary land registration and accessible disclosure of land title status to interested parties is recommended, along with dispute management mechanisms to strengthen investor confidence.

Further risks in the legislative environment include the following:

- The Labour Act contains restrictive employment clauses relating to women working in the evenings and allows employment of children aged 12 years.
- Gaps in provisions for equal pay for equal work by women and people with disabilities.
- Opaque definitions and limited grievance mechanisms to address sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) and limited reporting and monitoring of incidents within workplaces.

Natural hazards and climate change

With its location in the Pacific Ring of Fire and within the cyclone belt, Solomon Islands is highly prone to natural disasters. Under the World Risk Index, it is considered the second most at-risk country globally based on its high exposure to natural hazards and relatively low coping capacity (UNDRR, 2023).

Between 1940–2020, a total of 36 significant disasters have impacted Solomon Islands, with the greatest proportion of losses linked to storm and flood events from extreme weather or cyclones. Tropical cyclones bringing destructive winds and intense rainfall occur on average up to twice a year in Solomon Islands.

Climate change is likely to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities to natural hazards and create further challenges for economic development and social well-being. Solomon Islands is known as one of the countries with the greatest exposure and vulnerability to climate change (GFDRL, 2018). Sea level rises are a major concern given the number of communities living on coastal or low-lying areas, with 65 percent of people living within a kilometer of the coast (Australia Pacific Climate Partnership, 2021). Ocean acidification is predicted to continue because of climate change, with coral bleaching events forecast to increase (World Bank, 2021a).

Unexploded ordnance

The Pacific War became a major theatre of WWII that covered a large portion of the Pacific Ocean, particularly Solomon Islands. With the outbreak of WWII hostilities in Solomon Islands between Allied and Japanese forces, both sides established military bases and logistical hubs throughout the region. Several such sites were either lost or changed hands during fierce battles.

This action plagued the region with explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination from unexploded ordnance (UXO) that failed to function as designed, or abandoned explosive ordnance left behind or dumped by one of the parties to the armed conflict. The ESDS highlights areas of significant risk, particularly in the northwest area of Guadalcanal and in Central Province, particularly the Nggela corridor, Tulagi harbor, Tanamboghu Island and the Russell Islands.

Environment and biodiversity characteristics

Solomon Islands, an archipelago located in the southwest Pacific, consists of volcanic and smaller coral islands. Guadalcanal Province is a volcanic island with mountainous areas located on the northern side of the San Cristobal Trench. Central Province comprises Russell Islands, Nggela Islands (Nggela Sule, Nggela Pile, Sandfly), Buena Vista Island and Savo Island. Solomon Islands has a hot and humid tropical monsoon climate with significant and widespread rainfall.

Solomon Islands has globally significant biological diversity and endemism, which is a significant drawcard for tourists. However, its rich marine and terrestrial biodiversity is under pressure from anthropogenic disturbances, such as overexploitation, habitat destruction, invasive species, poor waste and sanitation management and climate change.

Identified ecological value within the study corridor includes:

- **Key Biodiversity Areas:** Areas of international conservation importance, including sites on Guadalcanal Island, West Pavuvu and Nggela Islands.
- **Terrestrial Protected Areas:** Komarindi conservation area is a government-managed protected zone within 50km of the study corridor in West Guadalcanal.
- **Managed Marine Areas (MMA) and Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs):** There are 10 MMAs and seven LMMAs in the East Guadalcanal Hub, 10 LMMAs in West Guadalcanal Hub, nine LMMAs in Russell Islands, two MMAs and five LMMAs in Buena Vista Hub (incorporating Buena Vista and Sandfly), and one MMA and seven LMMAs in the Nggela Hub.

- **Terrestrial Ecology:** Forest cover in Solomon Islands spans a range of vegetation communities from mangrove and coastal forest to lowland forest, hill forest and montane cloud forest communities (MEHRD, 2008). Flora and fauna biodiversity is high, with many endemic species (WWF, 2005).
- **Aquatic Ecology:** Across the study corridor, streams, and rivers flow from the higher points of the islands to the coast and provide freshwater ecosystems for fish and crustaceans. Aquatic ecological values are under significant threat from uncontrolled siltation from anthropogenic activity (SPREP, 2019).
- **Marine Ecology:** Solomon Islands is part of the Coral Triangle, a marine area in the western Pacific Ocean that hosts more than 2,000 species of reef fish and six of the seven marine turtle species. The Coral Triangle is known as the center of the world's marine biodiversity (WWF, 2024). Special and/or unique marine areas (SUMA) within the corridor include the West Guadalcanal Marine Area, Marau Sound, Russell Islands, and the area between Russell Islands and Guadalcanal Province. Green, hawksbill, leatherback and loggerhead turtles are known to occur within the corridor, with nesting sites identified. Rich coral reefs border the Western Guadalcanal Hub. The Eastern Guadalcanal Hub has a high density of key environments for habitat and biodiversity. Nggela Islands has extensive lagoon and reef systems amongst raised coral atoll islands to the north. Russell Islands is also an area with high biodiversity value.

One important aquatic consideration is the saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*), which is known to occur in the study corridor. This is both an environmental, health and safety-related issue, as crocodiles are a protected species, but human-crocodile interactions are a risk to both local communities and tourism operations. In Guadalcanal, it is estimated that up to 37 sub-adult crocodiles and 25 adults are present within the study corridor, with around 165 sub-adult crocodiles and 92 adults within the Central Province study corridor.



Solomon Islands. ©World Bank/EAP

Socio-economic characteristics

Population demographics

At the time of the 2019 Census, the population of Guadalcanal Province was 154,150 people (males - 51 percent and females - 49 percent), with a population density of 29 people per square kilometer. In Central Province, the population was 30,326 (females - 51 percent and males - 49 percent). The median age for both provinces was 21 years. Eleven percent of the national population who is five years and over, is recorded as having at least one form of functional disability (SINSO, 2023).

Across Solomon Islands, Christianity is the main religious faith, and more than 95 percent of the population in both provinces is of Melanesian descent. Other ethnic groups include Polynesians, Micronesians, Chinese and Europeans, with small populations in both provinces. The majority (90-95 percent) of the population in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces is Indigenous to the area. The larger settler communities in the Guadalcanal Province are located near northwest Guadalcanal Province and Marau Sound, while the larger settler communities of Central Province reside in Yandina (SINSO, 2023).

Gender equality, and disability inclusion

Solomon Islands is traditionally a patriarchal society, with decision-making processes and leadership roles typically considered the responsibility of men. In contrast, women are primarily considered to be responsible for domestic and caregiving roles. This is gradually changing with the introduction of the cash economy³ and improved access to education.

Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) remains a significant risk for women in Solomon Islands, with 64 percent of women reporting abuse at the hands of a partner or family member (IWDA, 2018). GBVH is correlated to industries that attract migrant workforces, particularly the logging industry (U.S. Department of State, 2023). Consultations highlighted that SEAH is also linked to logging activities in or near communities.

According to 2019 Census data, literacy rates for men and women, although still disproportionate, are not vastly different. In Guadalcanal Province, 80 percent of women are literate compared to 82 percent of males. In Central Province, 81 and 85 percent of females and males, respectively are literate.

Women continue to encounter gender-based disparities and inequality in society, impacting their ability to participate equally in various aspects of life. Women actively participate in political, civil, economic, and church activities. However, they remain marginalized in decision-making processes (Equal Rights Trust, 2019) and are poorly represented in leadership roles. National legislation also limits women's participation in the labor force, with the Labour Act prohibiting women from working at nighttime except in management or hospitality sectors. Although tourism operators are likely to qualify for this exemption, this may not cover businesses within the supply chain. The risk of GBVH may be heightened at night when women travel to and from work.

People with disabilities also face additional barriers to equal participation in society. Discrimination against people with disability in Solomon Islands starts prior to people reaching working age, occurring as early as primary school. Data collected by UNICEF shows that only 2 percent of children with a disability attend primary school, which limits opportunities later in life (Gwao, 2022). Accessing the workplace is also challenging. Analysis conducted by the economic development program Strongim Bisnis⁴ identified that the main barriers affecting people living with disabilities in Solomon Islands were levels of basic skills, mobility and stigma depending on the level and type of disability, communication capacity, and undeveloped social skills (Gwao, 2022). Physical barriers to participation are compounded by attitudinal barriers, with stigma an obstacle to workplace inclusion (CARE, 2020). There is no specific legislation that protects the rights of people with disabilities from workplace exclusion and discrimination, although there has been progress on the policy front with the launch of the National Disability Inclusiveness Development Policy 2022–2031, which sets a vision for equal participation in the country's development.

³ Cash economy in this context is the movement from home-based duties to small businesses such as gardening, market stalls or in some cases paid employment opportunities through formal or informal sectors. The growth in these opportunities provides women with more access to financial security.

⁴ Strongim Bisnis is an initiative funded by the Australian Government, partnering with SIG and the private sector to empower sustainable business growth. <https://www.strongimbisnis.com.sb/>

Infrastructure and services

In Guadalcanal, sites close to Honiara have access to infrastructure, however, this is limited in more remote and isolated areas. The two commercial airports in the Guadalcanal Province are Honiara International Airport and Marau Airport, with the latter currently closed due to a dispute over customary land on-site.

Honiara has good road connections to nearby settlements, but conditions are poor in many parts of West Guadalcanal. Accessibility is particularly an issue for the East Guadalcanal Hub, with sites only accessible by boat until Marau Airport reopens.

Outside of Honiara, access to grid electricity is minimal, with communities relying on solar, generators, and firewood. Rural communities use rainwater, groundwater wells and springs as their primary sources of water, while only 32 percent of households in Guadalcanal Province have access to improved sanitation. There are no formalized waste collection services or sanitary landfills in the study corridor, with communities burning and burying waste at community designated areas.

There are 40 health facilities in Guadalcanal Province outside of Honiara, the majority of which are nurse aid posts and rural health clinics which provide basic clinical services and essential trauma care but are intermittently staffed and lack basic supplies and equipment. A national

survey of health facilities indicated that most of these facilities operated without proper water and sanitation, electricity, and basic medical equipment. A serious shortage of clinical equipment and medical supplies, and the use of old and poorly maintained equipment was noted in the last comprehensive study of rural health facilities (WHO, 2015). This situation appears to remain acute with clinics reportedly in urgent need of upgrades, repair or renovation (Short, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic added further strain on the country's fragile health system, with approximately 26,000 recorded cases of coronavirus disease and 199 deaths recorded to date (Worldometer, 2024).

Many areas in Central Province are remote and isolated with limited infrastructure. There are no commercial airports, and road networks are limited. Boats are the major source of transportation. Rainwater, wells, and springs serve as primary water sources, and electricity is limited. Only 9 percent of the population has improved sanitation systems. There are no sanitary landfills or proper waste management systems in the area. There are 22 health facilities in the province, 17 of which are nurse aid posts and rural health clinics, and four are area health clinics. There is one provincial hospital in Tulagi. The facilities encounter similar challenges regarding infrastructure conditions and medical supplies as those highlighted in the national survey.

ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

The assessment findings are presented at contextual, corridor and site levels. Along with documenting risks, it is also important to consider the opportunities that tourism can present for inclusive economic development.

Contextual level risks

Detailed information on contextual risk⁵ is presented in Section 4.1 of the main report, with key risks depicted in Figure 2. The red shaded boxes depict high risks, and yellow boxes highlight moderate risk. For Food Security and Health, this risk was rated moderate in the 2021 ESDS report⁶, but is now assessed as high risk in Solomon Islands. Conversely, the 2021 study rated Reprisals as high risk, but is now assessed as moderate risk.

Figure 2: Overview of contextual risks



LEGEND: ■ High Risk ■ Medium Risk

⁵ Contextual risks, from a private sector perspective, are defined as risks in the external environment (at a country, sector, or sub-national level) that a project developer does not control, but which could negatively impact a project's or the private sector's ability to meet IFC's E&S requirements.

⁶ The 2021 ESDS covered Western Province in Solomon Islands, with the same methodology and framework applied to this ESDS for Guadalcanal and Central Provinces.

Workplace Exclusion and Discrimination (high risk).

Workplace exclusion and discrimination can lead to social unrest and undermine economic growth for all. Inequalities in Solomon Islands are rooted in histories and traditions, with the traditional *wantok* system of community kinship creating cultural strength in some respects, but also emphasizing and exacerbating differences. Gender discrimination is widespread, impacting women's ability to participate equally in various aspects of life, particularly in leadership and decision-making processes. People who experience disability in Solomon Islands regularly experience exclusion and discrimination based on their disability. The tourism industry is not immune from this risk, but offers potential to provide opportunities to address workplace discrimination through inclusive employment and supply chain policies and practices.

Deforestation and Other Threats to Natural Resources (high risk).

Some 78 percent of land in Solomon Islands is covered by forests providing a drawcard to tourists. Unsustainable commercial logging and illegal logging can negatively impact the visitor experience and erode the reputation or image of Solomon Islands as a destination. Unsustainable commercial logging is the primary driver of deforestation in Solomon Islands. Deforestation has far-reaching consequences, affecting both biodiversity and the well-being of rural communities.

Government Capacity in Protected Area Management (high risk).

As a country with diverse and abundant natural resources, management of conservation outcomes is particularly challenging amidst rapid industrial practices, such as logging and industrial fishing. Balancing environmental protection with pressure for economic development is identified in key SIG policies seeking to improve sustainability of resource management and protected area management. However, resourcing and capacity constraints are a significant challenge. Tourism investors and operators can potentially play a role in addressing this risk, leveraging the natural features of a protected or locally-managed area, and collaborating with the SIG and communities to strengthen efforts to conserve natural assets.

Food Security and Health (high risk). The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports that one-in-10 Solomon Islanders are undernourished, and 12.7 percent of the population live below the poverty line (FAO, 2021). Malnutrition and obesity are serious issues, with food scarcity and unbalanced diets linked to underlying poverty

and urbanization. Although tourism could potentially increase local demand for produce, it could also reduce food availability or affordability for local communities through preferential supply of goods such as vegetables, fruit and fish to tourism operators.

Reprisals Risk (medium risk). Reprisals are considered any act of retaliation by an individual or group. Solomon Islands has a history of reprisals, including throughout the "Tensions" that led to widespread civil unrest in the 1990s. During consultations, stakeholders and community members emphasized that ongoing and genuine engagement with local communities was critical to reducing the risk of reprisals.

Labor Policies (medium risk). Children as young as 12 years old can legally enter into formal employment in Solomon Islands, and in some informal industries it is even younger. This poses a risk for tourism investors who may, either directly or indirectly, utilize child labor as part of their operation or supply chain. Solomon Islands has occupational health and safety legislation, which outlines requirements for keeping people safe at work.

Access to Basic Infrastructure and Services (medium risk).

Most people across Solomon Islands face limited access to basic services and infrastructure, particularly those living in rural areas and people with additional needs, such as people with disabilities. Limited services and infrastructure present challenges for tourism operators, potentially increasing upfront development costs or safety risks for guests required to travel by boat to Honiara for evacuation or to access medical care. Although tourism could increase pressure on infrastructure, development of the sector could potentially drive demand for improvements in power, internet, waste, sanitation, water utilities, hospitals, and airports.

Rural-Urban Disparities (medium risk). People living in rural areas of Solomon Islands experience disparities compared to those in urban areas, including access to infrastructure, employment, education, and housing. The tourism sector provides an opportunity to deliver benefits to rural communities, as tourism sites are more likely to be developed in areas outside of urban centers, creating opportunities for employment, business development, and training.

Gender and Social Inclusion (medium risk).

Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) is a common issue experienced by women in Solomon Islands. Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) also remain a prevalent issue, with women and children living in rural areas particularly vulnerable. Whilst tourism provides workplace opportunities for women, gender equity is not always reflected in leadership positions. Marginalized groups, including people living with disability, are often excluded from participation in work and social engagement. Tourism enterprises can provide increased opportunities for women and people living with disabilities through employment and procurement practices, and through inclusive design principles.

Illegal Hunting and Wildlife Trade (medium risk).

The global wildlife trade targets rare species. With the high level of endemism in Solomon Islands, this increases the risk of illegal hunting and trade. Hunting of some species is illegal in Solomon Islands, but inadequate protection and under-resourcing of compliance and monitoring activities hinders efforts to protect wildlife from over-exploitation. Wildlife hunting can create impacts for tourism operators, particularly those offering nature-based experiences, such as diving and snorkeling. Declines in species diversity and abundance reduces the quality of the tourism experience and can erode the reputation of a country in the eyes of visitors who place a high value on wildlife. Tourism can provide economic benefits for nature conservation, with activities focused on wildlife – such as bird watching or turtle tours – providing incentives to protect species.

Corridor risks

The interpretation of corridor data by level of risk (“low”, “moderate” and “high”), indicates both challenges and opportunities. For example, a healthy coral reef system that provides important habitat for biodiversity must be protected from the human impacts of tourism development. A higher risk rating informs a developer or investor of the need to consider ways to protect the reef system from harm. However, the reef ecosystem also presents an opportunity not only as a tourism drawcard, but as a way to enhance conservation outcomes through increasing livelihood opportunities such as reef tourism based on protecting, enhancing and showcasing natural values. Creating alternative incomes through tourism can present an incentive to cease more destructive practices such as overfishing or live coral exports. Corridor-level risk ratings must, therefore, be interpreted as flagged issues rather than ‘no-go’ development zones.

Environmental risks

Terrestrial biodiversity

Low-risk areas are locations with modified habitats that have low biodiversity and limited ecological value, including urban and village, cultivated or monoculture sites (for example, oil palm and copra plantations or plantation forestry blocks). The Russell Islands Hub, Buena Vista Hub, and the northern end of the East Guadalcanal Hub were mapped as low risk for terrestrial environment indicators.

Moderate-risk terrestrial areas are associated with previously logged areas away from the coast, larger offshore islands with some level of occupation and resource use exhibiting a moderate to high level of environmental condition and integrity. This means that environmental indicators, such as water quality and terrestrial biodiversity, are in reasonable condition as logging generally has been historical (more than 10 years in the past). Forests have been allowed to regenerate without further interference. These areas may provide key resources and habitat to threatened species and provide important ecosystem services. The West Guadalcanal Hub, Nggela Hub, and the southern end of the East Guadalcanal Hub were mapped as moderate risk for terrestrial environment indicators.

High-risk terrestrial areas are those with high ecological values, such as important ecosystems or habitat, which require sustainable natural resource management or protection. No corridor areas were assessed as high risk for terrestrial biodiversity.

Low- to moderate-risk sites present an opportunity for tourism development to co-exist with existing land uses. This can also result in enhanced terrestrial biodiversity outcomes through preserving, enhancing or creating habitats and working with communities to address risks, such as invasive species.

Marine biodiversity

The vast majority of low-risk marine areas included within the study corridor are open ocean areas, which are not likely to incur significant impacts from tourism development. Reef systems that are highly damaged from fishing pressures, coral extraction and other intensive resource uses are also classed as low risk. Regarding marine environment indicators, low-risk areas are not within close proximity to Special and Unique Marine Areas (SUMA) and Marine Managed Areas (MMA).

Moderate-risk marine areas are primarily associated with coral reef systems of smaller island conglomerations, particularly in reef systems of the Russell Islands in Central Province and fringe reefs of Guadalcanal Province. Areas of moderate risk are in proximity to SUMAs or MMAs, such as the West Guadalcanal marine area, Marau Sound and the northern coast of Russell Island which hosts a SUMA around Pavuvu Island and contains important green and hawksbill turtle nesting areas. Areas in proximity to MMAs – including Marau Sound, the northwest edge of Nggela Islands and Buena Vista Islands – indicate a need for sensitive development to protect marine biodiversity.

Areas in the corridor mapped as high risk for marine biodiversity are within Marine Protected Area (MPA) or MMA areas, or locations centered on reefs of outstanding known (and published) biodiversity values. Notable areas are highlighted in Marau Sound and sites within the West Guadalcanal Hub.

Moderate- and high-risk sites for marine biodiversity also indicate strengths from a tourism perspective. Thriving marine eco-systems provide coral reefs and seagrass meadows to support diverse marine life, presenting outstanding opportunities for marine-based tourism experiences. Tourism ventures can also enhance conservation efforts through collaborating with the SIG and local communities, particularly those with a Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM) plan in place.

Presence of estuarine crocodiles

Crocodiles are likely to be present in several areas of the corridor, presenting environmental and social risks. They are highly mobile, and human-crocodile interactions risk fatality or serious injury. For tourists, knowledge of habitats and ways to mitigate risk are likely to be poor. Understanding presence and management options through collaboration with SIG and accessing local knowledge are important mitigations for tourism operators.

Social risks

Presence of people and livelihoods

The majority of sites are located within or near existing villages, although some small island sites are more remote. The presence of people presents a resettlement risk, and coconut plantations and gardens present the risk of livelihood disruption or loss. Proximity to communities offers access to a pool of labor, with communities benefiting from jobs, training, and income generation opportunities.

However, these opportunities must be carefully balanced with the need to ensure there is no impact on food security at a local level. Lack of local skills can also drive an influx of migrant workers into an area, disrupting social cohesion. Prioritizing local livelihoods, where possible, can reduce the risk of conflict.

Tourism development can bring social and economic benefits to women and men, but can also exacerbate existing disparities. To widen the distribution of benefits, support of enterprise opportunities should consider social inclusion for vulnerable groups, such as people living with disabilities.

The presence of people and livelihoods is relatively homogenous throughout the study corridor.

Proximity to infrastructure and access to services

Infrastructure is a significant constraint for tourism development in the study corridor. As was demonstrated by the closure of the Marau Airport at the time of the study, lack of accessibility can completely change the viability of tourism enterprises. The road network is also underdeveloped or in poor condition, with road access from Honiara only available to half of the West Guadalcanal Hub, while the East Guadalcanal Hub is completely cut-off. Most identified sites throughout the study corridor rely on boat access. This lack of proximity to accessible transport options needs to be considered a risk, particularly in the case of medical or natural disaster evacuation. There is also a risk associated with transport safety, with a large proportion of the study corridor reliant on boat transport through open water posing a risk to life, particularly in bad weather.

Electricity is limited throughout the study corridor, with scant options for grid connections. Therefore, investors need to consider self-sufficient energy sources such as solar, batteries, and generators.

This increases capital investment costs, although lowers risks for rising energy prices and grid unreliability. Access to telecommunications varies across the corridor. Sanitation services are poor, particularly in Central Province. Access to water resources is generally uniform, with communities relying on a combination of ground water, rainwater harvesting and river water. Any tourism investment will need to consider water resources at a local level and plan water use and infrastructure in alignment with availability, while limiting impacts to community water sources.

Health system infrastructure is also a risk for tourism in the study corridor. Whilst the network of nursing posts and rural health clinics is well established, facilities are intermittently staffed and do not have necessary levels of medical equipment and supplies to manage life-threatening situations. Often buildings, themselves, are in poor condition. Medical evacuations must be considered in tourism planning, along with having adequate supplies and first aid responders on-site to manage a medical emergency of a guest or staff member. With malaria and dengue fever already present in the corridor, other infectious diseases such as COVID-19 place increasing pressure on inadequate medical services. Tourists can exacerbate these risks by increasing demands on services.

Waste management services are not in place across the study corridor, with communities self-managing waste through dedicated burning and burial areas. This creates a challenge for tourism, as environment-friendly waste disposal services are not available. Investors and operators will need to consider on-site solutions such as waste avoidance, collection for recycling (and transport back to Guadalcanal), on-site utilization of organic waste as animal feed or compost feedstock, and waste disposal options for residual waste.

Tourism can be a catalyst for improved services through increased demand, which may facilitate additional investment in an area. There are also options for private investment in infrastructure to improve services, such as telecommunications and water supply.

Access to land and natural resources

Land use and tenure within the study corridor poses a significant risk for tourism development. Accessing customary land or natural resources on land or the marine environment can be a complex process. As is the case for the 31 identified potential tourism sites, focusing on land parcels that are registered and not under customary titles is one aspect of mitigating risk.

However, even when there is secure land tenure through a registered title, this does not prevent disputes if there are differing perceptions of title legitimacy. Hence, it is important to undertake appropriate consultations with legitimate community leaders and landowners to firstly map traditional

practices and perceptions of land ownership. Indigenous terrain mapping⁷ is one tool that can provide this framework in a respectful and comprehensive manner from the outset.

Community cohesion

In the corridor assessment, a risk rating was not assigned for Indigenous people as approximately 95 percent of people living within the corridor are Indigenous to that area.⁸

Although the local community can benefit through earning income from tourism, opportunities and benefits may not be distributed equitably, exacerbating existing tensions or creating new disputes. This risk is heightened in areas of the corridor where the logging industry has attracted settlers to an area and created ongoing tensions.

Community bodies that have authority for resource management, such as village development or Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM) committees, can provide a mechanism for collaboration to support local development. To mitigate the risk of dispute over access to natural resources, such as diving on reefs or walks through villages, tourism investors and operators must understand and then integrate local visions and by-laws. Having clear protocols in place also prevents individuals making unauthorized demands for fees from tourists, which can create confusion and result in a diminished visitor experience.

During the stakeholder engagement phase of the study, community-based tourism was raised as a potential model with merit for effective community partnerships and harnessing support for local tourism ventures. Potential investors may consider integrating community-based tourism elements into their business model where feasible.

Presence of cultural heritage

Tabu or sites of cultural heritage are present across the corridor particularly in Tulagi, West Russells and West Guadalcanal, but their protection and maintenance is challenging given the lack of site registration and cultural heritage mapping. These sites and artefacts present an opportunity for tourism as part of historical WWII treks or site visits, which will require carefully designed consultation processes with communities in line with good international industry practices.

7 The practice of Indigenous terrain mapping can de-risk complex land situations and build effective foundations for the development of sustainable projects in Solomon Islands. This tool has been successfully utilized by the Indigenous Knowledge Institute in Solomon Islands, that used this process for the Western Province once selected tourism sites were shortlisted, to provide advice on customary land tenure and cultural sensitivities.

8 In Solomon Islands, more than 95 percent of the population is made up of Indigenous peoples (Minority Rights Group, 2018). According to the 2019 Census, 98.2 percent of the population is Melanesian in Guadalcanal Province, and 95.7 percent in Central Province.

Potential for UXO

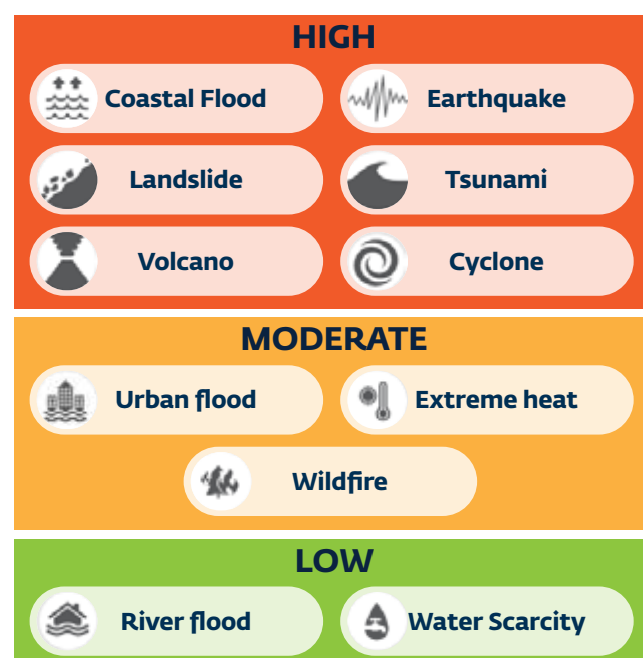
UXO risk is high in the Russell Islands, the southern coast of Nggela and the northern part of West Guadalcanal. However, even on sites where the risk is low or moderate, caution must be exercised. Information will continue to be developed through the UXO risk assessment work of the Halo Trust, an NGO, alongside the Solomon Islands Police Force in 2024 and 2025.

Potentially fatal consequences could result from tourism developers not undertaking vigilant UXO clearance during construction. It is possible to mitigate UXO risk through clearance work. However, in areas of high risk, ongoing vigilance and education to raise awareness of guests is an important component of risk mitigation.

Natural hazard risks

Solomon Islands is highly prone to natural disasters. This means tourism investors need to consider adaptation and resilience as part of infrastructure design and operational considerations. Figure 3 (GFDRR, 2020) provides the results of an online risk assessment tool called ThinkHazard! undertaken by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery in 2020 as part of its country assessment for Solomon Islands. Building resilient infrastructure is important for sustainability and can provide additional benefits, such as the demonstration of effective siting and construction methods as well as the provision of safe shelter for staff, their families and broader community during a natural hazard event.

Figure 3: Overview of natural hazards in Solomon Islands from ThinkHazard!



SITE RISKS

The ESDS undertook site assessments to highlight environmental, social and natural hazard risks through assigning "low", "moderate" and "high" ratings. However, the ratings indicate challenges and opportunities. A high-risk rating flags the need for caution in relation to ecological features, social issues or natural hazards. However, the ratings can also flag unique features such as coral reef systems, forest, cultural features, or community livelihoods that can be a tourism drawcard if siting, design, and consultations take these risks into account. A moderate- to high-risk rating does not mean 'no-go' for development, but spotlights issues that need to be considered from the outset.

The environmental, social, and natural hazard assessments of the 31 identified sites are provided in Appendix D site profiles and are summarized in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1: Summary of environmental risks at site level

Risk	Rating	Number of sites	Description
Terrestrial biodiversity	Low	12 sites	There are limited constraints associated with development in these low-risk terrestrial environments, with land generally already cleared through plantations, logging and/or settlements. Tourism provides an opportunity to enhance terrestrial biodiversity through habitat protection, enhancement or restoration.
	Moderate	17 sites	Sites of moderate risk indicate existing terrestrial values on-site providing biodiversity and ecosystem services. Sites with a moderate rating indicate that features, such as healthy coastal and secondary growth forest, are present. This adds to the value of the site and the tourism experience.
	High	2 sites	Two high-risk sites (Mbungana Island and Kokomuruka Islands) contain valuable terrestrial biodiversity with remnant primary forest on both, and sago palm wetlands and saltmarsh on Mbungana Island. Both sites contain high-value terrestrial biodiversity, but it is limited to a portion of the overall title area. If infrastructure can be sited away from the high-risk zone, it may not preclude tourism development and even feature these areas as an asset.
Marine biodiversity	Low	9 sites	There are few environmental constraints associated with development within or adjacent to low-risk marine areas considering the pre-existing impacts from fishing, coral harvesting, or impacts from logging or run-off from settlements. There is an opportunity to collaborate with the local community in marine environment restoration projects to restore marine eco-system health and build tourism appeal.
	Moderate	12 sites	Moderate-risk marine sites are relatively intact despite resource utilization activities and other impacts from settlements. The moderate-risk rating indicates that tourism developments need to consider siting, infrastructure design and activity controls to minimize impacts to the marine environment. The rating also indicates an opportunity, not only as a tourism drawcard, but to enhance conservation outcomes through increasing livelihood opportunities such as reef tourism.
	High	10 sites	High-risk marine sites are important biodiversity areas, located within or adjacent to a SUMA or MMA. There are five sites in West Guadalcanal, with a number hosting nesting habitat for turtles, one site in East Guadalcanal, four sites in Russell Islands. The high-risk rating informs a tourism investor of the need to consider ways to protect the marine eco-system from harm, particularly through siting, design and responsible management of construction and operational impacts. Management of marine-based tourism must provide oversight to ensure a 'do no harm' approach. The high risk also flags a significant tourism potential and presents an opportunity to leverage tourism as a mechanism to enhance conservation outcomes collaborating with the community to protect, enhance and showcase natural values.

Table 2: Summary of social risks at site level

Risk	Rating	Number of sites	Description
Presence of people	Low	20 sites	These identified sites have no permanent human occupation. Some sites may have some structures located on-site, but do not house a permanent population and are only used for temporary or short-term stays as people transit through the area. The risk of resettlement is considered low for these sites, with limited impacts from development. It should be noted that the lack of population on-site presents a challenge for sourcing a local workforce. Consultations would need to occur with the nearest village to confirm workforce availability and capacity.
	Moderate	7 sites	These sites have a permanent population of up to 50 people, with up to 10 houses, buildings or shelters in one discrete area of the site. There may be some resettlement required and residents may be impacted by development. Tourism could be developed if local communities' land use and traditional livelihoods are considered, and disruptions are avoided or minimized. Tourism developers could also benefit the local population by prioritizing local employment, resources, and services.
	High	4 sites	These sites have a large permanent population of more than 50 people with communities on-site for at least one generation. Tourism development on these sites may lead to resettlement and potentially conflicts relating to land use and access. The four sites in this category are all located in West Guadalcanal.
Presence of livelihoods	Low	12 sites	These sites are not used for gardening or plantations by owners, occupiers, or nearby communities. Instead, they accommodate low-visibility activities such as hunting, harvesting or collection of natural resources.
	Moderate	19 sites	These sites may feature gardens and crops that support a person, family or community, but there is still space to allow development with limited impacts on these areas and corresponding livelihoods they support. On these sites, tourism can be developed considering the local communities' land use and/or traditional livelihoods, to avoid or minimize its effects on their way of life. There are opportunities associated with livelihood activities on-site, particularly gardening and fishing, resulting in access to fresh produce for tourists and income generation for communities.
	High	No sites	These sites are largely covered in crops and gardens and there is limited space for development that would not cause impacts. Tourism development on these sites would likely require removal of crops that people in the surrounding community rely on. As such, it would be important for investors to work with communities to ensure the impacts are managed carefully. No sites were categorized as high-risk from a livelihoods perspective.

Risk	Rating	Number of sites	Description
Potential for UXO	Low	17 sites	Low-risk sites are those with no confirmed UXO discoveries, or documented WWII occupation of sites or battlefields. They include West Guadalcanal Hub sites down the west coast from Nuhu Point, the East Guadalcanal Hub area below Aola Bay, and most of the northern part of Central Province. These sites are unlikely to have UXO, but appropriate due diligence prior to ground disturbance remains appropriate.
	Moderate	6 sites	The sites rated as moderate risk do not have documented history of UXO findings from the Solomon Island Police Force nor historic records of significant WWII activity. However, the sites are within 10km of sites flagged as high risk, and as such require cautious development. These sites include Vulelua Island and Mbara Island near Aola Bay, and sites situated on the southern side of Nggela Islands. Whilst there have been no reported discoveries in Solomon Islands Police records, this is related to level of development and ground disturbance on-site. Therefore, it cannot be assumed there is no UXO present, and a thorough risk assessment is required prior to development.
	High	8 sites	The sites rated high risk have confirmed UXO discoveries on or in the immediate vicinity of the site or are situated in areas with documented WWII battles, including multiple bombings and heavy fighting. Sites in West Guadalcanal Hub closer to the northern coastline and the Russell Islands group are assessed as high risk, with developers advised to undertake site-based assessments and clearance work prior to development. It is also advised that tourists are informed of an appropriate response if suspected UXO is sighted.
Presence of cultural heritage	Low	22 sites	Sites ranked as low risk have no known cultural heritage sites (either <i>Tabu</i> sites, WWII historic sites, graves or other <i>Kastom</i> significance) connected to them. Tourism development generates an opportunity to improve the awareness and management of cultural heritage and should undertake heritage surveys with local communities for the identification and preservation of artefacts and sites.
	Moderate	7 sites	Moderate sites are those where cultural heritage sites have been identified, but are sparse. Hence, any impacts are likely to be completely avoided during the construction and operation of any future tourism operation. Siting of infrastructure is important, with design informed by respectful local dialogue. A strong cultural heritage creates an opportunity for tourist engagement, particularly with livelihood activities.
	High	2 sites	Sites ranked high are those with several cultural heritage sites. Hence, there would be limited space to develop around them, or tourism development impacts would be difficult to avoid or mitigate. As such, there is a risk associated with potential loss and damage to sites of cultural significance and conflict with local communities. In one high-risk site, Vulula Beach, there is a <i>Tabu</i> site where women are not permitted, which may present a constraint for tourism. Another site at Tambea features graves at a coastal area where a previous resort was located.

Table 3: Summary of natural hazard risks at site level

Risk	Rating	Number of sites	Description
Coastal vulnerability	Low	6 sites	These sites are in sheltered locations with some elevation. There is no evidence of coastal erosion.
	Moderate	20 sites	The majority of sites are categorized as moderate risk. There is no evidence of erosion, and some protection from fringing reef systems. However, parts of the coastal site or island are more exposed, with some exposure to erosion through storm surges or rising sea levels.
	High	5 sites	Low-lying coral sand islands with little elevation are high-risk sites. These sites are already showing some signs of coastal erosion. These more exposed sites are located in parts of East Guadalcanal and the West Russells.
Sea level rises	Low	8 sites	Low-risk sites have higher ground levels with only a small portion less than 1m above sea level. These sites allow for retreats and shelters in case of storm surges and sea level rises.
	Moderate	19 sites	Moderate sites are likely to experience the effects of sea level rises, but can still provide occupants some options to retreat. Infrastructure design needs to consider adaptation in the design phase.
	High	4 sites	High-risk sites are mostly low-lying and coastal with a large proportion of land vulnerable to sea level rises. Risks of inundation and damage from exposure to sea water during storm surges or flooding events, potentially impacting buildings and causing human injury. Design of infrastructure must take future sea level rises into account.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

It is recognized that contextual risks are likely to impact tourism investors and developers. But, they are more effectively addressed at a national level, with potential assistance from donor partners. The corridor assessment allows analysis at a landscape level to provide investors, the SIG and stakeholders with information on constraints and opportunities. It also provides information on the appropriate sitings and locations of enabling infrastructure and tourism sites, based on the environment, social and natural hazard findings.

At the site level, the assessments provide initial information to aid investment decisions, flag risks early on, and highlight opportunities.

Along with the presentation of risks, recommendations are presented for the SIG and developers to consider as pathways to address the identified risks. A summary of recommended mitigation measures is provided in Table 4. Refer to Section 6 of the main report for detailed recommendations.

Table 4: Summary of recommended actions to address each risk area

Risk	Recommended Actions for Government	Recommended Actions for Developers
Environmental Risks		
Terrestrial environment	Mitigate risks through suitable permit conditions. Enhance oversight and monitoring compliance capacities of relevant government departments. The Ministry of Forestry and Research (MOFR) to work with partners to seek ways to strengthen livelihoods that do not overexploit forestry resources. Enable collaboration between relevant agencies to build capacity and systems to address biodiversity loss.	Select sites that avoid high biodiversity risk or implement protection zones around high-value biodiversity areas on-site. Where unavoidable, design and implement mitigation measures in the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) to minimize construction and operational impacts. Consider using native species in landscaping to enhance habitat. Engage local communities on conservation and restoration projects to enhance biodiversity and community goodwill.
Marine environment	Continue to strengthen Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM) mechanisms, engage local communities and enhance the understanding of marine ecosystem threats. The MOFR to seek collaboration with tourism partners to strengthen community-based efforts in marine conservation.	Site selection after considering risks to marine biodiversity. Design and implement mitigation measures in the ESIA to avoid negative impacts on the marine environment. Incorporate traditional knowledge and management where possible and appropriate. Consider collaborating with local communities and tourists to undertake conservation works, including rehabilitation, restoration, and monitoring of marine biodiversity. Consult and collaborate with a CBRM committee if established. Educate guests on not impacting marine activities.
Social Risks		
Social cohesion	Confine tourism developments to registered land free of formal or informal disputes over land ownership. Ensure consultations with communities take place through processes that are locally acceptable. Prevent or resolve conflicts through proactive dialogue where differing views of title have been identified. Strengthen community by-laws to improve community governance structures.	Seek community participation, engagement and consultation with surrounding customary landowners and community leaders starting from early planning stages. Use Indigenous terrain mapping as a tool to understand traditional resource management, leadership and decision-making structures, and inform benefit-sharing frameworks. Explore opportunities for potential joint ventures with local communities. Conduct a security risk assessment of the operating environment to prepare for and respond to public and private security risks.
Rural-urban disparity	Consider introducing targets for tourism operators to meet local employment thresholds, including in low-skilled or unskilled roles. Support local communities and their access to tourism jobs through training, including scholarships to national or international training opportunities to improve local skills and capacity.	Where possible, procure goods and services locally if they meet the quality and quantity required by the project. Encourage local communities to produce goods for sale to tourists, avoiding competition with existing providers. Encourage visitors to buy local products and support the local community. Offer 'village tours' for tourists to engage with local communities in a culturally sensitive manner and purchase locally, if possible, with attention to those most vulnerable.

Risk	Recommended Actions for Government	Recommended Actions for Developers
Social Risks		
Gender and disability inclusion	SIG to continue to promote the business case for women in leadership positions, advocating ESG principles for businesses to mitigate risks. SIG to facilitate collaboration between tourism investors and NGOs working to improve social inclusion (considering disability, sexual orientation and gender) from early planning stages through to implementation. Strengthen capacities of law enforcement bodies to prosecute persons engaged in SEAH of children and women and improve social frameworks and oversight of companies who bring migrant workforces into communities. Support industry codes of conduct and improved grievance mechanisms to reduce rates of SEAH. Continue to work with stakeholders to strengthen the broader safety net for people with disabilities.	Understand barriers to inclusion of women and people with disabilities and identify ways to address them in collaboration with local communities. Implement targets and policies to promote inclusive employment and protect against SEAH and discrimination. Support leadership opportunities for women and people with disabilities. Use local knowledge gleaned to inform the design of inclusive tourism-related facilities.
Presence of people and livelihoods	Work with tourism investors to avoid development of tourism facilities on land used for living or commercial purposes, minimizing resettlement and impacts on livelihoods. If impacts are unavoidable, consider applicable IFC Performance Standards in addition to national law, and good international industry practice (GIIP). Collaborate with the private sector to support investment in alternative livelihoods, including employment and business opportunities if affected. Work with communities to support by-laws around any access fees to prevent <i>ad hoc</i> charging by individuals within the community.	Conduct an early and complete review of a site and engage the local community early to confirm site use before development decisions. Avoid resettlement or development in areas relied on for livelihoods. If unavoidable, undertake resettlement and livelihood-restoration planning, implementation, and monitoring in close consultation with communities. Maintain communities' access to natural resources used as source of income and/ or livelihoods wherever possible. Prioritize access to employment and procurement opportunities for project-affected people. Follow applicable IFC Performance Standards, in addition to national law and GIIP. Any adverse impacts on Indigenous peoples shall be avoided at the project design and site selection phase. The effectiveness of impact avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures is enhanced if the points of views of Indigenous peoples on matters that affect them are taken into consideration and form part of project decision-making processes. In the special circumstances described in paragraphs 13–17 of PS 7, the client's engagement process will ensure the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of the affected communities of Indigenous peoples.

Risk	Recommended Actions for Government	Recommended Actions for Developers
Social Risks		
Presence of infrastructure	Work with stakeholders to re-open Marau Airport as soon as possible. Prioritize the upgrade of infrastructure like roads, hospitals, clinics, jetties and ports to align with timeline of priority sites identified for tourism development. Understand limitations of clinics in proximity to tourism sites and use the opportunity to work with tourism operators in the vicinity to strengthen capacity of rural health clinics to serve communities and tourists. Plan and realize improvements to maritime infrastructure and maritime safety standards.	Prioritize sites with enabling infrastructure for access or develop self-sufficient and safe means of transport. Devise appropriate site-specific plans for maritime safety, medical treatment, first-aid and emergency evacuations, and contingencies for poor weather events. Decrease pressure on infrastructure by considering project designs for self-sufficiency (power, sanitation and water supply) and consider ways to facilitate safe access to tourism infrastructure as part of development planning. Develop tourism infrastructure and facilities that consider accessibility for all.
Potential for UXO	Continue to work with Halo Trust to undertake detailed UXO surveys, and progress UXO clearance work in priority sites. Ensure findings are well communicated with communities and key stakeholders, including project developers and tourists. In addition, the community shall be given access to accurate UXO mapping as soon as available.	Hire experienced UXO specialists to conduct due diligence and detailed risk assessment on the presence of UXO at potential development sites. If the study shows a high likelihood of UXO, surveys should be undertaken to identify its type, quantity, location, and clearance techniques. Appropriate procedures should be in place if discoveries are made during construction work, including 'stop work' orders.
Presence of cultural heritage	Ensure developers have a 'chance find procedure' in place as part of permit conditions. The process for recording and protecting sites of cultural heritage to be identified and developed in collaboration with NGOs/CSO and local communities, avoiding removal or damage to cultural artifacts and WWII relics.	Work with local community, including Indigenous people and minorities and relevant NGOs/CSOs, to identify and preserve any cultural heritage sites and related access and discuss appropriate utilization if allowed for tourism experiences. Ensure cultural practices are observed by all those involved in tourism development activities including contractors/ subcontractors, staff and tourists. As any cultural heritage, art, music may be culturally sensitive, conduct an assessment of potential risks and rewards by consulting with relevant communities prior to use or naming of project sites and pieces of equipment. A cultural heritage management plan may be required to ensure management of key sites identified during the assessment for preservation.
Presence of estuarine crocodiles	Finalize and implement national saltwater crocodile management and harvest monitoring plans. Increase community and tourist awareness on potential hotspots.	Seek local advice to understand the likely hotspots for crocodiles and local knowledge for mitigation of associated risk. Increase awareness amongst those involved in tourism development activities, including contractors/ subcontractors, staff and tourists for risk, especially near crocodile hotspots.

Risk	Recommended Actions for Government	Recommended Actions for Developers
Natural Hazard Risks		
Coastal vulnerability/ sea level rises	Undertake coastal inundation and tsunami risk mapping. Develop and implement appropriate strategies to address risk through community vulnerability assessments and plans. Incorporate ecosystem-based and community-based adaptation measures where possible.	Select sites less vulnerable to sea level rises. Undertake coastal vulnerability assessments to inform infrastructure design and account for climate change impacts.
Natural hazards	Strengthen the disaster response capacities of the National Disaster Management Office.	Understand the natural hazard risks of the area. Design and build infrastructure that accounts for these risks.

Monitoring

It is recommended that the MCT take a lead role in the oversight of actions. Whilst the recommended actions are through multiple stakeholders within the SIG, it would be worthwhile for the MCT to analyze progress across all actions on an annual basis. This would provide a measurement of progress, along with highlighting constraints. The monitoring could also inform ongoing planning for the tourism sector.

It is recommended that monitoring of progress include an annual analysis in coordination with the MCT national office, and engagement of MCT officers at provincial level to track the following:

- Number of existing tourism investments within the province.
- Number of proposed and new tourism investments within the province, including their status (early investigation, EIA and development application, design, construction, operation)
- Annual tourism sector survey to identify constraints, risks and opportunities as seen by industry stakeholders. Surveys will also solicit feedback on the use and uptake of various tourism-related materials made available to investors such as site profiles (in this report), amongst others.
- A tourism sector survey to seek data on policies, activities and attitudes related to inclusive workplace and procurement practices, social license and benefit sharing, and environmental safeguards and conservation.

To discuss annual findings and feed this into ongoing strategic priorities, it is recommended that the MCT initiate an annual tourism workshop in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces to discuss findings with key stakeholders from tourism businesses, relevant government ministries, NGOs, and community-based organizations.

Conclusion

This study reinforces Solomon Island's potential to capitalize on its unique biodiversity found nowhere else, and its thriving local culture. Developing carefully planned tourism infrastructure and activities has significant economic potential. This is especially the case if efforts are made to bolster local livelihoods, promote inclusion and enhance ecosystems to extend benefits. Efforts to protect and rehabilitate forests and coral reefs can be enhanced if local communities can derive value from the protection of these natural assets. In this way, tourism can have a positive impact on ecosystems rather than adding cumulative impacts to existing threats. However, if the bulk of tourism development in Solomon Islands does not follow good international industry practice, this could result in significant cumulative impacts with adverse physical and social implications for Solomon Islands as a destination and a tourism industry.

Well-planned tourism development, including accessible infrastructure and utilizing sustainable materials and resources, has significant potential. However, this relies on appropriate investment by the SIG. With the right resourcing and a cohesive approach to support the tourism sector, there is high potential to develop Solomon Islands into a leading eco-tourism destination in the region.



Solomon Islands. © World Bank/EAP

Main Report

1. Introduction

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Solomon Islands Government (SIG) has a strategic objective to develop the country's tourism sector into a driver of job creation and economic development.

However, the Solomon Islands National Tourism Development Strategy (2015–2019) and Solomon Islands Tourism Recovery Plan (2021–2030) recognize numerous barriers to national tourism development, particularly to attract and sustain investment in the sector.

In June 2020, International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) embarked on a mutual co-creation initiative to develop a Solomon Islands tourism partnership that would build upon foundational work in Western Province conducted by IFC during 2017–2021 and be implemented as part of MCC's 2022–2026 Solomon Islands Threshold Program (SITHP) with the SIG. This new phase of work, implemented by IFC in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) and two on-the-ground partners, DT Global and Tetra Tech, is known as the MCC SITHP Accessing Land for Tourism Investment Facilitation (ALTIF) project. The ALTIF project seeks to improve the enabling environment and address key sectoral constraints, systemic issues, and market failures to facilitate private sector investment in tourism in Solomon Islands. It also aims to identify and engage specific investment opportunities and transactions in the country to unlock its tourism potential. By building government capacity in this area, the project aims to increase tourism investment in Solomon Islands. A flow of tourism investment is expected to lead to job creation, productivity gains, a boost to the local economy and foreign exchange earnings.

One of the critical aspects of identifying potential tourism sites is understanding any environmental, social, and natural hazard risks associated with their development. Highlighting potential risks early in the process will underpin sound decision-making by the SIG, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) and potential investors with sustainability at the forefront.

This Environmental and Social Diagnostic Study (ESDS) covers contextual and corridor levels and 31 sites across Guadalcanal and Central Provinces for analysis.

The 31 sites were determined by the ALTIF team through a review of a long list of potential investable sites based on each site's land tenure, access, and tourism potential, and through stakeholder consultations.

The outcome of this study will be incorporated into a range of ALTIF resources that support the SIG in its tourism investment and promotion activities.

1.2 OUTCOMES OF PREVIOUS RELEVANT PROJECTS

IFC recognized the importance of supporting investment in Solomon Islands' tourism sector and has undertaken the following foundational work to support this transition:

- Stakeholder consultations since January 2018, facilitating discussions with government, titleholders, investors, legal professionals, and business owners in Solomon Islands, and tourism investors elsewhere in the Pacific region.
- IFC Western Province Tourism Investment Needs Assessment (WPTINA) 2018.
- Western Province registered land survey (2018–2020) to assess registered land with high tourism potential in Western Province.
- Boosting Tourism: Environmental and Social Diagnostic of the Tourism Sector in Solomon Islands' Western Province (2021).
- Solomon Islands Tourism: Investable Site Identification and Selection. A guide to the identification and selection of land for future tourism investment (2021).
- Solomon Islands Tourism: Investor Guide. A guide to investing in land for tourism development (2021).
- A set of 70, two-page promotional flyers for investable sites in Western Province (2021).
- A set of 70, 10-page site profile documents for investable sites in Western Province (2021).

This previous work has underpinned the ALTIF project and was considered in preparation of this ESDS.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

This ESDS is structured as follows:

- Section 1** introduces the project and purpose of the ESDS.
- Section 2** describes the methodology used to prepare the ESDS.
- Section 3** provides a E&S and natural hazard baseline assessment.
- Section 4** identifies and assesses potential E&S, and natural hazard risks at the contextual, corridor and site levels.
- Section 5** provides case studies of tourism development from Solomon Islands and countries with similar environmental and social settings.
- Section 6** recommends actions to minimize potential impacts and maximize potential benefits of tourism development.
- Section 7** outlines a conclusion to the ESDS.
- Section 8** provides a list of references used in this report.
- Appendix A** provides the methodology, including the data sources for GIS mapping.
- Appendix B** provides an overview of relevant legislation, international conventions, SIG policies and strategies.
- Appendix C** provides a summary of protected or locally managed marine areas in the study corridor.
- Appendix D** provides site profiles for each of the 31 sites, detailing E&S and natural hazard risks.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DIAGNOSTIC STUDY

The purpose of the ESDS is to summarize the environmental, social and natural hazard issues within the study area. These findings will provide tourism developers and investors with information on constraints and opportunities prior to site selection, including insights into E&S and natural hazard issues. This ESDS has been developed primarily to inform the SIG, potential investors and developers of the E&S and natural hazard risks and opportunities within this tourism study corridor. In addition, it provides guidance for the SIG, at national and provincial levels, to enhance the investment environment and growth of tourism as an industry. This ESDS is also a resource for stakeholders – including donors, business groups, NGOs, and communities – to understand constraints and consider the recommendations for inclusive and sustainable development that maximizes benefits for local communities. The individual site assessments will also act as a valuable tool for the SIG to prioritize investment, and for investors and developers to inform decision-making.

1.4.1 Solomon Islands investment

This study can be utilized at both national and provincial levels to inform ongoing policy development and assist with infrastructure and tourism development planning.

The analysis of risks and recommended actions (Section 6) can inform SIG policy development priorities and strategic development plans. In addition, specific linkages to enhance the management of E&S and natural hazard risks by the SIG include:

- Inform the MCT's investment promotion activities and provide a basis to explore E&S and natural hazard aspects of tourism development opportunities with investors, emphasizing the benefits of sustainable tourism.
- Inform InvestSolomons (under the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration – MCILI) of the opportunities and constraints to investing in Solomon Islands tourism, particularly in Guadalcanal and Central provinces. As the investment promotion agency for Solomon Islands that also regulates and monitors foreign investment, this ESDS can inform InvestSolomons' ongoing planning to attract foreign investment into the sector.

- Inform the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology's (MECDM) policy direction for tourism development environmental approvals.
- Utilize data on infrastructure constraints and tourism sector priorities to inform the National Infrastructure Investment Planning process undertaken by the Ministry of National Planning and Development Cooperation (MNPDC).
- Explore the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources' (MFMR) opportunities to enhance marine conservation through support or collaboration with tourism initiatives.
- Use the study as a further basis to lobby for increased funding for monitoring and compliance work (MCT, MECDM, MFMR and Ministry of Forestry and Research – MOFR). This may be through recurrent budget or fee structures for services, where possible. Enhancing enforcement and compliance monitoring programs is fundamental to strengthening the results of biodiversity protection.

At the provincial government level, the ESDS can provide a solid foundation for provincial or regional tourism planning. Being informed not only by local knowledge, but also by E&S and natural hazard risks, will create a more robust basis for planning and addressing the risks to environmental and social well-being. Provincial government staff can use this study to:

- Raise awareness of risks and mitigation responses at national dialogues and in decision-making processes.
- Inform tourism planning at a provincial level.
- Guide ongoing work in marine and land conservation.
- Inform inputs into the national government infrastructure investment planning process, articulating provincial priorities to enhance tourism opportunities.

1.4.2 Tourism developers and investors

Developers and investors can use this study to identify lower risk sites and plan tourism development projects and activities by referring to individual site risks, along with the broader risks at contextual and corridor levels. The study sheds light on business requirements, including access to land and natural resources. It also explains the social and cultural context of operating a tourism business in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces. This will allow potential investors to plan the size and nature of a proposed business, and where it fits within the broader tourism market.

1.4.3 Other relevant stakeholders

With the development of tourism in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces, local communities can utilize this study to learn about the opportunities they can seize and the risks that may affect them.

These insights also provide an opportunity for NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces to strengthen programs that seek local economic and conservation benefits. Potential partnerships with investors or tourism operators can enhance monitoring programs to improve knowledge, particularly in relation to species conservation. A tourism business can be more than an employer. It can also act as an important stakeholder in partnership with NGOs, CSOs and the local community to enhance outcomes at a local level.

2. Methodology

2.1 APPROACH

A landscape level assessment is a geographically-centered evaluation of a specified landscape area. In this instance, the study corridor is comprised of five hubs and within these hubs, 31 identified sites were shortlisted by the ALTIF team. This approach identified components within the contextual, corridor and site levels, and incorporated both E&S and natural hazards criteria in the high-level assessment to prioritize areas for potential tourism investment. A landscape level assessment offers a comprehensive overview of broader considerations that can guide the selection of sites for development, highlighting potential E&S risks. Subsequent in-depth investigations, such as environmental and social impact assessments, of chosen sites would need to be carried out.

The ESDS was conducted with reference to IFC's Environmental and Social Performance Standards (IFC PS) (2012):

- **Performance Standard 1:** Assessment and Management of E&S Risks and Impacts.
- **Performance Standard 2:** Labor and Working Conditions.
- **Performance Standard 3:** Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention.
- **Performance Standard 4:** Community Health, Safety, and Security.
- **Performance Standard 5:** Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement.
- **Performance Standard 6:** Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources.
- **Performance Standard 7:** Indigenous Peoples.
- **Performance Standard 8:** Cultural Heritage.

E&S and natural hazard indicators relevant to each Performance Standard were identified to create a data indicator framework. This framework guides the data collected through primary and secondary sources (see Section 2.1.2) and the risk register criteria (see Section 2.1.3). The approach to preparing the ESDS was also informed by the following guidelines:

- International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) International Principles for Social Impact Assessment 2003 (Vanclay, 2003).
- United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.
- World Bank Environment, Health and Safety Guidelines (2007).
- The Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade E&S Safeguards Policy.
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Guidelines for Conducting Integrated Environmental Assessments (2019).
- Methodology developed by IFC and GHD in Boosting Tourism: Environmental and Social Diagnostic of the Tourism Sector in Solomon Islands' Western Province (2021)

This following section provides an overview of the steps taken to prepare the ESDS, based on the agreed approach outlined in Section 2.1.

2.1.1 Definition of study areas

A description of the study areas used for this ESDS is shown in Table 5 and Map 1.

Map 1: Overview of study corridor and identified potential tourism sites in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces, Solomon Islands

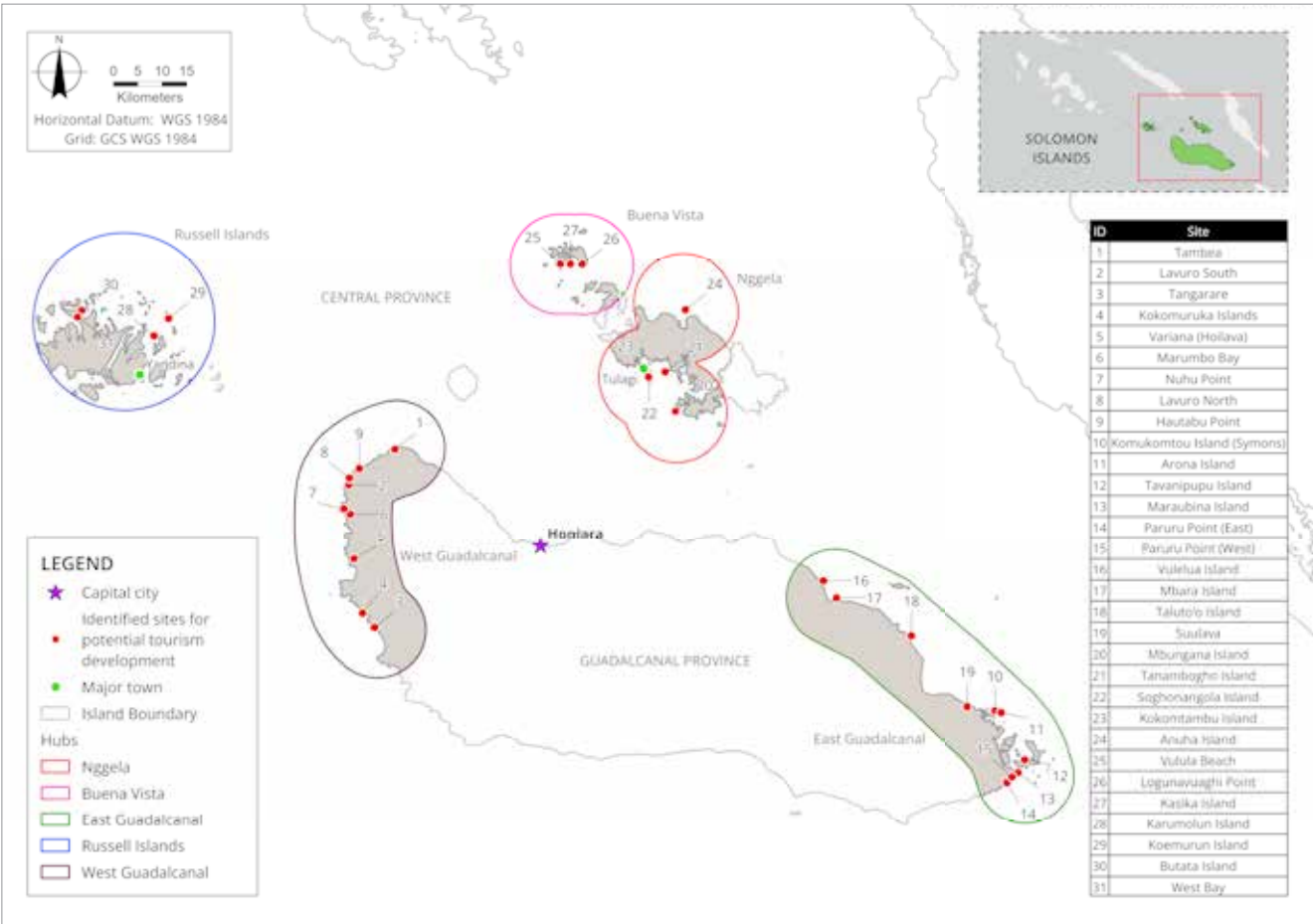


Table 5: Study area definitions

Study area level	Geographical area	Description
Contextual	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands-specific information is used to provide context to the E&S and natural hazards baseline. Inherent E&S and natural hazard risks related to the tourism sector or Solomon Islands generally cover aspects that investors would not have control over, but which could negatively impact a project's ability to be consistent with IFC's PS requirements.
Corridor	Guadalcanal and Central Provinces	Corridor-level information is used to identify potential risks and opportunities specific to the entire study area, based on provincial-level factors such as environment, history, governance, industry development and infrastructure. In this study, the corridor encompasses areas across two provinces.
Hub	5 hubs West Guadalcanal Hub (includes northwest of Guadalcanal Island down to south of Tangarare) East Guadalcanal Hub (includes area known as Marau Sound) Nggela Hub (includes Nggela Pile and Nggela Sule) Buena Vista Hub (includes Buena Vista and Sandfly Islands) Russell Islands Hub (includes East Russells and West Russells)	A 'hub' refers to a group or cluster of sites in close geographic proximity, which may share similar risks and opportunities (for example, presence of workforce, infrastructure, and accessibility constraints). Hubs do not denote specific governance boundaries, but are clusters of selected sites in identifiable geographic areas used to convey mapping information where appropriate.
Site	31 sites	31 individual sites were shortlisted by the ALTIF team (IFC, MCT, MCC and Tetra Tech) and provided to the study team. All sites are registered under the Land and Titles Act with the SIG, meaning they are not classed as customary land and are, therefore, preferred for development. Registered land holds fewer land tenure risks than customary-owned land. Sites vary in size. For the purposes of this assessment, sites are considered in their entirety.

2.1.2 Data collection

2.1.2.1 Review of desktop information

The ESDS was informed by a desktop review of available literature, Geographic Information System (GIS) and other relevant data, previous environmental and ecological assessments as well as social research reports developed for other projects or country-specific datasets. This informs the baseline assessment at a national and corridor level (Section 3).

2.1.2.2 Stakeholder consultations

Targeted consultations with key stakeholders were undertaken to inform the ESDS at the contextual and corridor level. The purpose of stakeholder consultations was to:

- Understand government and community perspectives and aspirations for tourism development.
- Identify potential E&S and natural hazard impacts or benefits, and suggestions regarding opportunities to mitigate negative impacts and enhance benefits.

- Collaborate with key stakeholders to communicate and refine the vision for sustainable tourism development.
- Gain insights into the E&S and natural hazards baseline characteristics of the corridor and hubs.
- Gain a broader understanding of the customary community structure and beliefs, and how these factors may influence tourism development.
- Understand the roles, interests, and influence of different stakeholders within communities near identified sites.

Stakeholders were identified and prioritized based on their level of influence and interest in tourism development in Solomon Islands. Stakeholders were consulted through semi-structured interviews, both face-to-face and via videoconferencing. Consultations were informed by IFC's Spectrum of Engagement (IFC, 2007), with key issues raised then documented within the internal Stakeholder Engagement Plan. A summary of discussion points incorporated within the study is provided in Table 6.

Table 6: Key findings from stakeholder discussions

Theme	Summary of outcomes	Relevant sections of this report
Tourism	• Overall, tourism was viewed positively by stakeholders, particularly as an alternative industry to timber harvesting. • Some stakeholders identified challenges encountered by tourism operators in the past, including a lack of social license and community support leading to disputes and reprisals. • Other challenges included accessibility, maritime safety and infrastructure gaps. Stakeholders outlined the need to develop adequate public infrastructure, including transport, health, waste services and telecommunications to underpin tourism growth. • Stakeholders reported a lack of adequate government funding for the tourism sector, viewing this as a major constraint to resourcing a cohesive vision to encourage the growth of a vibrant industry.	Sections 3.1.3, 3.1.8 and 3.2.2
Governance	• The importance of working transparently and collaboratively with communities when constructing and operating a tourism business was raised, including: - Maximizing local employment, including provision of training and skill development opportunities. - Procuring local goods and services. - Engaging with local villages through village walks or selling handicrafts to tourists. - Visiting local cultural heritage sites (as appropriate) and sharing traditional practices, such as festivals and food. - Some stakeholders noted that good community governance and cohesion were required for long-term sustainable partnerships. It was identified that in the past, when a community was not in agreement, this had impacted the operation of local tourism businesses. Good community governance also underpins conservation initiatives and community safety and security.	Sections 3.1.1, 3.1.4, 3.1.5, and 3.1.6
Physical environment	• Climate change and natural hazards were raised as risks to be considered, with adaptation essential in development of tourism infrastructure and services. • Unexploded ordinance (UXO) risks were identified based on analysis of WWII history and consultations with the Halo Trust, an NGO, that is working with Solomon Islands Police Force to map UXO risks.	Sections 3.2.3, 3.2.4, 3.2.5 and 3.2.6

Theme	Summary of outcomes	Relevant sections of this report
Terrestrial ecology	• Tourism presents both a risk and opportunity, with stakeholders identifying that any development could increase land clearance and habitat loss, and impact the water quality, amenity, and health of terrestrial eco-systems. • Equally, a tourism development could be placed at risk by neighboring land uses, particularly logging which can have high visual and ecological impacts without sound management practices in place. • The opportunity from tourism is it can deliver economic benefits to local communities and reduce the reliance on revenue from resource extraction.	Sections 3.2.7 and 3.2.8
Aquatic and marine ecology	• Marine ecology is impacted by several separate and cumulative activities, such as over-fishing, consumption or sale of turtles and their eggs, pollution and climate change. • To protect marine areas, local benefits need to be articulated, such as improved fish stocks over time, sustaining resources for future generations, and alternative livelihoods in conservation and tourism activities. • Coral reefs and attractive beaches present opportunities for tourism, but linking in conservation measures will sustain the industry over the longer term. • Risks associated with crocodiles, conflict, and co-existence in the study area were discussed.	Sections 3.2.9 and 3.2.10
Socio-economic environment	• In general, villages held a favorable view of potential employment opportunities from tourism operations. It was commonly reported that most people currently worked in subsistence roles and would welcome different industries in the respective areas. • Stakeholders stated there were issues with the forestry industry, including alleged increases in sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) particularly of young women, and use of children for labor. This was identified as most common in Marau Sound and West Guadalcanal Hub, which host forestry operations. • Stakeholders noted opportunities for people living with disabilities to work in tourism operations or within the supply chain, including jewellery and handicrafts. These opportunities would need to be facilitated by a third party such as People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PDSI) to increase the accessibility and availability of such livelihood opportunities. • Differing perceptions of the validity of land titles of some sites, particularly in Guadalcanal Province, were indicated during stakeholder consultations. This presents a potential risk to tourism developers, as secure land tenure is critical. Indigenous terrain mapping⁹ was identified as an important tool to develop a common understanding and build social license.	Section 3.2.11

⁹ Indigenous terrain mapping is a framework used to map traditional practices and community perceptions of land ownership and user rights. See Section 3.1.7 for more details.

Theme	Summary of outcomes	Relevant sections of this report
Infrastructure	- Consultations with stakeholders indicated that the airport in Marau Sound was expected to reopen after a period of closure due to community tensions and a land dispute. The SIG has worked closely with the disputing parties, who have now signed a memorandum of understanding to resolve the issue, recognizing the importance of this infrastructure for the community. The SIG expects resolution in 2024. - At the time of stakeholder consultations, there were no active airports in Central Province. Stakeholders identified one airport at Yadina that planned to reopen after its closure in the 1990s. However, this reopening was not confirmed. - Stakeholders reported there was a hospital planned for Marau Sound, however, the building did not pass inspection. However, some stakeholders noted it was still being used for medical care. - Quality of healthcare is variable, and any serious condition requires treatment in Honiara. First aid access through the network of rural clinics and nursing posts is adequate, although not always immediate and accessible. - Stakeholders identified that communities were reliant on boat travel. At times, the sea conditions are too rough for travel – particularly the passage from Marau Sound to Honiara, and Honiara to Russell Islands. - Lack of proper waste management and sanitation systems was noted as a constraint. Whilst sanitation can be resolved through effective on-site infrastructure, it is difficult for a tourism operator to practice good waste management without a proper landfill facility in the area.	Sections 3.2.12 and 4.1.7

2.1.2.3 Site visits

Site visits for the ESDS were conducted between 25 September 2023 to 15 October 2023. The study team visited each identified site (31 in total) and collected primary E&S data through observations during each site walk-over and consultation with community members. The study team was comprised of four members, two social specialists and two environmental specialists, while a staff member from IFC joined the site visits to Central Province. Data collected through site visits included:

- Documenting specific infrastructure and environmental features.
- Field observations of terrestrial plants and habitat, and fauna.
- Observations of land topography, coastal natural protection systems, and evidence of erosion.

- Marine/reef inspections, where relevant and possible.
- Quantitative and qualitative data from interviews with community members (where available) and local stakeholders.
- A structured question guide was used for each community interview to ensure consistent information was documented.

Information was collected based on indicators relevant to IFC Performance Standards, as shown in Section 2.1. Data collected through site visits were a critical input to the assessment of environmental, social, and natural hazard risks.

2.1.3 Risk assessment

There is limited published guidance on landscape level assessments for evaluating risks to social and natural environments. However, there is similarity with Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) methodologies. The methodology adopted for this ESDS borrows from the Myanmar CIA/SEA approaches and was refined for the tourism sector through the Western Province ESDS to deliver contextual, corridor, and individual site-specific assessments (IFC, 2021a). While these risks were considered at a landscape level, further site-specific studies, such as ESIs, would need to be conducted by developers to determine specific E&S risks. The risk assessment was undertaken at three levels, aligned with the study areas defined in Section 2.1.1. The approach to risk assessments is demonstrated in Figure 1.

2.1.3.1 Contextual risks

In accordance with IFC's 2012 Sustainability Policy, the categorization process requires considering "inherent E&S and natural hazard risks related to a particular sector as well as the context of a business activity's setting".

Contextual risks, when viewed from both a private sector and E&S perspective, are an important aspect of painting a complete picture when considering risks in a given country. Contextual risks refer to those in the external environment (country, sector, or subnational level) that the client does not control, but which could negatively impact a project or private sector entity's ability to meet IFC's PS. Data pertinent to contextual risks was collected using IFC's Contextual Risk Framework and validated during stakeholder consultations and site visits.

2.1.3.2 Corridor risks

Corridor risks relate to general E&S and natural hazard risks that may manifest across the study corridor and can be differentiated at a broader scale. Measurement of corridor-level risks is primarily based on findings at site level when they present a pattern across the corridor, supplemented by secondary data. Corridor-level data includes key biodiversity areas, protected areas (marine and terrestrial), population density, distance to infrastructure such as medical facilities and airports, land tenure and use, social vulnerabilities, tourism facilities, planned infrastructure, cultural heritage and UXO hazards.

Key risks at the corridor level were identified, qualitatively described and assessed, and where possible mapped spatially using GIS. The mapped risks allow areas of the corridor

to be highlighted as susceptible to higher or lower E&S and natural hazard impacts, which can guide investors in their decision-making.

Reliable data with finer details differentiating areas of Guadalcanal and Central Provinces was combined with on-site observations and reviews of recent aerial photos to map key E&S and natural hazard indicators wherever possible across the study corridor. Capturing relevant data required consultations with SIG ministries and NGOs, accessing international partnership databases, including the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, supplemented by utilization of other accessible research and online spatial data portals.

The interpretation of corridor-level data by level of risk (low, moderate, and high), indicates both challenges and opportunities. For example, a healthy coral reef system that provides important habitat for biodiversity needs to be protected from the human impacts of tourism development. A higher risk rating informs a developer or investor of the need to consider ways to protect the reef system from harm. However, the reef ecosystem also presents an opportunity, not only as a tourism drawcard, but as a way to enhance conservation outcomes through increasing livelihood opportunities such as reef tourism based on protecting, enhancing and show-casing natural values. Creating alternative incomes through tourism can present an incentive to cease more destructive practices, such as over-fishing or live coral exports. Corridor-level risk ratings must, therefore, be interpreted as flagged issues rather than 'no-go' development zones.

Environmental indicators

Presenting key environmental assets and risks for the study corridor provides the reader with a high-level snapshot of environmental attributes. Accessing and interrogating data related to environmental health, such as ecosystem condition and biodiversity values, presents some challenges at the scale of the study-corridor level. Whilst there is some locational and information data available on a regional basis, this tends to be limited with most biodiversity information available at the national level.

The presence or status of flora and fauna of conservation significance, along with essential habitat factors important to maintenance of ecosystem processes and functionality, are well-documented in scientific literature and online

databases referenced in this study. Subsequently, the type, location, condition, and integrity of ecosystems can be used as reliable surrogates to assess potential risks to biodiversity values, with these risk bands mapped for both marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Essential habitat factors are a key ecological concept and include those environmental features considered critical to the survival of populations of threatened fauna and flora and/or the maintenance of natural ecosystem processes. The condition and integrity of these factors are key to determining the likely presence of important species. For this study, 'condition' refers to the abundance and distribution of natural vegetation types or marine community types, whereas 'integrity' indicates the likely long-term viability or sustainability of ecological processes. The study considers the extent to which these processes have been affected by past or present land uses, the ability of the ecological community (vegetation types) subject to these processes to rebound (or be rehabilitated) and a time frame for any restorative process. Typically, timber harvesting (logging), impacts of tropical storms, large-scale clearing and infrastructure development are the most obvious visual evidence of these indicators at a study corridor and site-level scale of resolution.

Where suitable data was available, environmental indicators were mapped at a corridor level, acknowledging that some indicators were only able to be mapped at an individual site level. In the absence of site-specific data, the field survey team had general proforma for the collection of data aligned with indicators used for the corridor level. The field study aimed to verify secondary environmental data, such as the level of disturbance, extent of overfishing, presence of potentially vulnerable ecosystems, status of logging and cyclone recovery regrowth, albeit at a finer scale of resolution.

This allowed the team to refine risk assessments at corridor and individual-site levels. The resulting environmental indicators adopted for the study are summarized below and presented in more detail in Table 7.

- **Conservation areas:** Location/status of locally, nationally, or internationally recognized areas of conservation significance, including Marine Protection Areas (MPA), Community-Based Management Areas (CBMA) and Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA).
- **Location of fauna/flora of conservation significance:** This indicator is a standard international best practice when considering the potential risk of development within a particular area.

- **Terrestrial habitat condition and integrity:** In the absence of species-specific location data, essential habitat factors and their condition and integrity were adopted as a surrogate measure to indicate likely areas of habitat and resource utilization by species of conservation significance.
- **Terrestrial landforms and types:** Landforms and types of the terrestrial environment were used as an indicator of potential risk at a study-corridor level. This included, for example, slopes above 30 percent, cliff areas, floodplains, and associated drainage depressions (freshwater swamps). At a site level, these factors were able to be more closely delineated and verified during field inspections.
- **Marine ecosystems:** Encompassing a variety of habitats and types, marine ecosystems include coral reefs, seagrass meadows, mangroves, and intertidal systems. Direct information on the condition and integrity of various marine ecosystems was not available as mappable digital data. Since each ecosystem's vulnerability to development varies, their individual degree of vulnerability, as established through the scientific literature referenced in this report, was used as an indicator of potential environmental risk at a study corridor level with field verification at a site level.
- **Coral reefs:** The type and location of a coral reef system determines, to a large degree, its level of vulnerability. Barrier and ribbon reefs, owing to their distance from land and configuration, are less vulnerable to impacts from onshore pollution (such as sediment from logging and clearing operations, or nutrients from villages and towns), compared to atoll or fringing reef systems. More remote reef systems, from densely settled areas, are also less likely to be overfished due to limitations on accessing these reefs by small village boats.

External data: Digital databases, GIS mapping and published reports were used to establish the locations and risk bands (low, moderate, or high) for the environmental indicators at a study-corridor scale of resolution. Some mapped data represents such small areas, for example freshwater wetlands, that cannot be captured at the study-corridor level. This highlights the utility of the corridor risk assessment to provide a snapshot of key challenges, with the need for site-specific field analysis.

Reconnaissance-level environmental data for individual sites were obtained through field inspections, with findings also informing the corridor analysis.

Site visits were undertaken to understand key environmental assets and risks at a high level for each individual site and ascertain data on the environmental condition and integrity.

These landscape level assessments did not include surveys for threatened species, as this will take place after site selection in the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment phase by developers. Subsequently, potential environmental risks at a site level were refined and considered in the final risk assessment for each site outlined in this report.

Table 7: Environmental risk assessment criteria at a corridor level

Measurement criteria and source	Description	Risk Rating
Terrestrial biodiversity impacts	- Highly disturbed or modified environment that has low or limited ecological value. - Examples include active coconut plantations, residential or housing areas, agricultural land.	Low
- IUCN / IBAT databases - Logging concession maps (MOFR) - Published research and studies.	- Moderately disturbed environment where forests have regenerated without interference. - Examples include former abandoned coconut plantations with heavy secondary growth forest, or former logged areas with secondary growth. - Relatively healthy reef ecosystem with signs of human impacts. - Endangered or threatened species may be present.	Moderate
	- Relatively undisturbed environment, such as primary forest with high ecological values or habitats which require sustainable natural resource management and/or conservation protection. - Healthy and intact ecosystems with limited impact from human activities. - Endangered or threatened species likely to be present.	High
- Marine biodiversity impacts - Presence of informal marine management areas, such as CBMAs	- Marine areas close to urban centers which have low or limited ecological value and are not likely to incur significant impacts from tourism development. - Ecosystem health compromised through pollution and overfishing. - Shallow reef areas with no adjacent deep water. - Visually stressed marine environment. - Low ecological diversity and health.	Low
- Discussions with SIG fisheries officers and local communities to understand the current status of CBMAs - IUCN / IBAT databases.	- Marine ecosystems are relatively intact with some evidence of fishing pressures or human impact. - Areas less than 5km from nearest village. - Moderate extent of reef, mangroves or seagrass with visible indicators or stress or impact. - Areas where adjacent land use, such as logging, will likely impact marine ecosystem health.	Moderate
	- Ecosystems with important biodiversity values that will require high mitigation and management controls to ensure minimal impacts. - Extensive seagrass beds in good health. - Well established and healthy mangrove areas. - Healthy reef ecosystems with wide fish diversity and little impact from fishing. - Extensive reef systems with documented rich biodiversity. - Rare or endangered species likely to be present. - Sea turtle feeding or nesting areas. - Sea bird roosting or nesting areas.	High

For tourism investors, corridor-level risk ratings provide insights into ecological values. Where there are high biodiversity values, these are flagged as moderate or high risk as such values can be impacted by tourism infrastructure and operations. Concurrently, these environmental values present opportunities as tourism drawcards, but this needs to be managed through appropriate siting, design, and operational practices to conserve and potentially enhance environmental attributes.

Social indicators

All 2019 Census data and social indicator-related information was well documented and considered within the literature review undertaken for this study. However, this information is primarily recorded at the country level, with focused data at localized levels of the study corridor and individual sites being reasonably sparse or dated. Mapping details of the social baseline and constraints are piecemeal to date, with social information viewed as most reliable at the national level with limited data and site observations able to support a general understanding of social risks at corridor and individual site levels.

Understanding the vulnerability of communities to change and the levels of development in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces was a focus area to determine key social risks. Applying an awareness of the current social infrastructure and support available to local communities can guide investors in integrating positive outcomes in tourism development planning.

While the social indicators mapped at a corridor level were limited due to gaps in data, these gaps became the focus of individual site assessments.

The social indicators considered for the ESDS at the corridor level are summarized in the following list:

- **Land use:** Settlements, areas under cultivation (such as gardens, coconut plantations, forestry plantations, logging areas).
- **Demographic profile:** Population density.
- **Social vulnerabilities:** Subsistence living, education levels, health status of the community (for example, malnutrition and disease profiling), use of sanitation and access to power.

- **Land tenure/land use rights:** Customary land, land under Indigenous administration and registered land (perpetual lease or fixed-term lease).
- **UXO hazards:** Potential for UXO.
- **Social infrastructure:** Medical and health services, emergency response, transport (roads, airports, jetties and ferry docks), potable water supply, markets for food and daily supplies, waste management and water treatment facilities, power and telecommunications.
- **Planned development projects:** Physical infrastructure projects.
- **Tourism facilities and activities:** Existing accommodation and tourism operators.
- **Cultural heritage:** Presence of *Tabu* or cultural sites.

A risk rating was not assigned for Indigenous people as the vast majority of inhabitants in the corridor are indigenous to that area. According to the 2019 Census Report (SINSO, 2023), 95.5 percent of the country's population are Indigenous. If Indigenous people's presence was accounted for in the risk ratings, all corridor areas would be considered high risk for development. This is detailed further in Section 3.1.7.

These indicators were examined and weighed against available data and information, reliability of data sources and the ability to measure and map these indicators at a corridor level. Many social indicators did not present sufficient data to be mapped and measured or were viewed as only relevant at a national level following the background analysis. Indicators used to map social risks at a corridor level are shown in Table 8.

Other data important to consider at a corridor level, but not be mapped due to the homogeneity of the issue, are presented in Section 4.2.2.

Table 8: Social risk assessment criteria at a corridor level

Measurement criteria and source	Description	Risk Rating
• Land tenure/access to land use rights • Access to infrastructure, GIS measurements for distances from airports and medical facilities • Exposure to potential UXO areas • Population density.	• Areas as registered land with land titles. • Located less than 15km from a medical facility, and less than 30km from an airport. • Good access to urban centers and markets via road. • High population density in the corridor, providing a good source of potential workforce. • Low likelihood of UXO presence. • Tourism development of these sites is rated low risk due to the above factors.	Low
	• Areas with registered land tenure but contested by local communities or Indigenous groups. • Located 15-30km from a medical facility, and 30-50km from an airport. • Some access to urban centers or markets, but only via a short (under 30 minutes) boat ride. • Moderate population density in the corridor, providing a source of potential workforce. • Moderate likelihood of UXO present. • Tourism development on these sites is rated moderate risk with investors required to consider risks related to land tenure, infrastructure access, population and potential for UXO.	Moderate
	• Areas on customary land. • Located more than 30km from medical facilities, and more than 50km from an airport. • Limited access to urban centers or markets, and only via a long (more than 30 minutes) boat ride. • Low population density in the corridor, limiting availability of local workforce. • High likelihood of UXO present. • Tourism development on these sites is flagged as a high risk with investors needing to consider the risks related to land tenure, infrastructure access, population and UXO potential, and whether these risks can be effectively mitigated.	High

For tourism investors, the risk ratings at corridor level provide insights into social risks. Land title, access to transport and medical infrastructure, workforce availability (tied to population density), and potential presence of UXO are all issues that intersect to inform this broader risk rating.

It should be noted that areas with moderate and high social risk ratings are not precluded from tourism development, but they provide a potential developer with an indication of risk and identify areas requiring more detailed assessment, implementation of mitigation measures and could involve longer timeframes and costs. As the social environment changes, social factors can become redundant as new ones emerge. Therefore, the mapping and ratings should be reconfirmed through consultations and further study by developers.

Natural hazard indicators

Natural hazard indicators considered in this study include tropical storms and cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, landslides, flooding, and sea level rises. It should be noted that most natural hazards occur over large areas, rather than small ones. For example, a high seismic hazard is applicable across the entire corridor. Historical cyclone paths cross Solomon Islands, with some areas such as East Guadalcanal experiencing more frequent landfall. However, applying historical events to predict future cyclones needs to be undertaken with caution (See Fig 3 p. 13).

ThinkHazard! is a web-based tool created to consider the impacts of disasters on new development projects (Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, 2020). The tool is designed for use at a nationwide or local level depending on country data availability. The Solomon Islands *ThinkHazard!*

report generated in 2020 outlines national level and some limited regional data for the following natural hazards: floods (river, urban, coastal), earthquakes, landslides, tsunami, volcanos, cyclones, water scarcity, extreme heat, and wildfires (Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, 2020). When assessing risks from natural hazards, the *ThinkHazard!* risk ratings consider exposure to hazards along with vulnerability and resilience. Solomon Islands' vulnerability to natural hazards is exacerbated by socio-economic conditions, with vulnerable groups disproportionately impacted (Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, 2023). Housing and services infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, is highly vulnerable to natural hazards throughout Solomon Islands.

The methodology to assess natural hazard risks at the corridor level applies the assessment from *ThinkHazard!* for each hazard type, with the risk description for the corridor providing data on historical events and information on particular risks as they relate to the corridor. Risks in relation to cyclones, tropical storms and earthquakes were able to be mapped from available data sources. In the individual site assessments, *ThinkHazard!* risks were distilled into two categories of coastal vulnerability and sea level rises.

2.1.3.3 Site risks

Potential E&S and natural hazard risks were identified based on data collected through a review of available information, outcomes of stakeholder consultations and field surveys.

The environmental, social, and natural hazard risks outlined in Table 9 were considered at a landscape level and further site-specific studies, such as ESIA's, should be conducted to determine specific E&S risks.

Table 9: Risk definitions

Environmental risks	Definition
Terrestrial biodiversity	Abundance and diversity of life on land, including flora, fauna, and vegetation communities, including freshwater ecosystems and species.
Marine biodiversity	Presence, health and diversity of seagrasses, coral reefs, fish, and marine life.
Social risks	Definition
Presence of people	Permanent or temporary population located on-site who, depending on the footprint of development, may require resettlement. This also considers populations located near the site who may not require resettlement, but may have greater exposure to transmission of disease, gender-based violence, exploitation, and additional pressures on resources, such as water and electricity. Presence of people is also indicated through dwellings or structures located on-site.
Presence of livelihoods	Livelihoods on-site includes markets, gardens, shell collecting, reefs used for subsistence and artisanal fishing, boat launch areas, copra, coconut plantations, fruit trees, or the presence of other activities as sources of income and livelihoods. This risk also considers the presence of other industries nearby, such as forestry operations.
Presence of cultural heritage	Location and significance of areas of cultural heritage to individual sites and the hub. Includes identification of <i>Tabu</i> sites or areas important to the community and/or protected by relevant authorities, including shipwreck dive sites.
Potential for UXO	Level of risk of potential exposure to UXO.
Community cohesion	Any community conflict observed or described in communities near or on the individual site, including evidence of previous unrest, strength of governance, incidence of crime, and access to the justice system if crime is committed. This was not provided a risk rating for the purpose of this assessment, but any potential risks are flagged within the site assessment dashboard.
Indigenous people	A risk rating was not assigned for Indigenous people as the vast majority of people living on or near individual sites are indigenous to that area. If Indigenous people's presence was accounted for in the risk ratings, it is likely most sites would be considered high risk for development. Therefore, any potential sensitivities around Indigenous or people local to the area – including land claim disputes, community cohesion concerns or cultural heritage management – have been included in qualitative descriptions in the site profiles.
Presence of infrastructure	The distance between each site and the closest medical facility and transport hub (airport and ferry terminals) was individually assessed with data provided in each site profile. These distances were not factored into the quantitative risk assessments as most sites are generally located a long distance from facilities and transport hubs and serviced by limited infrastructure (water, power, sanitation or mobile phone connectivity). Overall presence of infrastructure is captured in the corridor-level assessment.
Natural hazard risks	Definition
Coastal vulnerability	Vulnerability to coastal inundation and erosion through low-lying terrain or exposure to storm surges.
Sea level rise	Site elevation and the capacity for shelter and to retreat in case of storm surges and sea level rises.

As well as defining risks at individual sites, the methodology includes a multi-criteria analysis, which incorporates each score from the quantitative data and applies weightings as shown in Table 10. The overall risk rating applied to each site provides an indicative measure, which needs to be supplemented with details provided within each site assessment dashboard to provide more information on where individual risks or 'red flags' apply at each site.

For example, a higher risk category for the entire site may be due to a particular risk associated with the likelihood of UXO or an important ecosystem in one area of the site, whilst the social aspects of the assessment may present as low risk. The overall combined rating is an indicator of issues that need careful consideration, but this information needs to be supplemented with more detailed data within each site assessment dashboard.

Table 10: Risk weighting

Risk theme	Overall importance weighting (percentage)	Key risks	Initial importance weighting for risk attribute (percentage)
Environmental risks	40	Terrestrial biodiversity	50
		Marine biodiversity	50
Social risks	40	Presence of people	30
		Presence of livelihoods	30
		Presence of cultural heritage	20
		Potential for UXO	20
Natural hazards	20	Coastal vulnerability	50
		Sea level rise	50

Tables 11 to 13 provide the full methodology for each site risk assessment undertaken in October 2023, including how each attribute was assessed and weighted.

Table 11: Risk assessment criteria and weighting – environment

Risk	Weighting (percent)	Measurement technique	Rating		
			Low (Score of 1–3)	Moderate (Score of 4–6)	High (Score of 7–10)
Environmental Risks					
Terrestrial biodiversity	50	• Site observations • IUCN/IBAT databases where relevant • Where available, information based on discussions with species experts, local biodiversity specialists, or communities.	• Highly disturbed /modified environment • Represents low ecological value • Examples include active coconut plantations, residential/or housing areas, agricultural land.	• Moderately disturbed environment • Examples include former or abandoned coconut plantations with heavy secondary growth forest or former logged areas with strong secondary growth present • Threatened species may be present • Within 10km of KBA.	• Relatively undisturbed environment, such as primary forest with relatively limited impact from human activities • Threatened species likely to be present.

Risk	Weighting (percent)	Measurement technique	Rating		
			Low (Score of 1–3)	Moderate (Score of 4–6)	High (Score of 7–10)
Marine biodiversity	50	- Site observations of reef directly adjacent to site - Presence of informal marine management areas, such as CBMA - Information based on discussions with communities and fisheries officers - IUCN/IBAT databases where relevant.	- Marine areas close to urban centers - Ecosystem health compromised through pollution and/or over-fishing - Shallow reef areas with no adjacent deep water - Visibly stressed marine environment - Low ecological diversity and health.	- Marine ecosystems relatively intact - Some evidence of human impact - Areas less than 5km from nearest village - Moderate extent of reef, mangroves or seagrass with visible indicators of stress or impact - Areas where adjacent land use (for example, logging) will likely impact marine ecosystem health.	- Extensive seagrass beds in good health - Well established and healthy mangrove areas - Healthy reef ecosystems with wide fish diversity (little impact from fishing) - Extensive reef systems with documented rich biodiversity - Threatened species likely to be present - Feeding areas for significant numbers of sea turtles - Sea turtle nesting areas - Sea bird roosting or nesting areas.

Table 12: Risk assessment criteria and weighting – social

Risk	Weighting (percent)	Measurement technique	Rating		
			Low (Score of 1–3)	Moderate (Score of 4–6)	High (Score of 7–10)
Social risks					
Presence of people	30	• Presence of people provides information on the presence of housing and structures, and potential for resettlement • Site observations • Discussions with communities • Aerial photos.	• No known communities, families or individuals occupying or using the site for living purposes (excluding caretakers) • Nearest community is more than 10km from the site.	• Up to 10 houses, buildings or shelters in one discrete area of the site • Moderate size permanent population (less than 50 people) • Nearest community is more than 5km from the site.	• More than 10 houses or buildings or shelters scattered throughout the site • Large permanent population (more than 50 people) • Nearest community is within 5km of the site.
Presence of livelihoods	30	• Presence of gardens or crops on-site • Presence of fishing or livelihood activities based on marine or terrestrial resources • Site observations and review of aerial photos for used or unused gardens/crops • Estimate area based on aerial and Land Use Pac Geo layer.	• No presence of resources or activities used as a source of income of livelihoods on-site or nearby reefs • No formal boat landing or storage located on-site.	• Abandoned cropping, plantation or gardening land, or less than 30 percent of site occupied by crops or gardens • Small reef located nearby used for subsistence or artisanal fishing • Area used for collection of one resource (firewood or shells, for example) • Boat landing may be present, but not regularly utilized	• Crops/gardens occupying 30 percent of site or more • Large or multiple reefs located adjacent to site used for commercial, subsistence and artisanal fishing • Area used extensively for collection of multiple resources • Large or frequently used boat landing.

Social risks				
Presence of cultural heritage	20	- Data from site visits documenting areas of site used for family graves, WWII relic or battle sites, cultural sites <i>Tabu</i> or <i>Kastom</i> sites or animist sites considered important by local community - Includes traditional resource collection areas.	No historical or cultural sites confirmed	- One site identified of unknown, low or moderate significance to community. - More than one site identified of unknown, low or moderate significance to community or one site of high significance to community.
Potential for UXO	20	- UXO likelihood of presence based on WWII battle histories, and studies undertaken to assess UXO risk - Data from police unit documenting and responding to UXO discoveries.	- No records of UXO located in the area - No recorded conflict within the immediate vicinity of the site.	- No records of UXO identified, but the site is within 10km of known battlefields, occupied sites, training areas, or sunken warships where there is a moderate possibility that UXO may be encountered. - Confirmed UXO discoveries in vicinity of the site - Historical documentation of battles in WWII includes multiple bombings and heavy fighting - An area is also considered high risk if it was an occupied site subject to intense conflict and multiple air raids or is recorded as an area with ammunition dumps.

Table 13: Risk assessment criteria and weighting – natural hazards

Risk	Weighting (percent)	Measurement technique	Rating		
			Low (Score of 1–3)	Moderate (Score of 4–6)	High (Score of 7–10)
Natural Hazards Risks					
Coastal vulnerability	50	• Site observations • Evidence at site observations of erosion • Percentage of site within 50m of shallow to medium depth reef • IUCN/IBAT Reef Mapping • Aerial photos.	• Sheltered locations, within lagoon or island group. Unlikely to be affected by storm surges • No evidence of erosion • 60 percent or more of site perimeter surrounded by shallow or medium depth reef.	• Somewhat sheltered from storm surges. Exposed location within lagoon environment • No evidence of erosion • 30–60 percent of site perimeter surrounded by shallow or medium depth reef.	• Reef fringe islands, exposed to weather events, low elevation above sea level • Evidence of erosion • Less than 30 percent of site perimeter surrounded by shallow or medium depth reef.
Sea level rise	50	• Semi-quantitative: Percentage of site more than 1m above sea level based upon site observations and aerial photos.	• 70 percent or more of site area more than 1m above sea level.	• 30–70 percent of site area more than 1m above sea level.	• 30–70 percent of site area less than 1m above sea level.



Solomon Islands. ©Tourism Solomons

2.2 ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The ALTIF team provided the locations of 31 shortlisted sites for field assessments, along with relevant local contact information where available. Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) reports were used where available.

It was assumed that not all E&S data for site assessments would be readily available. Where there were gaps in secondary data, the study team attempted to attain relevant primary data on-site. However, there may be remaining information gaps for attributes. Maps were only developed for attributes where there was a sound confidence level in the data. Any gaps have been made clear in the reporting.

This report is based on research conducted at a landscape-level. Detailed site-based ESIs will need to be conducted by developers to identify project E&S impacts, risks and develop related mitigation and management measures as per national requirements and as defined in IFC PS 1 and related Guidance Note 1 to meet international standards. Other risk assessments will be required prior to any site development.

Primary data was collected at a landscape level and was qualitative. Detailed quantitative E&S data was not collected on-site. Primary data collection occurred in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces during September and October of 2023. It is, therefore, representative of conditions of each site at this time.

Risk mapping is indicative only and based upon available data at the time of assessment. Conditions are likely to change over time. Opinions and perceptions of stakeholders from each community were dependent on who was available for consultation at the time of field work.

3. Environmental and social baseline

3.1 SOLOMON ISLANDS

3.1.1 Policies and legislation

There are several laws and regulations in Solomon Islands relevant to the tourism industry, from land tenure through to labor laws and legislative instruments for biodiversity protection. Government policies and strategies provide a framework to understand investment priorities, addressing constraints and highlighting opportunities. Tourism strategies are presented in Section 3.1.3, with additional relevant documents such as the National Infrastructure Investment Plan summarized in Appendix B. Relevant international conventions and treaties signed or ratified by the SIG are also presented in Appendix B, as they outline commitments to be enacted at a national level.

3.1.2 Government agencies relevant to tourism

Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey: Responsible for land administration in Solomon Islands. Its duties include registration of land, collection of land rents, recordkeeping of land records/documentation, and compliance with statutory requirements for land surveys and valuations.

Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs: Responsible for the administration of justice and legal affairs. Its duties include overseeing the review and updating of laws, and formation of legal policy to meet the needs of citizens. The Registrar of Titles sit under this ministry.

Ministry of Culture and Tourism: Responsible for development and implementation of tourism policies and programs. The ministry's functions include tourism policy, legislation and regulations, tourism education and training, tourism projects, product development, planning, research and development, and provincial tourism coordination and development.

Tourism Solomons (formerly Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau): Under the MCT, Tourism Solomons functions as the marketing office for tourism in the country.

Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources: Responsible for fisheries management and the development and implementation of policies in accordance with the Fisheries Management Act, 2015. The ministry also administers community-based marine protected areas and supports management plans.

Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology:

Responsible for sustainable environmental management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk management and meteorological services for Solomon Islands. This ministry is responsible for the following environmental laws: *Environment Act 1998, Wildlife Protection and Management Act 1998, Environmental Regulations 2008, Wildlife Protection and Management Regulations 2008, Protected Areas Act 2010 and Protected Areas Regulations 2012.*

Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration:

Responsible for development and implementation of economic and industrial development strategies for Solomon Islands and the oversight of labor and immigration. InvestSolomons (previously the Foreign Investment Division) facilitates and monitors investments in the country, developing procedures and actions to improve trade, and evaluating applications for investment.

Labor compliance

The SIG has labor policies and legislation, such as the *Safety at Work Act 1982 and Labour Act 1996*, to protect employee or worker rights. The Office of the Commissioner of Labour is the main agency responsible for managing and implementing labor laws, including provisions for casual employees or daily wage earners, foreign workers, the minimum wage, working hours, employment of women and child labor restrictions.

While the intent is to protect the health and safety of women, the *Labour Act 1996* has various provisions which restrict women's rights. These provisions include prohibiting women from night work, except under specified circumstances (including work in hotels, restaurants and bars, nursing, health or other welfare work, or as registered pharmacists).

With the provision of 22 weeks' maternity leave, women must take leave for at least six weeks, or they will be in breach of their original contract.

However, several gaps are apparent when it comes to equal opportunity relevant to the tourism sector, including:

- Provisions for equal pay for equal work for women and people with disabilities.
- The need for strengthened legal definitions of sexual harassment, violence, and more effective grievance mechanisms.
- With the safety of women in public at night is an issue of concern, addressing risks associated with women travelling to and from work for hospitality shifts at night requires attention.
- Solomon Islands is currently working on developing a National Employment Policy to act as an overarching policy document for labor administration in the country. Two further policies are currently awaiting Cabinet approval for implementation: the Occupational Safety and Health Policy, and the Apprenticeship Policy (ILO, 2024).

Ministry of Health and Medical Services: Responsible for following environmental health laws relevant to sanitation, food safety and disease control, including the *Environmental Health Act (updated 1996)* and *Environmental Health (Public Health Act) Regulations 1980*.

Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening: Responsible for the administration of Solomon Islands' nine provincial governments. Under the *Provincial Government Act 1997*, the ministry defines its core functions, programs and priorities through its planning processes and then devolves these functions to provincial governments to enable them to deliver services at provincial and community levels. With tourism often closely linked to site or regional features, provincial governments play a key role in developing tourism opportunities and facilitating appropriate local activities to support tourism.

Biosecurity Solomon Islands: Manages compliance with principles and systems developed by the International Plant Protection Convention and the World Organization for Animal Health. SIG is a signatory to the World Trade Organization and strongly supports international cooperation in controlling pests of plants and plant products and of animals and animal products through science-based quarantine measures.

It is important that requirements are clearly communicated to tourists, and effective border control measures are in place, to protect local plants and animals.

Royal Solomon Islands Police Force: Has certain powers for enforcement of general crime and environmental offences. Safe and secure communities and towns are a fundamental requirement to underpin tourism. The police has an Explosive Ordnance Division responsible for call-outs and clearance work in response to reported discoveries of UXO and works closely with the Halo Trust to map UXO risk and prioritize ongoing clearance work.

The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and ministry officers are given certain powers to enforce environmental laws and ensure compliance with regulations against the following offences (Moore K., 2015), the following of which are relevant to environmental enforcement that potentially impacts tourism:

- Logging and mining operations without an EIA and/or a development consent.
- Felling and milling trees without the necessary license, or not in accordance with a license or permit.
- Fishing without a license, exceeding the limit on the number of fish, catching fish that are too small, or using illegal fishing methods.
- Coral or sand harvesting without approvals or the appropriate effects assessment.
- Certain activities, such as logging, mining or taking species from a protected area.
- Importing or exporting prohibited or restricted plants and animals without necessary permissions.
- Polluting water or air in breach of regulations.

Guadalcanal and Central Provincial Governments: Under the *Provincial Government Act*, Solomon Islands is divided into provinces wherein provincial governments, composed of an assembly and executive, have legislative and executive functions. Guadalcanal and Central Provincial Governments are the provincial governing bodies within the study corridor, tasked with planning, management, and implementation of tourism development plans.

3.1.3 Tourism development strategies

Relevant tourism development strategies have been summarized in Table 14.

Table 14: Relevant tourism development strategies

Strategy name	Summary
Solomon Islands Tourism Recovery Plan (2021–2030)	In 2021, the recovery plan was developed by the SIG, MCT in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan outlines two main objectives: • By 2023, return the industry back to its 2019 number of visitor arrivals. SINSO released data showing there were 26,036 international visitor arrivals through Honiara Airport between January and December 2023. This fell short of the target of 29,000 recorded in 2019 but signifies improvements since the border reopened in July 2022 (PATA, 2024). • Grow the industry with a target of 100,000 arrivals per annum by 2035.
Tourism Solomons Strategic Plan (2021–2023)	This is an internal document that provides guidance for stakeholders in the tourism sector to guide the industry's growth and development to a shared vision and objectives. The plan outlines strategies to reinvigorate the tourism industry under COVID-19 as a 'new normal'. Its target of 100,000 visitor arrivals by 2035 is to be achieved through an increased focus on digital marketing, facilitation of domestic tourism, additional revenue streams for Tourism Solomons, and improved health and hygiene standards for tourism operators through the government's COVID-19 'Extra Care' program.
MCT Corporate Plan (2021–2024)	The MCT Corporate Plan 2021–2024 outlines directions to deliver a sustainable tourism agenda that protects the diverse culture and traditions of Solomon Islands people. The plan is focused on service delivery with the following objectives: • Ensure an even process in the monitoring and evaluation of its programs and activities. • Enable clear reporting on these programs and activities. • Provide more pertinent information on government resources allocated to these programs and activities. • Allow for proper coordination and direction towards achieving its aspired targets and outcomes.
Solomon Islands National Tourism Development Strategy (SINTDS) 2015–2019	The SINTDS was a strategy to develop the tourism industry focused on five interrelated focal areas: marketing and research, transport and infrastructure, cruise shipping and yachting, human resource development, and product development and investment. To drive development in the five areas, SINTDS assigned government agencies with key actions, indicative budgets and timelines. Key actions and strategies include: • Provision of tax and/or tourism investment incentives. • Development of minimum standards, grading and accreditation for tourist activities and business establishments (e.g. hotels, lodgings). • Development of integrated tourism trails in Western Province and Guadalcanal/Central Provinces. • Development of a marketing program. • Design and/or adopt stringent anti-corruption policies and practices to improve the business enabling environment. • Upgrade and/or redevelop existing airport and port structures. • Provision of capacity building and/or training in hospitality and tourism. • Expansion of cruise shipping and yachting.

3.1.4 Permits and oversight of tourism businesses

Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) process

A development consent process to establish a tourism business covers the following aspects:

- Environmental permitting.
- Business licensing.
- Foreign investor permitting.

Of most relevance to this study is the environmental permitting process. A key safeguard measure in Solomon Islands is that development of a tourism project requires an EIA.¹⁰ The MECDM can issue an approval with or without conditions, seek further information, or deny the approval of the development if its impacts are viewed as too significant and irreversible. Under the *Environment Act 1998*, it is illegal to proceed with a prescribed development without this assessment process (tourism is listed as a prescribed industry under the Act).

The Environment and Conservation Division (ECD), under MECDM, has developed EIA guidelines (2010). The guidelines prescribe four principles or purposes for conducting an EIA:

- Identify and describe the likely environmental, social, and cultural impacts of a proposed development.
- Identify and evaluate alternatives to the proposed development.
- Identify and describe measures to mitigate the adverse impacts of the proposed development.
- Provide information to decision-makers and the public about the proposed development and its potential impacts.

The EIA must describe the environment (including cultural aspects), likely environmental impacts (including cultural/social impacts), and the need for the project (environmental, social, cultural, and economic). It must also consider alternatives (and alternate sites) to demonstrate a E&S basis for decision-making. A development proposal should include a map to indicate the geographic location of the site, elevation and slope, any nearby areas of environmental significance such as proposed or declared reserves, protected areas, World Heritage Sites, watercourses, wetlands, and adjacent land uses, including the nearest villages / communities.

The Foreign Investment Bureau, on behalf of the Attorney-General of the SIG, is charged with ensuring EIAs are carried out to an appropriate national standard. Otherwise, the SIG has little subsequent recourse to force a business to implement mitigation measures in case of environmental degradation.

Other relevant approvals

At the provincial level, development of tourism businesses, establishments or activities must be approved by the Guadalcanal or Central Provincial Government. Investors should allocate sufficient time and resources for the required processes or permits.

A business license is required prior to commencing any business operations. In Guadalcanal and Central Provinces, any infrastructure to be constructed must also obtain a building permit, which includes an engineering review of construction plans and building inspections. This incorporates environmental aspects, such as sanitation and water management.

Construction permit processes have been investigated by the World Bank (2020). The findings revealed that it takes a local business an average of 99 days per project to obtain a building permit, and costs on average 20 percent of the value of the project. The study also reported that required MECDM inspections may not necessarily be conducted due to the remoteness of areas and limited resources.

Implementation oversight

Government organizations have limited E&S capacity and resources to enforce the *Environment Act* and provincial laws. This includes limited capacity to monitor developments in accordance with consents to check developers adhere to commitments within the EIA, with limited systems to record non-compliance and follow-up actions. Insufficient staff and operational resources, along with poor accessibility to some islands and remote sites, hampers MECDM's ability to send government employees to ensure development projects comply with E&S safeguards, policies, and legislation (Chêne, 2017).

Minimum standards for tourism accommodation

The MCT in 2018, through a Minimum Standards Working Committee, prepared the minimum standards and classification for tourism accommodation. The over-arching

¹⁰ An Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) is recognized as international best practice for development projects, however, national regulations for Solomon Islands refer to EIA instead. Despite referring to EIA in the context of these regulations, otherwise refer to ESIA throughout other sections of this report.

aim was to implement quality control standards to improve accommodation facilities to boost tourism. Minimum standards were set across eight types of accommodation facilities, with all tourism accommodation assessed by MCT officers and provided with ways to improve their offerings to visitors. It is mandatory that all new businesses comply with the minimum standard requirements. Business licenses are linked to the assessment under the standards, with a minimum standards certificate valid for two years.

Code of practice for tourism sector

This is a guiding set of principles for tourism operators to improve the quality and consistency of tourism products and services. The code covers standards in safety, sustainability, ethics, and professionalism.

Further planned initiatives to improve tourism standards

Once the minimum standards are deemed to be consistently applied across the sector, the MCT plan to implement an accreditation system, followed by a ranking (star rating) system to provide accurate information for tourists to differentiate the level of quality and service on offer.

Regional destination and industry standards

The Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard – was developed by the Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) to provide direction and guidance to member countries to implement national sustainability standards, support tourism sector to become more sustainable through public-private sector partnerships and action, and to raise awareness and encourage visitors to travel responsibly.

The criteria and indicators within the standard intend to serve as tools for Pacific countries and the tourism industry to strengthen sustainable practices. The standards outline the minimum that destination management organizations and tourism businesses should aspire to achieve, and is relevant to governments, tourism organizations and businesses, communities, and funding partners.

The standards are supported by guidance notes for each criterion, detailing how these can be achieved and the associated tools and educational materials available through the SPTO. The Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard is derived from the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) criteria, which are viewed as global best practice for sustainable tourism standards.

3.1.5 Governance

Solomon Islands is a parliamentary democracy and part of the British Commonwealth, with the Head of State as the British monarch represented by the governor-general and the Head of Government as the Prime Minister. Solomon Islands is a unitary State with a national level and provincial level of government, established under the *Provincial Government Act 1981* and amended in 1997 (Ministry of Provincial Government, 2018).

In Solomon Islands, general elections are a formal democratic process through which registered voters choose representatives for the country's national legislature, the National Parliament of Solomon Islands (Solomon Islands Electoral Commission, 2017). The governor-general is responsible for scheduling general elections.

While Solomon Islands has organized government structures, legislations and law enforcement, customary ways of life continue to play a significant role in various sectors in the country, particularly in terms of land tenure, ownership and utilization of land and natural resources.

According to the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International, Solomon Islands ranked the 70 least corrupt nation out of 180 countries. The Corruption Rank in Solomon Islands averaged 89.46 from 2007 until 2023, reaching an all-time high of 120 in 2011 and a record low of 70 in 2018 (Trading Economics, 2024).

Corruption in Solomon Islands is a complex issue, and efforts to combat are ongoing. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been actively highlighting the need for engagement, integrity, sound journalism and collective action through the Transparency and Accountability for People of Solomon Islands project (UNDP, 2019). There have also been legislative measures, with the *Anti-Corruption and Whistleblowers Bills* an indication of government efforts to combat corruption. However, constraints in law enforcement, weak governance in the resource sectors, and resource limitations on environmental oversight all contribute to these challenges.

3.1.6 Land administration and ownership

For this study, all sites visited are registered land parcels.

The *Land and Titles Act 2016* governs land ownership in Solomon Islands, including customary land. The Act regulates how land is owned, managed, bought, and leased in the country. It also explains who owns the natural resources on the land, which are usually the customary landowners, with some exceptions such as water from rivers. Land types in Solomon Islands is either customary (85 percent) or registered (15 percent) (IFC, 2021a). The Constitution of Solomon Islands respects the rights of people who own land by custom (SIG, 2017).

Under Part V, Division 2 of the *Land and Titles Act 2016*, the Minister of Lands can take over any land that is either customary or registered, if it is needed for any public purpose. The Constitution, Section 8(1) shows when compulsory acquisition can happen:

- The takeover is “necessary or expedient in the interests of defense, public safety, public order, public morality, public health, town or country planning or the development or utilization of any property in such a manner as to promote the public benefit”.
- There is a fair reason or justification for causing the interest holders to suffer any hardship.
- The acquisition is completed under a law that gives reasonable compensation (either as a single payment or in parts, and either as cash or other form) within a reasonable time.
- The acquisition is completed under a law that allows interest holders to appeal to the High Court regarding ownership, the lawfulness of the takeover, or the compensation they received.

Customary land

Customary land refers to land that a person or community uses or lives on, based on their traditional practices. This includes land covered by water and anything that grows on the land, as well as buildings and structures attached to the land. The *Customary Land Records Act* allows tribes, communities, or families to apply for customary land or rights to be documented. The government plays a role in demarcating the boundaries of the customary land, which is treated differently from registered land in any lease or sale arrangements. The government considers how many people live on or use the natural resources of customary land. To record land as ‘customary’, the government publishes

the customary land record in a public notice, so that other people or groups with rights to the land or natural resources can inform if they have any conflicting claims (Foukona, 2007). Although there are legal mechanisms to regulate customary governance and land ownership, communities and/or tribes in Solomon Islands perceive land as communally owned by tribes (Ogle, Solomon Islands: Legal Framework for REDD+, 2014).

Under the country's policies and/or laws, tribes and/or families can record their primary rights and/or ownership of a parcel of land under the *Customary Land Records Act*. Other tribes and/or families can use the land and marine resources in that area with permission of the primary owner. Customary institutions should oversee transactions or resolve disputes over tribal land before escalation to the State legal system (Solomon Islands Law Reform Commission, 2012). However, tribes and/or families still face challenges in recording or registering their land, even with the legal mechanisms in place. Corrin (2011) lists the following challenges that tribes and/or families encounter in registering customary land:

- Overlapping land ownerships or boundaries and a lack of consensus can create a lengthy and challenging land registration process because of conflicting claims on land and resources (for example, marine and forest resources).
- No connection or link between a group's customary laws and the legal systems of Solomon Islands.
- Formal registration based on ‘ownership’ of specific resources (for example, customary rights on timber, water, minerals) may make tribes and/or families lose rights or benefits on other resources. It is challenging to not only identify the right landowner/s, but also to ensure benefits from land lease or acquisition are shared equitably.
- Poor dispute resolution process where tribes and/or families are asked to solve overlapping claims through traditional methods. Customary landowners and/or tribes can get legal advice on lease or acquisition from outside of government agencies, but may not have the financial resources and/or information to access qualified professional advice.

Voluntary registration of customary land is under Division 1, Part V of the *Land and Titles Act*, which states that:

“Customary land may be sold or leased to the Commissioner or any Provincial Assembly in accordance with the provisions of this Division (...) and the lease of that land from the registered owners”.

The Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs maintains a land register which is not public. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the percentage of customary land which has been registered.

Registered land

Under the *Land and Titles Act*, customary land can be converted to registered land, which can then be transferred and leased. There are two types of registered land parcels: perpetual estate and fixed-term estate.

A perpetual estate is like a freehold estate that grants the owner the permanent right to use and live on the land subject to any conditions of the Land and Titles Act. The Solomon Islands Constitution says that only a Solomon Islander or someone whom Parliament allows, such as the Commissioner of Lands, has the right to hold or acquire a perpetual estate.

A fixed-term estate is granted on a registered perpetual estate, allowing the owner to use and live on the land and have rights to its produce for a set amount of time, subject to payment of rent and compliance with any responsibilities and limitations. Lease estates in land, such as long-term leases, can also be granted.

Land administration

The MLHS facilitates and oversees the lease, sale and change of ownership of customary and registered land through the *Customary Land Records Act 1994* and the *Land and Titles Act 2016*. After reaching agreement with landowners for lease of land, investors are required to submit forms to the ministry, detailing provisions such as the area of land, names of landowners or council. For the lease of customary land further details are required, such as rental amount, payment plans, and duration of the lease.

The MLHS, as well as provincial governments, maintain records of titles to customary and registered lands. The laws governing compulsory land acquisition and compensation procedures are covered in Part V, Division 2 of the *Land and Titles Act*. The Commissioner of Lands largely determines the compensation, but landowners can challenge the amount in court (Ministry of Mines, Energy and Electrification, 2017). A group of people claiming rights or interests in land under the Act have entitlements based on how the land or natural resources are currently used under customary practice. In addition, compensation shall be payable to the group and for the benefit of all.

Any land, registered or customary, may be acquired under compulsory purchase if it is needed for public purposes. It needs to be noted that this does not provide power to acquire land for a private tourism development, as the powers only apply to public infrastructure.

To carry out public development projects, the MLHS must demarcate the required land and identify landowners, holders of customary rights, and other interested parties. To provide holders of customary rights with the opportunity to register their interest or file an appeal with the High Court on the effects of the proposed land acquisition, the notice of compulsory land acquisition must be published in the government gazette.

In determining compensation for registered land, the High Court will decide it based on the land's condition as well as other factors relevant to the registered land's decreased worth to the occupier. In the case of customary land, the Commissioner of Land must first offer to transfer or grant an estate in land to the person or group of people who are entitled to compensation for the land acquisition, rather than directly paying them any compensation they may be claiming. Within three months, the land's customary rights holders (people that constitute the majority of the group) may accept, reject, or contest the offer. A magistrate's court will decide any disagreement over whether any individuals, as group members, make up a majority of the group, unless the parties agree differently.

As previously stated, Solomon Islands face several challenges pertaining to land tenure, administration and ownership.

Under the Solomon Islands Constitution, the following procedures are required for government-led land acquisitions for development purposes:

- Prior negotiations with the landowners.
- Owners have the right to access independent legal advice.
- As far as practicable, the interest acquired shall be limited to fixed-term interest.

The Solomon Islands Constitution states that customary land ownership should take precedence over commercial-related transactions. However, if the government leads the development project, there is no clear national legislation or strategy regarding involuntary displacement or resettlement.

Furthermore, according to Corrin (2011), the SIG lacks the resources necessary to effectively register customary land and handle disputes. This makes it difficult to undertake the steps outlined in the Constitution.

The Land Reform Unit of the MLHS is responsible for improving recording and registration of customary land in Solomon Islands.

3.1.7 Indigenous peoples, *Kastom* culture and leadership

There is no internationally accepted definition of “Indigenous peoples.” In IFC PS7, the term Indigenous peoples is used in a generic sense to refer to a distinct social and cultural group possessing the following characteristics in varying degrees: (i) self-identification as members of a distinct Indigenous cultural group and recognition of this identity by others, (ii) collective attachment to geographically distinct habitats or ancestral territories in the project area and to the natural resources in these habitats and territories, (iii) customary cultural, economic, social, or political institutions that are separate from those of mainstream society or culture or (iv) a distinct language or dialect, often different from the official language or that of the country or region in which they reside. Indigenous peoples are often closely tied to their lands and related natural resources. Frequently, these lands are traditionally owned or under customary use. While Indigenous peoples may not possess legal title to these lands as defined by national law, their use of these lands – including seasonal or cyclical use, for their livelihoods or cultural, ceremonial, and spiritual purposes that define their identity and community – can often be substantiated and documented. There is a certain level of vulnerability linked with Indigenous peoples, including social groups with identities distinct from mainstream groups in national societies, and who are often among the most marginalized and vulnerable segments of the population. In many cases, their economic, social and legal status limits their capacity to defend their rights to, and interests in, lands as well as natural and cultural resources. This may restrict their ability to participate in and benefit from development.

In Solomon Islands, more than 95 percent of the population is made up of Indigenous peoples (Minority Rights Group, 2018). Ethnic groups in Solomon Islands include Melanesian (95.3 percent), Polynesian (3.1 percent), Micronesian (1.2 percent), other (0.3 percent), while languages include Melanesian pidgin (lingua franca in much of the country), English (official, but spoken by only 1–2 percent of the population) and 120 indigenous languages (CIA World Factbook, 2024).

Indigenous cultural practices remain the dominant way of life in Solomon Islands, particularly in rural areas. These cultural and traditional practices constantly interact with introduced ways of life, particularly modern institutions introduced through post-European contact. Protection of culture is a central principle of Solomon Islands legislation, particularly around land and natural resources.

As the dominant culture in Solomon Islands, Indigenous peoples do not face the same risk of marginalization and economic and social disparities as migrant communities who often face greater hardship due to lack of access to land and natural resources, and social exclusion. Tensions often emerge between migrants to an area and local residents.

When referencing Indigenous peoples throughout this report, this term refers to people who have deep, historical ties to the land and exercise customary rights.

In Solomon Islands, the *Wantok* system is perceived as a way of helping family, relatives, and neighbors during times of need. This ranges from helping to pay school fees to acts that border on corruption, such as offering a job or contract to a particular person because they are a *Wantok* rather than the most qualified applicant.

The *Wantok* system has traditionally had many benefits such as support for the less fortunate and promotion of community collaboration. However, the system can be misused for personal gains (Leua Nanau, 2011) and impede development and progress with revenue going to help *Wantoks* rather than further development (Iyabora, 2016). A further disadvantage is the *Wantok* system relies on family support networks rather than a social safety net. Without broader social responsibility, this can reduce opportunities for people living with disabilities if their needs are not prioritized and advocated for by their family or *Wantok*.

Solomon Islands culture does not have a universal identifiable traditional leadership system. Two common leadership systems involve 'Big Men' and chiefs (Sahlins, 1963), with some villages being patrilineal and others matrilineal. There are numerous 'Big Men' and chiefs who rule over limited geographical enclaves with relatively small populations.

The position of 'Big Man' is not hereditary but is acquired through personal efforts. One aspires to be a 'Big Man' by accumulating wealth and distributing it, not only among one's immediate group but to others outside the clan, creating a network of allegiances and obligations that extend far beyond the village or even the island.

In chiefly societies, chiefs are powerful in influencing public opinion in their communities. They may have an influence on which candidate people should vote for in elections and decide what their opinions should be on issues of national concern (Moore C., 2005).

In contemporary times, land use access and exclusion can be dictated by male leaders, who validate their own claims to the exclusion of the broader landowning group, particularly women and young people (Hall, Hirsch, & Li, 2011). However, this depends on the region and whether the system is traditionally matrilineal or patrilineal, with Guadalcanal and Central Provinces primarily dominated by matrilineal inheritance systems (Corrin, J and Baines, G, 2020).

During consultations, it was indicated that for Solomon Islanders, the term 'indigenous' relates to family groups, ties or connections to specific islands or areas. Those not considered indigenous to an area are often described as 'settler' communities, as they may have moved from other parts of Solomon Islands or countries, particularly Pacific Island ones. In some cases, these communities have settled over several generations. Tensions between Indigenous and settler communities were identified in several site level assessments. Consultations also highlighted the need for site-specific consultations early in any proposed development. It is critical to speak to the correct people, recognizing both patrilineal and matrilineal systems, and existing local *Kastom*. The practice of indigenous terrain mapping can de-risk complex land situations and build effective foundations for the development of sustainable projects in Solomon Islands.

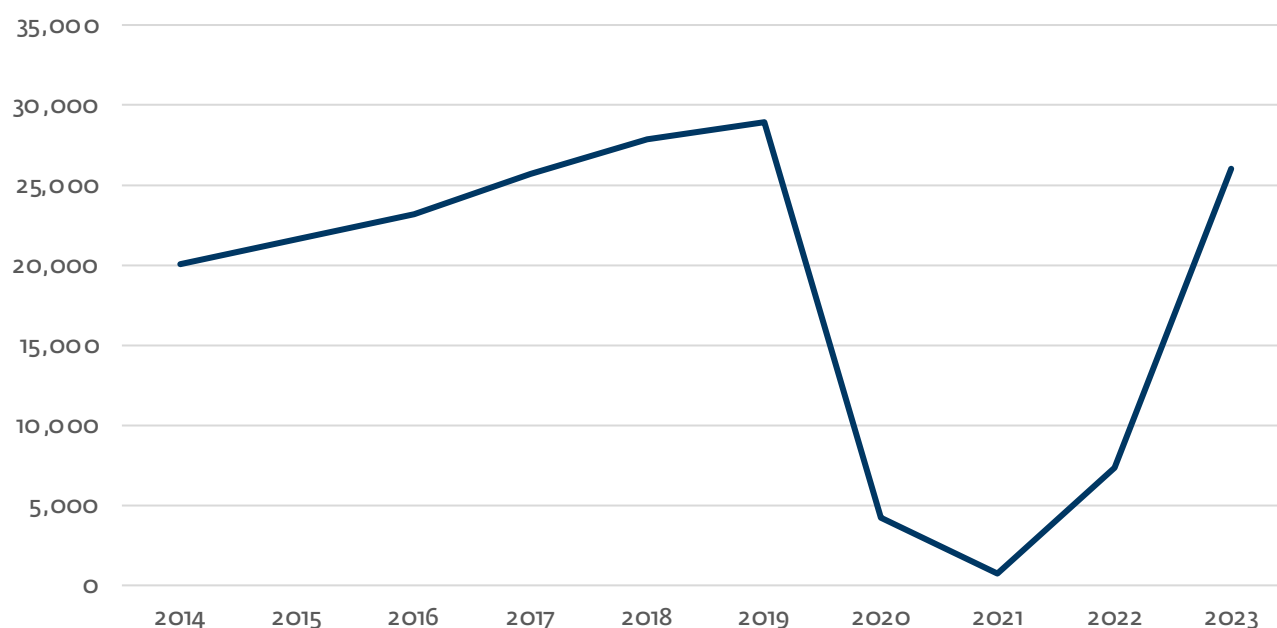
This tool has been utilized successfully by the Indigenous Knowledge Institute in Solomon Islands, that used this process for the Western Province once selected tourism sites had been shortlisted, to provide advice on customary land tenure and cultural sensitivities. Other examples of a similar process, but using the term 'indigenous cultural mapping', can be found in Australia through companies such as Winyama, that undertake land management and cultural mapping projects to document cultural resources, place names, traditions, and grounding of people's identities and relationships to the country. This resource can underpin knowledge sharing and a deeper respect for indigenous connections to place (Holcombe, S, 2023).

The indigenous terrain mapping process works to identify leaders and share indigenous knowledge from the outset. Discussions include benefit sharing, local development, and co-governance arrangements to underpin development (Indigenous Terrain Mapping, 2024). Even though all identified sites in this study are on fixed-term or perpetual lease titles (registered land), consultations revealed mixed perceptions in several cases, highlighting the need for meaningful engagement to reach agreement with local Indigenous communities from the outset.

3.1.8 Tourism

In 2019, some 28,900 visitors entered Solomon Islands. This number decreased in the following years due to the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 when the borders closed. Borders re-opened on July 1, 2022 when visitors began to return to the country. In 2023, the total number of recorded tourists was 26,036 (Tourism Solomons, 2023) Figure 4 provides an overview of total visitor arrivals, sourced from Tourism Solomons unpublished data. There is a clear trend from 2014–2019 of increasing visitor numbers, and strong arrival numbers after the borders reopened.

Figure 4: Solomon Islands visitor arrival trends before, during and after border closure



The most recently published visitor data is the Solomon Islands International Visitor Survey (July to December 2022). Undertaken to understand visitor profiles and spending since the border reopened, with 324 visitors participating, the observations included:

More than half (56 percent) of participants visited Guadalcanal Province, while 11 percent toured Central Province.

- The largest proportions of visitors travelled to Solomon Islands for business (51 percent), holidays (19 percent) and visiting friends and family (20 percent). A further 10 percent were visiting for 'other' reasons.
- The age of visitors is spread relatively evenly, with those aged 30–39 years comprising 20 percent, 40–49 years (20 percent) and 50–59 years (23 percent).
- The largest proportion of visitors came from Australia (42 percent), with 27 percent from other Pacific countries.
- The average length of stay in Guadalcanal Province was 7.6 nights and 3.4 nights in Central Province.
- The average spend per person was US\$1,079.

- Looking only at tourist visits, 88 percent visited a beach, along with snorkelling (77 percent), swimming (76 percent), diving (71 percent), fishing (43 percent), and dolphin-watching (39 percent). Common activities were paddle boarding (38 percent), kayaking (38 percent), sailing (32 percent), surfing (17 percent) and water skiing (11 percent). Common activities linked to culture and environmental values were hiking and trekking (24 percent), cultural tours (21 percent), bird watching (12 percent) and conservation-animal sanctuary activities (12 percent).
- Nature-based tourism has significant potential in Solomon Islands, with an estimated annual socio-economic benefit and environmental value placed between US\$147 million and US\$189 million by 2035 (Coral Triangle Sustainable Nature-based Tourism Project, 2016).

At its peak in 2019, the tourism industry contributed US\$91.4 million to the economy, 10.5 percent of Gross National Product. There has been a steady increase in tourists visiting Solomon Islands since 2015 (up 8 percent), however, this trend was interrupted by the pandemic-triggered border closures (IFC, 2021b).

From March 2021, Solomon Airlines partnered with the MCT to deliver Solomon Islands' largest domestic tourism initiative to help reduce barriers for domestic travel. This increase in domestic tourism was noted during stakeholder consultations, where tourism operators identified the change from an international to domestic customer base. At the end of 2023, international tourism numbers across the globe had returned to 88 percent of pre-pandemic levels, with the United Nations World Tourism Organization predicting strong growth and a full recovery by the end of 2024 (UN Tourism, 2024). This underlines the high growth potential of tourism in Solomon Islands.

3.2 STUDY CORRIDOR

3.2.1 Overview

The study corridor refers to the combined land and marine areas covered in this report. The corridor is spread over five hubs that contain the 31 identified sites. The corridor baseline analysis presents the current conditions in the broader study area. When considering risks in tourism investment, it is important to understand conditions not just on the potential site, but within the surrounding area.

This section provides an overview of the E&S and natural hazard baseline conditions for the study corridor covering the focal areas in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces.

Guadalcanal Province is the largest island in Solomon Islands (5,302km²) and has the second highest population after Malaita Province. The capital city of Honiara is in Guadalcanal Province, but outside of the study corridor.

Central Province covers 615km² and encompasses Russell Islands, Nggela Islands and Savo Island. The administrative capital of Central Province is Tulagi, previously the capital city of Solomon Islands.

3.2.2 Tourism

There is a range of tourism facilities and experiences on offer within the study corridor as shown in Map 2. Whilst the identified hubs within the study corridor have significant potential, the industry is at an early development stage.

3.2.2.1 Guadalcanal Province

In 2019, nearly half (49 percent) of all tourists arriving in Solomon Islands visited Guadalcanal Province, and on average tourists spent 6.8 nights in Honiara, and 5.7 nights in the remainder of Guadalcanal Province (PSDI, 2021a). The tourism appeal of the province is its natural and cultural beauty and historical significance.

With Honiara based in Guadalcanal Island, there is an opportunity to enhance visitor attractions across the province, with key infrastructure such as the Honiara International Airport making this a logical stepping stone for broader tourism experiences.

There are several historic and cultural sites in West Guadalcanal Hub, particularly wartime relics from significant battles that took place during WWII. Trails and tour packages focused on WWII history could be developed to attract visitors and extend stays within the province. There is also the potential to develop a war museum as a means to build this market and offer other unique experiences to visitors.

Guadalcanal Province is known for world-class scuba diving, thanks to its clear water, rich and diverse marine life. Several dive sites are well-known along the western part of Guadalcanal, including famous WWII wreck-diving sites at Iron Bottom Sound and Bonegi Beach. In addition to scuba diving, a range of nature-based activities include trekking, surfing, birdwatching, and game fishing. To harness these natural attractions, investment in infrastructure such as walking trails and bird watching platforms would be of benefit. There is also the potential to implement annual events and competitions related to surfing or fishing to build these markets. Aside from infrastructure, tourism markets can be strengthened through training local guides, divers and fishing experts who can provide authentic experiences for guests. Marketing campaigns are also an important foundation to harness many of these untapped opportunities.

West Guadalcanal Hub also hosts numerous attractive beaches, with several communities gaining income from entrance fees and sales of refreshments. In 2023, the MCT conducted a survey of beach operations in West Guadalcanal. Twenty-one beach operators were identified, including six that also offered accommodation. From the survey it was estimated that income from these activities generates US\$1.03 million a year (SIG, 2023a). Efforts to improve tourism attractions and beaches in West Guadalcanal were supported by the MCT ahead of the South Pacific Games in 2023.

Within the West Guadalcanal Hub, there are approximately five small to medium accommodation businesses offering bungalow style accommodation with basic facilities at affordable rates. In East Guadalcanal Hub, also referred to as Marau Sound, scenic islands in sheltered turquoise waters, and beautiful coastal areas provide abundant recreational opportunities.

Marine environments include coral reefs, seagrass meadows, rich and diverse fish stocks. Populations of sea turtles provide a drawcard for scuba divers and potential for nature-based conservation tourism.

However, there are ongoing challenges, particularly access into East Guadalcanal. Flights were suspended at Marau Airport due to ongoing community dispute regarding land ownership. Prior to the suspension of flights to Marau Airport, Solomon Airlines reported that Marau Sound was one of the top three selling destinations in its 'Iumi Tugeda Holidays' domestic tourism program. In Marau Sound, Tavanipupu Resort, owned by Solomon Islands National Provident Fund, has a strong operational history as a world-class eco-lodge and diving resort. At the time of writing, Tavanipupu Resort was non-operational and in a state of some disrepair. Consultations with the resort indicated that it was planning to reopen in the near future.

Prior to the Tensions (2003–2008), there was an established eco-tourism market in Marau Sound through the Village Stay Network, attracting a few hundred international tourists per year through an Australian travel agent. At the time of writing, this network had not re-opened since its closure in the early 2000s (SPC, 2016). There are approximately eight budget accommodation facilities in the area in addition to Tavanipupu Resort.

3.2.2.2 *Central Province*

In 2019, one-fifth (21 percent) of tourists arriving in Solomon Islands visited Central Province (PSDI, 2021a). Key Central Province attractions include visiting historical sites, snorkelling, and scuba diving. The province is easily accessible from Honiara via a one to two-hour boat trip, making it an ideal short stay destination for visitors from Honiara.

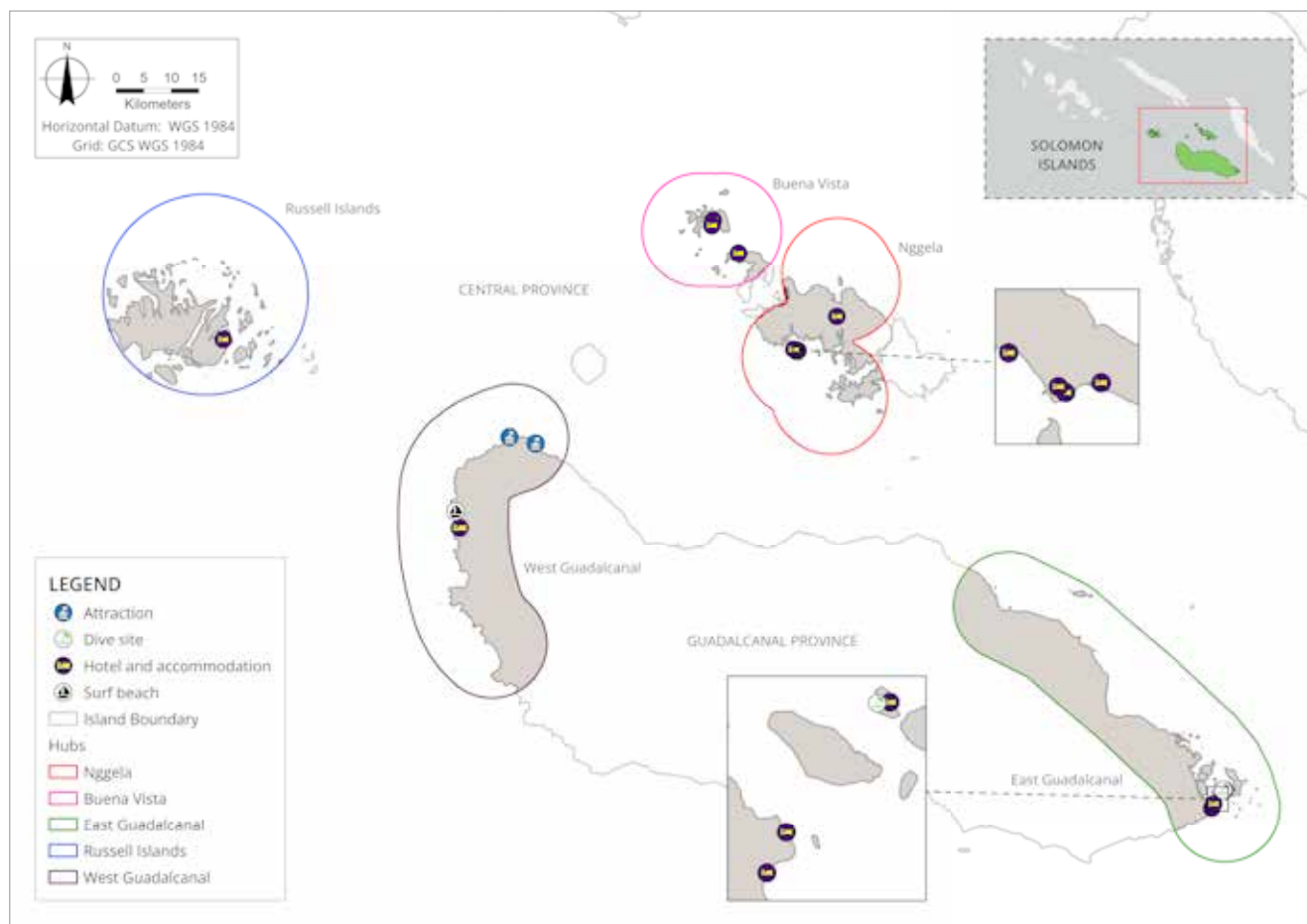
Dive sites are plentiful in Central Province, including WWII ship and aircraft wrecks, along with diverse coral reefs, stunning drop-offs and drift dive sites. There is cave diving available in Leru Cut in the Russell Islands, and a world-class site known as Twin Tunnels at Florida Islands.

Tulagi Island has a rich history and heritage as the capital of the British Protectorate during 1896–1942. WWII history is close at hand throughout Central Province, particularly in Nggela Islands and Russell Islands where fierce battles took place. A tourism trail study conducted by Strongim Bisnis recommends a thematic WWII trail be developed across Savo, Tulagi, Tanambogho, Gavutu and Nggela Islands, potentially looping to Guadalcanal and linking to the north and northwest WWII sites on Guadalcanal Island.

A range of tourism providers offer experiences such as Tulagi Tours and Travels, Tulagi Dive and Go Tours Travel. Tours often focus on WWII history. Liveaboard diving is available through groups such as Bilikiki Liveaboard Cruises and Tulagi Island Lodge. There is also a nature-based tourism operation located in Roderick Bay. Other existing tourism accommodation facilities include Nugu Beach Resort, Kulikau Tabu Lodge, Maragavi Resort and Sunset Lodge.

In Sandfly Passage and Buena Vista, there are five accommodation facilities offering budget to mid-range options. Diving, surfing and fishing are available, with significant potential for increased visitor numbers due to the quality of the sites and their untouched nature. For tourists seeking 'off the beaten track' experiences, this area has much to offer. Nature-based tourism also has significant potential in Russell Islands, although boat travel is more challenging with an estimated up to five-hour trip from Honiara. Yandina is located on Pavuvu Island in Russell Islands, with one of the best deep-water anchorages in the country. Some low budget accommodation options are available.

Map 2: Tourism providers in study corridor



3.2.3 Physical environment

Geology

Guadalcanal is one of the largest provinces in Solomon Islands covering 5,302km². The island is mostly mountainous, with the main range reaching a height of 2,440m. The corridor broadly consists of oceanic basement rocks and intrusive outcrops in the island's southern mountain zone and successively younger tertiary deposits, reef limestones, fluvial classics, deltaic mark and mudstones in the north.

Central Province covers 615km² and comprises Russell Islands, Nggela Sule, Nggela Pile, Sandfly, Buena Vista and Savo Islands. It is composed of an exceptionally thick succession of Lower Cretaceous to Holocene rocks.

Climate

Solomon Islands has a hot and humid tropical monsoon climate with significant and widespread rainfall. The temperature is relatively uniform with daytime temperatures between 25°C and 32°C, and some cooling at night. Temperatures seldom exceed 32°.

Solomon Islands experiences mean annual rainfall of 3,180mm (World Bank, 2024). This rainfall varies across the country depending on topography, latitude and wind patterns. For instance, annual rainfall in Honiara averages around 2,000mm compared to 3,000–5,000mm elsewhere in the country (World Bank, 2024). High altitude locations can also record rainfall of up to 9,000mm (Meteorological Services Division, Solomon Islands, 2024).

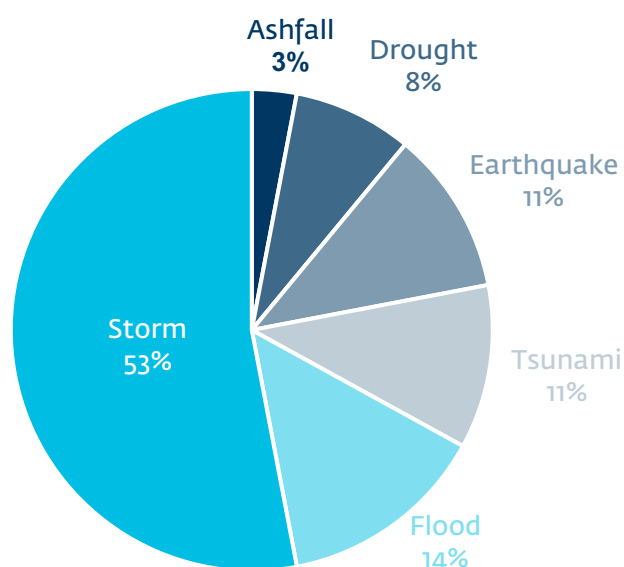
There are also seasonal variations in rainfall, with higher rainfall experienced during the wet season from November to April compared to the dry season from May to October. There are only two seasons in Solomon Islands. The country experiences high levels of humidity, ranging between 75–80 percent, with little seasonal variation but marked diurnal variation.

3.2.4 Natural hazards

With its location on the Pacific Ring of Fire and within the cyclone belt, Solomon Islands is highly prone to natural disasters, known as one of the countries with the greatest exposure and vulnerability to climate change (GFDRR, 2018). Under the World Risk Index, it is considered the second most at risk country globally based on its high exposure to natural hazards and relatively low coping capacity (UNDRR, 2023). Figure 3 provides a high-level indication of natural hazard historical occurrence.

Between 1940–2020, a total of 36 significant disasters have impacted Solomon Islands, as shown in Figure 5 (EM-DAT, 2022b as cited in UNDRR, 2023). The greatest proportion of losses are linked to storm and flood events, reflecting extreme weather or cyclones. Tropical cyclones bringing destructive winds and intense rainfall occur on average once to twice a year in Solomon Islands.

Figure 5: Disasters occurring in Solomon Islands between 1940–2020



In 2020, Tropical Cyclone Harold caused widespread destruction, killing 27 people and destroying or damaging infrastructure and homes across Guadalcanal, Makira, Rennell and Bellona Provinces (UNDRR, 2023). Flooding in April 2014 occurred after a significant rainfall event associated with Tropical Cyclone Ita. The damage and losses incurred were calculated as equivalent to 9 percent of GDP, with 10,000 displaced people and 22 fatalities (GFDRR, 2018). Similarly, Tropical Cyclone Evan wreaked havoc in 2012, with extensive damage of tourism accommodation, and cultural heritage sites. It was estimated that approximately 980 tourism jobs were lost due to these impacts (UNDRR, 2023).

In addition to historical data about natural hazards, there are a range of tools used to understand how this informs the understanding of ongoing potential impacts from disasters. The INFORM Risk index is a global ranking tool measuring the risk of humanitarian crisis and disasters, based on the three dimensions of hazard and exposure, vulnerability, and coping capacity to support decision-making in disaster prevention, preparation, and response. Solomon Islands is ranked by INFORM as 50th out of 191 countries, giving it an overall rating of medium risk (INFORM, 2024). Whilst Solomon Islands is one of the countries with the highest risk of natural hazard occurrence, the resulting crisis is not ranked as high as many other countries due to the resilience and response ratings applied in the INFORM data analysis process.

In addition to the potential for natural disasters, biological hazards are a further risk within the study corridor. This includes malaria, dengue fever, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), and other communicable diseases. This may vary between years but remains a risk factor for tourism developers to consider.

3.2.5 Climate change

Climate change is likely to exacerbate existing vulnerability to natural hazards and create further challenges for economic development and social wellbeing. By 2050, average annual temperatures are projected to increase by approximately 0.8°C compared to the 1986–2005 baseline under a low emission scenario (RCP2.6) and by 1.3°C under a high emission scenario (RCP8.5). By 2090, projections modelling a high emissions scenario predict annual temperatures to rise by as much as 4.0°C (World Bank, 2021a).

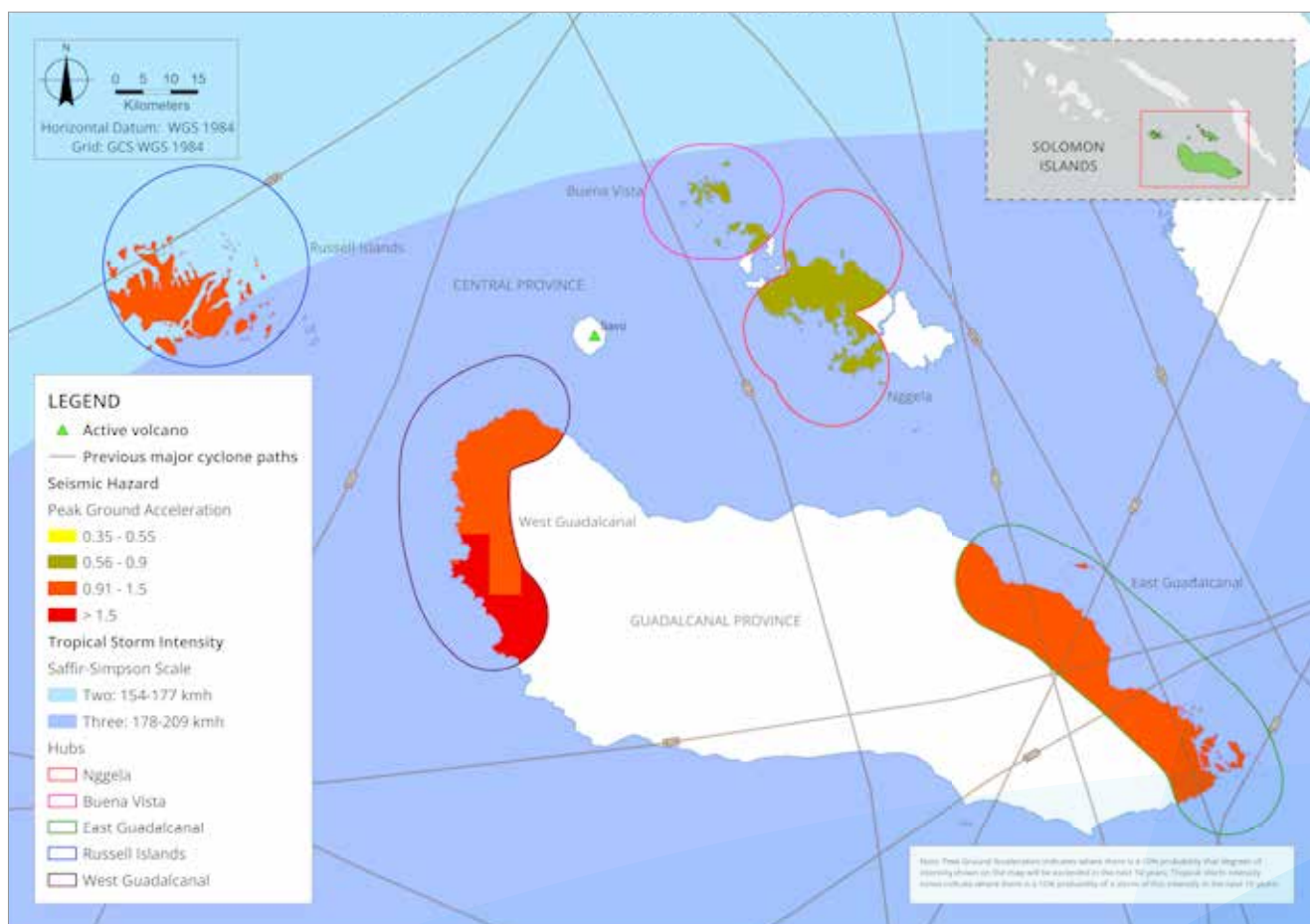
Projected changes to rainfall state that annual and seasonal mean rainfall will increase slightly (low confidence). Of greater concern is that the intensity and frequency of extreme rainfall events are projected to increase (high confidence) (World Bank, 2021a).

Rising sea levels is a major concern given the number of communities living on coastal or low-lying areas, with 65 percent of people living within 1km of the coast (Australia Pacific Climate Partnership, 2021).

Since 1993, there has been a recorded sea level rise of approximately 8–10mm per annum near Solomon Islands, higher than the global average. Sea levels are projected to continue to rise by 28–61cm by 2100 under a low emissions scenario (relative to the 1986–2005 baseline) and a range of 52–98cm under a high emissions scenario (World Bank, 2021b). This is predicted to increase the impacts of storm surges and incidences of coastal flooding (NASA, 2023). Ocean acidification is predicted to continue due to climate change, with coral bleaching events set to increase (World Bank, 2021a).

El Nino and La Nina events will continue to occur, but there is limited consensus in the modelling if these events will become more frequent or change in intensity. The incidence of drought is predicted to decrease slightly (World Bank, 2021a).

Map 3: Natural hazard overview in the study corridor



3.2.6 Unexploded ordnance

Documented discoveries

The Halo Trust, currently funded by the United States Government, is assisting the SIG to identify likely locations of UXO and provide advice on priorities for clearance work. Documenting the extent of the problem and estimating resources required for clearance is part of its focus, along with increasing public awareness on recognizing risks and appropriate responses.

The methods used by Halo Trust include physical evidence and interviews at a site level, coupled with data on the location and intensity of WWII battles and locations of munition dumping areas. This information is cross referenced with data from the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team of the Solomon Islands Police. The EOD team documents reported discoveries and disposals and has created maps with locations of reports received since 2011. It must be noted that the density of discoveries is often linked to development. For example, some 6,000 items were discovered during the recent stadium development in Honiara due to the extent of intrusive site works (Halo Trust, 2024). Discoveries are, therefore, not necessarily reflective of the extent of UXO existence, but an indication of presence in relation to intensity of development or land use.

To date, the Halo Trust has not surveyed the study corridor area, except for Nggela Hub. During 2024–2025, the Halo Trust plans to continue to work with the SIG and stakeholders to survey all land areas of Solomon Islands.

Historical battle data

The Pacific War became a major theatre of WWII that covered a large portion of the Pacific Ocean, particularly Solomon Islands. With the onset of WWII hostilities in Solomon Islands between Allied and Japanese forces, both sides established military bases and logistical hubs throughout the region. Several of these sites were either lost or changed hands during fierce battles or abandoned completely, including upon cessation of hostilities in 1945.

This action plagued the region with Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) contamination, from UXO that failed to function as designed or abandoned explosive ordnance left behind or dumped by one of the parties in the armed conflict.

WWII has left the land and marine environments potentially heavily contaminated with ERW, including all types of munitions, found in either environment due to conflict or the abandonment of stockpiled ordnance. Table 15 provides a brief wartime history of each hub within the study corridor and is illustrated in Map 4.

Marine explosive remnants of war

Whilst land-based ERW surveys and clearance operations generally follow documented principles and procedures, underwater survey and clearance operations present challenges that require further consideration. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-mining (GICHD) has published a best practice guide for survey and clearance of underwater explosive ordnance, which effectively classifies underwater ERW into three categories:

Category 1: Underwater explosive ordnance not buried beneath the seabed and in less than 20m of water.

Category 2: Underwater explosive ordnance buried below the seabed and in greater than 1m of water.

Category 3: Underwater explosive ordnance in greater than 20m of water depth or in situations where ordnance is located inside the compartment of a shipwreck.

The best practice principles of underwater ERW survey and clearance operations, as well as engagement of specialist trained underwater UXO survey and clearance companies with a proven track record, are recommended for any technical UXO services in the marine environment.

Map 4: Potential UXO risks in the study corridor

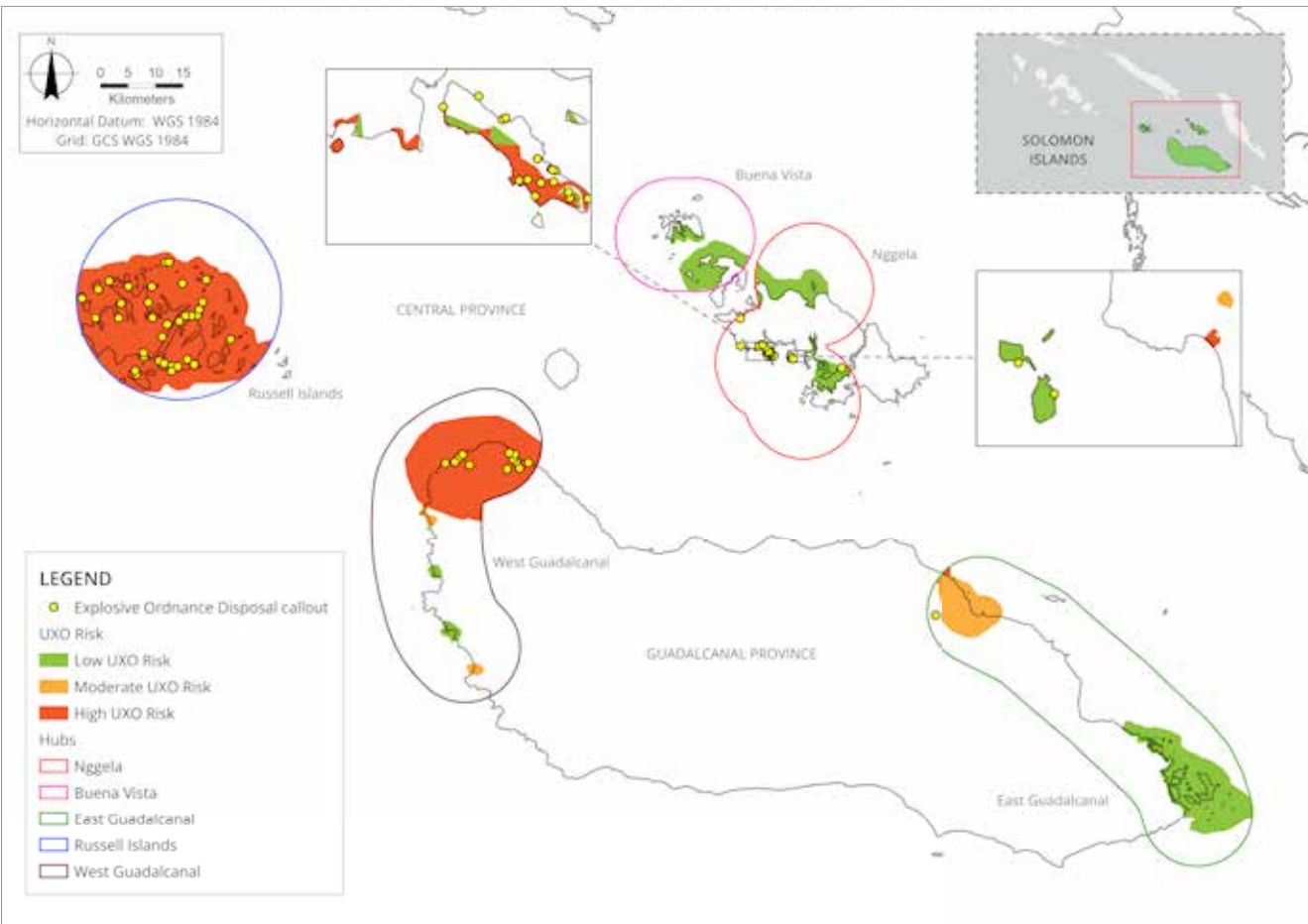


Table 15: UXO discoveries and war time history

Hub	UXO Details
West Guadalcanal Province	The Halo Trust has not conducted any survey to date in West Guadalcanal. Mapping of Solomon Islands Police Force EOD Unit reports indicates that discoveries have only been documented in the northern tip of the West Guadalcanal area of the study corridor, particularly around Hautabu Point. However, more detailed work in the area is planned for 2024. Caution needs to be applied in this area, particularly where the battle history indicates higher levels of risk. West Guadalcanal Hub was one of the most recognized and fiercest campaigns in the Pacific during WWII. On July 5, 1942, the Japanese Army landed at Ranadi and began developing Lunga Point Airfield (Henderson Field) as a forward airfield to patrol the shipping lanes to Australia and New Zealand. The United States Marine Corps (USMC) made an amphibious landing at Red Beach on August 7, 1942. Guadalcanal Province then became a pivotal piece of island real estate that both sides wanted to control, committing large forces of soldiers and materials over the months. United States Army reinforcements continued to land, while the Japanese attempted to supply their forces by night via the 'Tokyo Express'. Guadalcanal Province and Henderson Field became the focal points of the six-month Guadalcanal campaign (Pacific Wrecks Inc, 2024). After the Battle of Guadalcanal, the Island became a significant staging base and training ground for Allied operations elsewhere in Solomon Islands. Even after Guadalcanal Province was secured, pockets of Japanese resistance remained. The island became a rear base and staging area. The last Japanese holdout surrendered on October 27, 1947 (Felton, 2015). The fight for sea superiority during the battle for the Guadalcanal Province cost each side 24 ships, with over half situated near the coast of the province, likely carrying an abundance of firepower (Encyclopeida Britannica, 2024). Approximately 16 shipwrecks are located near the proposed tourism corridor coastline.

Hub	UXO Details
East Guadalcanal Province	The Halo Trust has not conducted any survey to date in East Guadalcanal. Mapping of Solomon Islands Police Force EOD Unit reports indicates that no reported discoveries or callouts have been documented for East Guadalcanal. Within the East Guadalcanal corridor, Aola Bay, Mbara Island and Vulelua Island provided the only known troop movement within the region. On November 4, 1942, Navy Task Force 65 conducted an amphibious landing at Aola Island. The force included 500 14th Naval Construction Battalion (14th NCB) 'Seabees' and the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion 'Carlson's Riders', along with elements of the United States Army 147th Infantry Regiment and the Marine 5th Defense Battalion 23 to attack Japanese forces behind the lines (Pacific Wrecks Inc, 2021).
Nggela Islands	The Halo Trust has undertaken survey work in 2023 on Tulagi Island within the Nggela group. Mapping of Solomon Islands Police Force EOD Unit reports indicate numerous discoveries and callouts, particularly along the southern coastal area of the Nggela group and at Tulagi. The Big Nggela corridor was a central hub for Japanese forces and the United States from January 1942 to 1943. Tulagi was subjected to multiple air raids and bombings in the conquest to control the region. The Japanese bombed the area until its occupation of Tulagi on May 3, 1942, where it utilized Tulagi Harbor as a naval anchorage and established a seaplane base on Gavutu, Tanambogho Island and Ghaome Islands (Pacific Wrecks Inc, 2022). Following Japan's occupation of Tulagi, the United States continued to bomb the area until it was captured on August 7, 1942, when two battalions (1,800 marines from the USMC) made an unopposed landing on Blue Beach on the western shore of Tulagi Island. No landing could reach shore as the landing crafts were held up in the coral up to 100 yards away. Following the unopposed landings of Tulagi Island, the USMC set its sights on the Japanese seaplane base at Gavutu, Tanambogho and Ghaome Islands, which sat about 2.7km east of Tulagi, where the Japanese built a 150m long stone and wood causeway to connect these islets (Coulson, 2020). A few hundred marines landed at Gavutu's concrete dock, and during the battle, they both charged and retreated across this causeway. The Japanese had dug into the modest hillocks on the islets and attacked the landing parties. United States tanks and reinforcements arrived a day later to support the attack and by the end of the third day, its objectives were secured (Favre, 2021).
Buena Vista Island	The Halo Trust has not conducted any survey to date on Buena Vista Island. Mapping of Solomon Islands Police Force EOD Unit reports indicates that no reported discoveries or callouts have been documented for this area. The only information found around the Buena Vista corridor during the research was of a B-24D 'Pregnant Polecat' 42-40877 that crashed northeast of Buena Vista Island on March 1, 1944, killing all nine crew members (Metz, 2020).
Russell Islands	The Halo Trust has not conducted any survey to date in Russell Islands. Mapping of Solomon Islands Police Force EOD Unit reports indicates numerous reported discoveries or callouts documented throughout the entire island group. The density of reported discoveries is commensurate with the expectation given the WWII history on this island group. Before the United States' unopposed occupation in February 1954, the Russell Islands were a staging area for Japanese forces to ship troops to Guadalcanal Province. The Allied forces never received an attack by sea from the Japanese. However, the air encountered attacks during development of Russell Island airfields, vital for the Allied forces to conduct air raids from the island to New Georgia which was strategically 200km southeast of New Georgia. Limited information was ascertained from the Japanese occupation of Pavuvu. However, Pavuvu was home to the 1st Marine Division and was used as a staging area for training United States troops before shuttling them to other locations within the Pacific (History Source LLC, 2019). It was the hub for live fire training throughout the Island, which included rifles, automatic weapons, grenades, bazookas, anti-tank weaponry, demolitions, and the manoeuvring of tanks live firing. Due to the size of the island, predominately artillery rounds were aimed towards the sea with observers out in a boat (locations unknown) (Garand GW, 1971).

3.2.7 Biodiversity overview

Given its geographic isolation, Solomon Islands has globally significant biological diversity and endemism. However, its rich marine and terrestrial biodiversity is under pressure from overexploitation, habitat destruction, invasive species, poor waste and sanitation management, and climate change. The National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan 2016–2020 (MECDM, 2016) identifies a significant number of threatened species in terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments, with two ground birds believed to be extinct.

There are five Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) designated within the study area (see Map 5). A KBA identifies areas that support the greatest biodiversity conservation values.

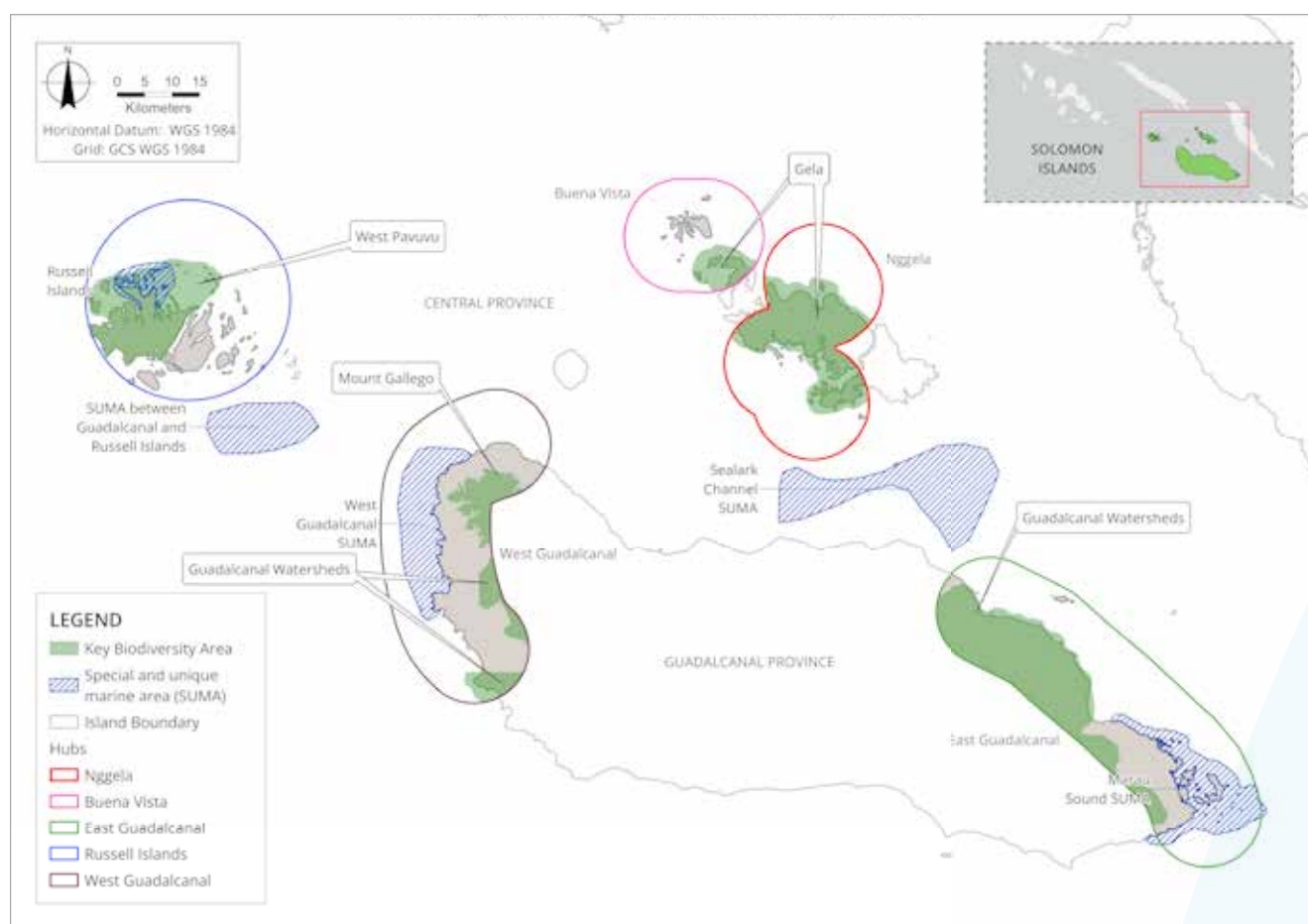
Solomon Islands is identified by BirdLife International as an

endemic bird area. This is an indicator of the high number of bird species that occur nowhere else in the world and highlights the need for conservation efforts.

Mangrove systems have diminished and are affected by anthropogenic activity worldwide. The mangrove forests of the study corridor contain up to 40 percent of the world's mangrove species, making them KBAs (WorldFish, 2012).

Efforts have been made to designate KBAs to identify areas that support the greatest biodiversity conservation values, as shown in Map 5. Note that these areas are indicative: any areas of natural habitat need to be surveyed for their biodiversity values, but areas of modified habitat such as plantations are unlikely to have high biodiversity conservation values.

Map 5: Key Biodiversity Areas in the study corridor



Documentation of protected areas can be accessed through a range of global databases, including the IBAT. These databases reflect the time that information was extracted rather than the year of publication. There are also differences between the way that different data sources apply mapping methodology or calculate areas.

As such, it is important to recognize that the data is indicative, and that it changes over time. Some database sources may not be entirely accurate, particularly as new areas are designated or existing ones are no longer accurately described as protected or proposed for protection. Where possible, the data has been cross-referenced with relevant agencies through the stakeholder engagement process. According to the World Database on Protected Areas (UNEP-WCMC, 2024) within Solomon Islands, there are 94 protected areas nationwide. There is 585km² of land designated as protected area (2 percent of the land mass) and 1,879km² of marine and coastal areas covered by some type of protection status (0.12 percent of the country's marine area). There is one World Heritage Site in East Rennell (200km south of East Guadalcanal), and one national park to the south of Honiara (Queen Elizabeth Park). There are 13 Terrestrial Protected Areas in Solomon Islands, including those classified (SPREP, 2020) as:

- **Designated:** (four) areas recognized or designated through legal means.
- **Established:** (seven) areas recognized or designated through other effective means.
- **Proposed:** (one) area in a process to gain recognition or dedication through legal or other effective means.

In the study corridor, the terminology of Marine Managed Areas (MMAs) is used for sites that have traditional management in place by local communities, also known as *Tabu* areas. The other term used is Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs), which are managed through Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM). The reason for using this terminology rather than Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) is that during consultations with MFMR fisheries officers, they advised that the terms MMA, *Tabu* and CBRM were viewed as more relevant and recognizable at a local level.

The following areas are relevant to the study corridor:

Naro Terrestrial: Is a predominantly land-based LMMA managed on a voluntary community basis. It covers 579ha (7ha marine, 572ha land) with 13ha of coral habitat on the northern side of Guadalcanal Province. It is within 50km of the study corridor in Guadalcanal Province.

Komarindi conservation area: Is approximately 20km inland west of Honiara city. The designated size is 19,300ha, and it is managed under customary land tenure. The site is listed as Category 'V' under the IUCN Protected Area Categories. The 'V' category is assigned to areas managed primarily for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation (IUCN, 2004a). This site was established as a conservation area in 2004, and is designed to facilitate long-term sustainable resource management, integrating social and economic development with biodiversity conservation (Taloiburi E. J., 2009). With the support of SPREP and IUCN, the project Ensuring Resilient Ecosystems and Representative Protected Areas selected the Komarindi site for conservation management and is hoping to declare it a protected area in the future.

Queen Elizabeth II National Park: Is a government managed protected area within 50km of the study corridor in Guadalcanal Province. It covers a 1,090ha terrestrial area established in 1954. The area is categorized 'II' by IUCN and identified as managed for ecosystem protection and recreation (IUCN, 2004a). Queen Elizabeth National Park has completely degraded in the 70 years since its establishment, due to the proliferation of illegal settlements and logging activities (Taloiburi E. J., 2009). There are current efforts led by MECDDM and supported by SPREP to introduce legal protections and improved management in both the Queen Elizabeth National Park and Barana Nature and Heritage Park (located in the watershed catchment area near Honiara).

Marine Protected Areas are protected by law. In Solomon Islands, this protection is under the *Fisheries Management Act 2015*. MMAs are generally on a smaller scale and focus primarily on sustainable resource harvesting/use and conserving those resources for the future (SPREP, 2018). LMMA refer to nearshore areas and associated coastal and marine resources managed at the community level. CBRM is the tool used for community fisheries management, with communities developing and implementing a local fisheries management plan in consultation with the MFMR. CBRM is a suitable approach for Solomon Island's land and sea tenure context, where central government capacity is weak (United Nations, 2008). By partnering with local communities, sustainable use of marine resources can be achieved using CBRM systems.

The Community-Based Coastal and Marine Resource Management Strategy 2021–2025 (SIG, 2021) provides a national framework to work collaboratively at the local level, addressing critical challenges and threats to coastal and marine resources. The strategy seeks to improve sustainable

management, whilst contributing to socio-economic and food security needs of communities. This is through expanding the CBRM network, supporting awareness, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation. When thinking about the intersection with tourism, it is important to note that a CBRM can support and enhance appropriate tourism activities, with conservation measures and sustainable fishing key principles that, in turn, bring tourism benefits. This risk can be elevated when a tourism development does not consider integration with the CBRM in place, and impacts community efforts through poor planning, pollution from construction and operations, and increased visitor activities impacting marine eco-systems.

Table 16 provides an overview of the MMA/*Tabu* and LMMA information from the desktop research, and from information received from consultations with relevant fisheries officers in the study corridor. At times the information was contradictory, reflecting the changing status of managed areas. In instances of contradictory data, the information sourced from MFMR officers was prioritized.

Table 16: Summary of protected or locally managed marine areas in the study corridor

Hub	Managed Area Type
West Guadalcanal	10 LMMAs under CBRM system
East Guadalcanal	10 MMA/ <i>Tabu</i> sites: Kere hira, Alite, Nu'u Marere, Simeruka, Niuhoa, Wahere, Paipai, Hatere (Tariararo), Waimamaura, Parisuna Seven LMMAs under CBRM system
Russell Islands	Nine LMMAs under CBRM system
Buena Vista/Sandfly	Two MMA/ <i>Tabu</i> : Maravaghi, Sisili Five LMMAs under CBRM system
Nggela Sule and Nggela Pile	One MMA/ <i>Tabu</i> : Roderick Bay Seven LMMAs under CBRM system

3.2.7.1 Case Study: Tiaro Bay - Intersection of CBRM and Tourism

Tiaro Bay is located on the western coast of Guadalcanal Province in the study corridor. It is dominated by healthy coral reef habitat essential to biodiversity and subsistence for the local community of approximately 300 people living across 15 villages. Tiaro was established as a LMMA in 2014 and incorporates a marine area of 740ha. The coral reef system provides resources to the communities, particularly reef fish and shellfish, but there were growing concerns over longer-term sustainability and impacts from activities, such as logging.

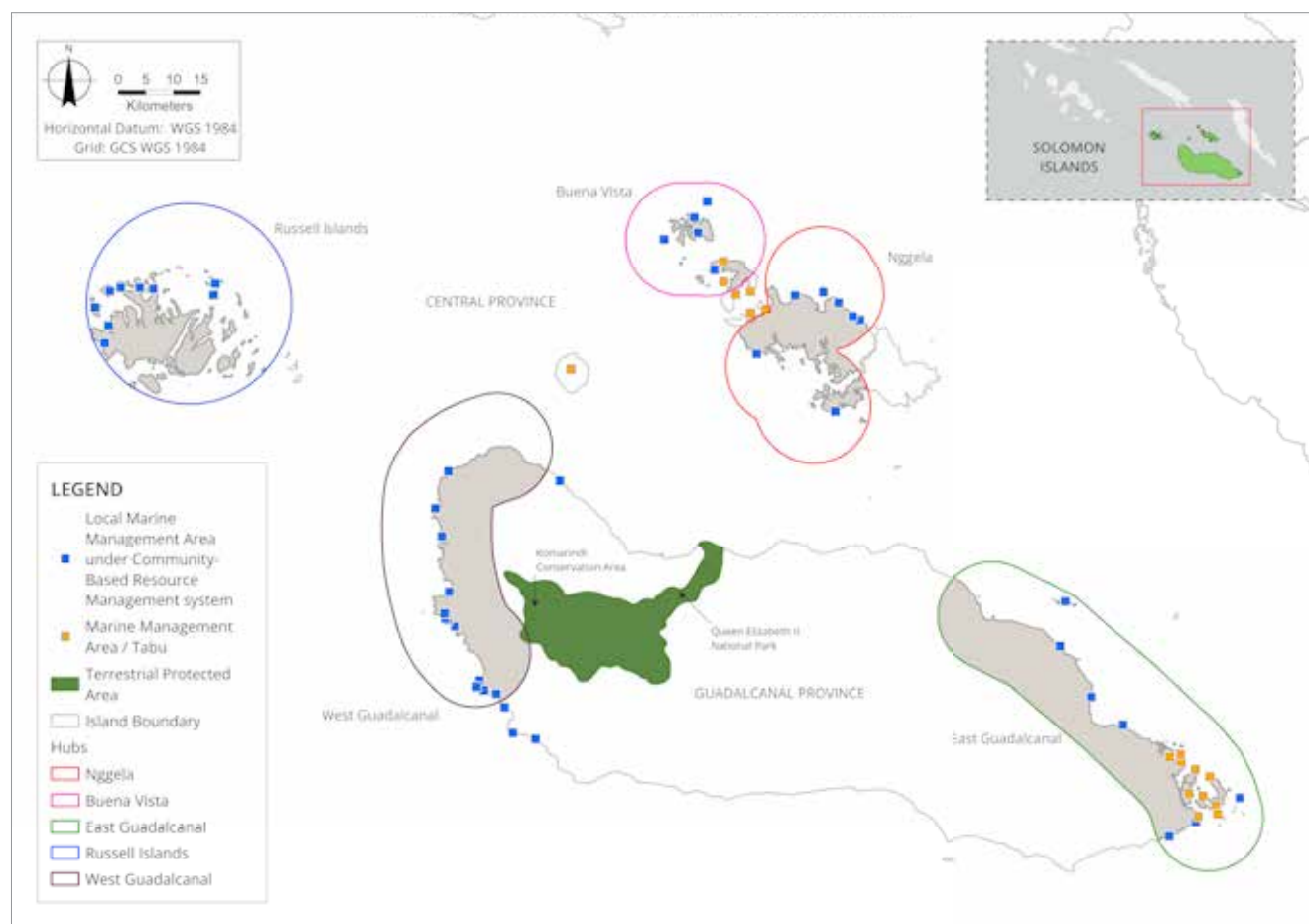


Since 2017, there has been active management work ongoing in cooperation with the MFMR. The Tiaro Marine Conservation Committee (TMCC) was formed, and community members trained as 'resource rangers' to monitor target species such as trochus shells, giant clams and sea cucumbers. A no-take area was established, and regular community meetings are conducted to discuss harvest controls, proper management, and sustainable community livelihoods. A Trochus shell harvest was opened for only five days a year, with TMCC awareness and oversight in relation to harvest amounts and regulated size. Livelihoods were further supported through fishing outside the management area, a solar-powered freezer reduced waste, and a Kastom Garden Association supported gardening for food security and alternative income generation. Efforts to conserve the resources and diversity in Tiaro have included resource monitoring, controlled harvesting supervised by trained members of the community, recording fish catches and erecting CBRM signboards for public awareness about the protected nature of the area (Tiaro Marine Conservation Committee, 2021).

Tiaro Bay is in proximity to the Tangarare site in West Guadalcanal. Although there is no tourism infrastructure at present within the bay itself, it is a short boat trip of approximately 15 minutes from the Olatsara Retreat Center located at Hulavu, and an area that shows strong potential. Olatsara has several bungalows and is developing conference facilities to enhance the retreats offered. With a focus on nature-based tourism, particularly surfing, there is a keen interest in expanding offerings. CBRM work in Tiaro Bay has potential to become a day-trip area for diving and snorkeling if this aligns with local aspirations.

The intersection with tourism is an area that presents both opportunity and risk. As stated in the CBRM Strategy 2021–2025 (SIG, 2021), livelihood options need to be considered in CBRM planning, provided that supplementary livelihood activities have minimal impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems and services. Through alternative livelihood programs, local communities can sell sustainably harvested reef fish and shellfish, along with vegetables and handicrafts, with a focus on longer-term management. These are all assets, as environmental and social capital can be part of the area's tourism story. However, tourism development can impact the reef system through pollution, poor construction and planning, and poorly controlled tourism activities, such as diving and fishing. An approach that engages with TMCC would provide a sound basis for tourism, with collaboration and the sharing of local benefits to strengthen the CBRM system in place.

Map 6: Protected areas in or near study corridor



3.2.8 Terrestrial ecology

Tourism infrastructure is often built and operated in places with high aesthetic appeal, sometimes in remote areas. Often located on the coast, such areas can also experience existing pressures that can be exacerbated by tourism. With limited existing infrastructure and services, such as waste management and wastewater treatment, tourism ventures can have a significant impact on terrestrial systems. Tourism development can cause habitat loss and degradation through direct or induced land clearance. High visitation can heavily impact areas susceptible to disturbance, such as terrestrial habitat or nesting areas. Invasive species, such as rats and feral cats, can increase through changed food resources at hotels, and weeds can be spread through landscaping and construction activities. Islands with local endemic species are particularly vulnerable. Understanding the existing terrestrial conditions and threats is an important starting point in managing and mitigating impacts from tourism.

In a global assessment of ecosystems undertaken by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Solomon Islands was included in the high-priority Ecoregion 200 list (WWF, 2005). Flora and fauna biodiversity is high, with many endemic species (WWF, 2005). Solomon Islands has the highest number of range-restricted bird species by area in the world, making it a crucial nation for conservation efforts (MECDM, 2016).

Forest cover in Solomon Islands spans a range of vegetation communities, from mangrove and coastal forest to lowland forest, hill forest and montane cloud forest communities (MEHRD, 2008). Across the archipelago, forest structures are diverse with varying composition. The Ministry of Forestry and Research (MOFR) classifies 51 percent of natural forests as lowland forests, 38 percent as hill forests, 10 percent as montane forests, 1 percent as mangroves and saline swamp forests, and 0.3 percent as freshwater and riverine forests (MOFR, 2020).

Map 7 provides information on forest and vegetation cover through an analysis of satellite imagery of logging roads in the study corridor from 2020 (Global Forest Watch, 2023). Map 8 provides an overlay of logging roads and vegetation cover.

Solomon Island forests contain at least 4,500 flora species, with 3,200 being native or Indigenous, including 2,763 species of angiosperms, 22 species of gymnosperms and 367 species of pteridophytes (true ferns and fern allies) (Forest Stewardship Council, 2023). In 2024, some 56 plant species were included on the IUCN Red List as threatened (IUCN, 2024).

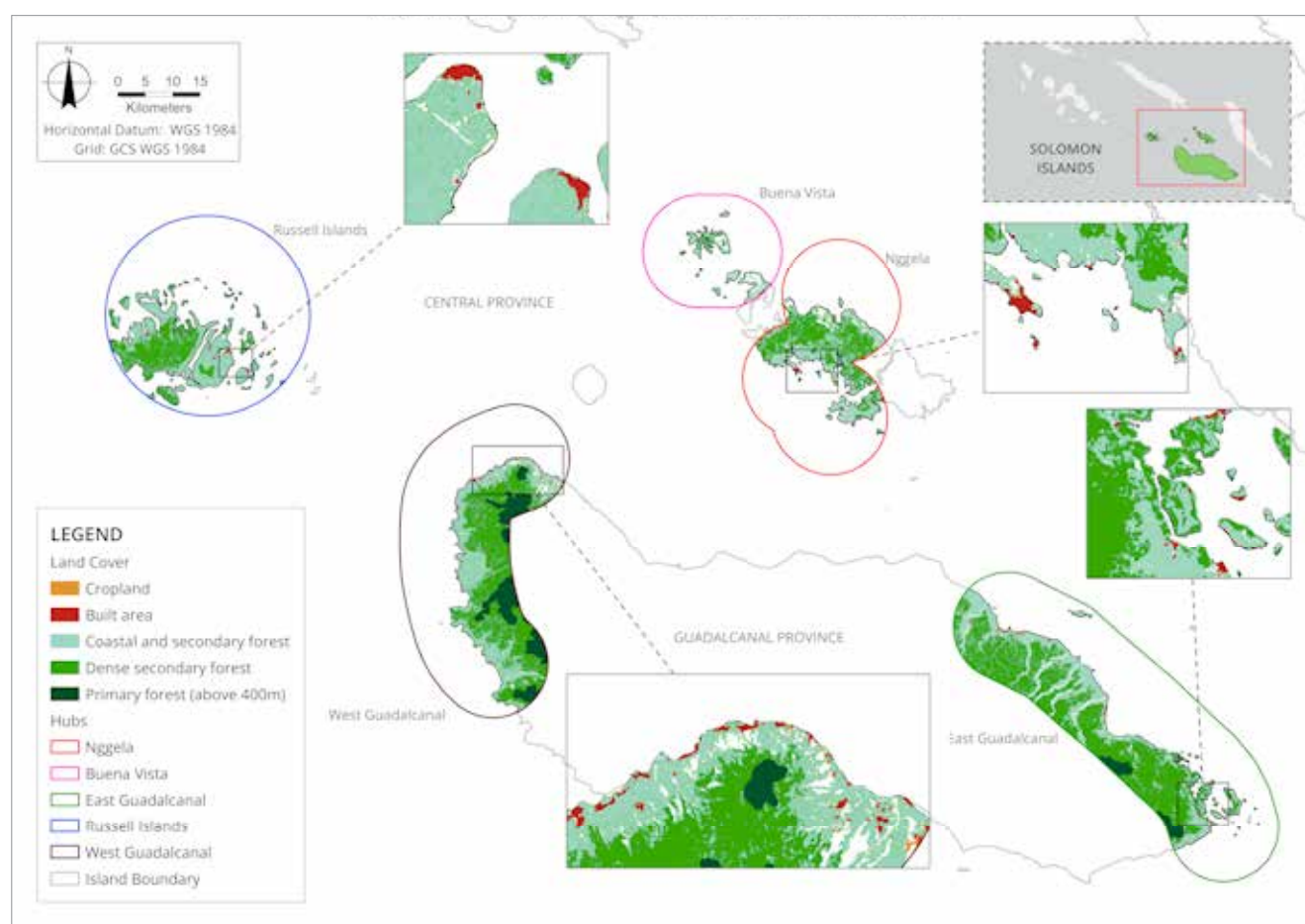
The forest cover for Solomon Islands is estimated at 90 percent of total land area (World Bank Group, 2021) with the main forest types recognized as:

Lowland forest (0-200m above sea level): Once the dominant vegetation in the low-lying areas of the study corridor, these highly accessible forest communities have been heavily impacted by logging for valuable timber species. Any remaining pockets of primary lowland forest are isolated, with most lowland forests successional and many of these regrowth areas are actively logged.

Hill forest (200-600m above sea level): With less commercially valuable timber species and more accessibility constraints, hill forests with moderate to high integrity occur in the study corridor.

Montane forest (upland rainforest) (above 600m above sea level): This also occurs as low as 400m above sea level on particular oceanic islands. Whilst montane forest does occur in Guadalcanal, it is not likely to occur within the study corridor.

Map 7: Forest and vegetation cover in the study corridor



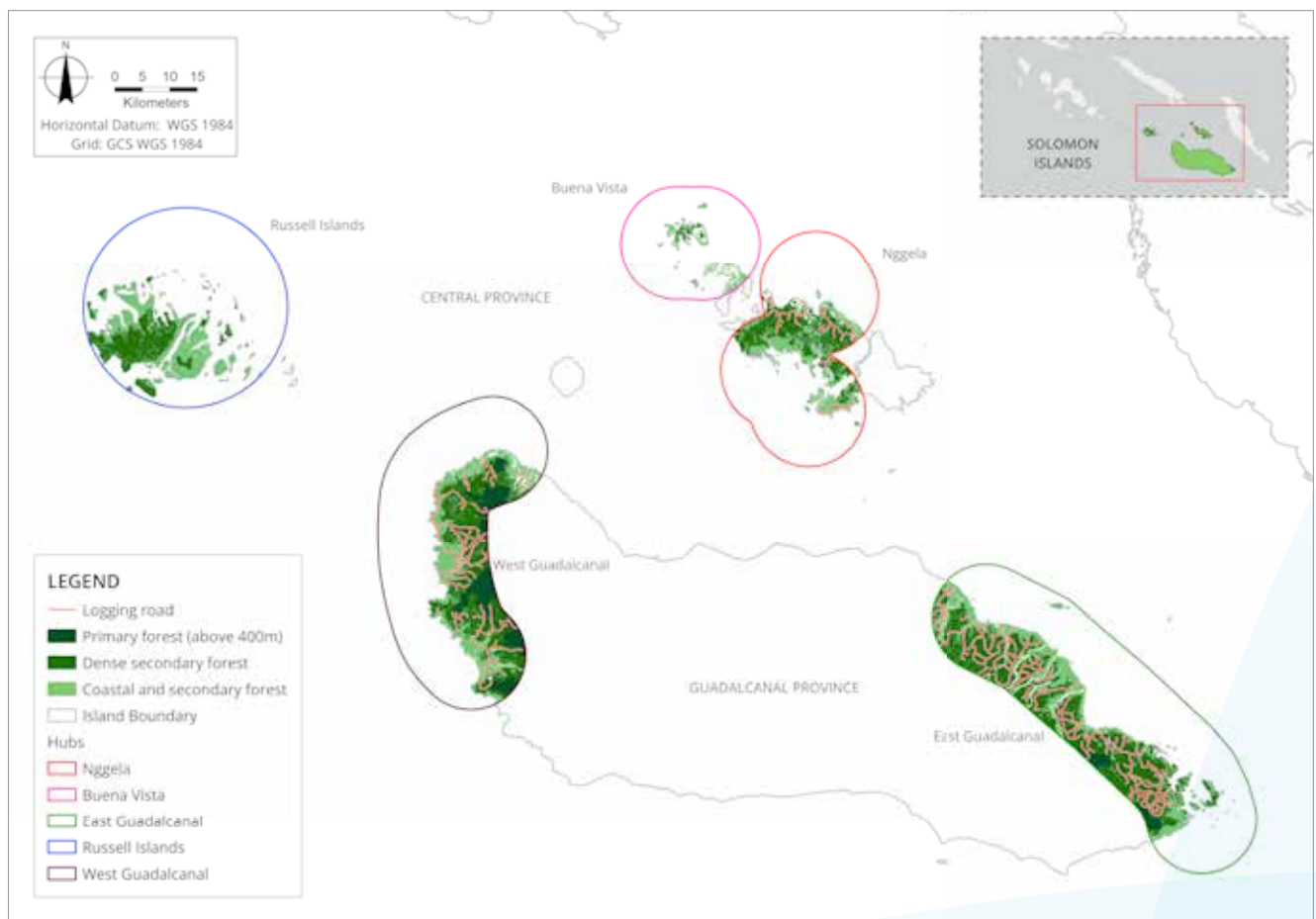
Freshwater swamp (riverine forest): Occurs as seasonally inundated vegetation communities vary in floristic composition and structure from sedge lands, comprising various treeless areas of grasslands and sedges, to tall reed freshwater swamps. The latter are primarily found in the near tidal zone, often persisting as extensive areas of wetlands behind the main strand and littoral zone adjacent to the coast. These communities are major regulators of flood and coastal drainage processes and important contributors to coastal foreshore stability. Larger areas are predominantly restricted to the base of hilly and mountainous locations in Guadalcanal but occur as smaller discrete units in numerous coastal locations throughout the corridor.

Mangrove forest (saline swamp forest): Comprises intertidal wetlands, including mangroves and samphire flats. Typically, mangal communities are located in the

run-on areas at the mouth of estuaries on substrates of mud and marine silts, and along banks of slow-flowing rivers where the deposition of transported sediments have occurred in tidal reaches. These communities are critical habitats supporting the lifecycle of many reef fish species. The majority of these communities within the study corridor remain relatively undisturbed and of high integrity.

Industrial plantation and community woodlots: These areas have been converted into agricultural and resource areas. Most such areas were previously classified as lowland and hill forests. It is estimated that about 69 percent of undisturbed primary forest is predominantly hilly forests, but the terrestrial ecology has changed rapidly with Global Forest Watch estimating that half of the country's intact forest was lost between 2000 and 2020 (Forest Stewardship Council, 2023).

Map 8: Logging roads and vegetation cover in the study corridor



Forest systems in the study corridor range from swamps/marshes, coastal/lowland forest on smaller islands and the edges of Guadalcanal Province, with some hill forest in higher elevation areas such as Pavuvu Island in Central Province and limited areas of eastern Guadalcanal. The eastern edge of Guadalcanal Province (Marau Sound) and nearby islands are bordered by extensive mangrove forest. This area is considered an important site of the Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion and is a biologically significant ecosystem (WWF, 2003).

Mammals, aside from bats and rodents, are limited in the study corridor. Solomon Islands has a high level of avian endemism with a significant portion of species declining or threatened (IUCN, 2020). Out of approximately 246 bird species studied throughout Solomon Islands, 27.6 percent are endemic to the country. This means they occur nowhere else in the world (Birdlife International, 2023).

Invasive species are an ongoing threat to terrestrial biodiversity, with introduced plants and weeds documented throughout the study corridor (Hurutarau J, Tigulu I, 2018). Domestic mammals have been introduced for human resources or pest control. These include dogs, pigs and cats. Feral cats and rats have become an ongoing threat to local ground dwelling biodiversity.

The study corridor supports invasive introduced species of invertebrates, such as the giant African land snail *Lissachatina fulica*, which poses a significant economic threat to crops. These snails are also classed as a human health risk as they carry the rat lungworm parasite (BSI, 2016). Population growth of the giant snails increases exponentially when spread to new areas.

An invasive amphibian with an effect in the study corridor is *Rhinella marina* (South American cane toad). Introduced in the 1940s for insect control, large populations have now spread across the study corridor favoring human-disturbed areas, such as settlements and roads. Cane toads out-compete other species for food and territory. The toads are toxic to their predators and prey on native invertebrates (Pikacha, 2013).

Twenty invasive ants are recorded in Solomon Islands, among them *Wasmannia auropunctata* (little fire ant) that poses a significant threat to humans, crops, domestic animals, and biodiversity in the study corridor. It has a painful sting and can result in gradual blindness in vertebrate species like dogs, that are a highly utilized resource for hunting across the study corridor (Fasi, 2009).

Phalanger orientalis, or the northern common cuscus, is an introduced marsupial that can be found across the main islands. The cuscus has become a known prey of the endemic *Haliaeetus sanfordi* (Sanford's Sea eagle) (Heinsohn, 2019).

The National Biodiversity Strategic Plan 2016–2020 stated support for ongoing work with community-based organizations to control invasive species like feral cats and dogs, 'crown of thorns' starfish and the giant African snail (MECDM, 2016). When considering risks from tourism development, it is important that these issues are not exacerbated or in the best case, that operators can play a role in control and eradication efforts.

Table 17 provides an overview of terrestrial ecology in the study corridor.

Table 17: Summary of terrestrial ecology factors in the study corridor

Factor	Guadalcanal Province	Central Province
Flora	- The study corridor area is primarily characterized by littoral and coastal strand communities, human-altered plantation and gardening landscapes and lowland rainforest. Logging and plantations have significantly affected the lowland forest, which is mostly in a successional state. - Mangrove stands are mainly found in Marau Sound, with 11 recorded species. The dominant species are <i>Rhizophora stylosa</i>, <i>R. apiculata</i>, <i>Bruguiera gymnorhiza</i> and <i>Lumnitzera littorea</i>.	- In Central Province, 11 flora species listed as vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered (IBAT, 2023). - Forests in the study corridor primarily consist of coastal and hill forests, covering 61 percent of the province's land area. Lowland forest is also present. - Oil palm plantations in coastal areas of Russell Islands impact terminal reaches of streams and swamp land due to runoff and vegetation clearance (Polhemus, Dan A; Englund, Ronald A; Allen, Gerald R; Boseto, David; Polhemus, John T, 2008). - Mangroves present help protect coastlines and developments from erosion and tidal factors.
Terrestrial fauna	- Mammals: Terrestrial mammals unique to Solomon Islands found in the study corridor primarily consist of bat and rat species. Critically endangered or endangered species that may occur are <i>Uromys imperator</i> (emperor rat), <i>U. porculus</i> (Guadalcanal rat), and <i>Pteralopex pulchra</i> (Montane Monkey-faced Bat). - Reptiles and amphibians: Solomon Islands boast 21 native described frog species (Rowley, 2020), with several of these amphibians inhabiting the study corridor and likely to be present in Guadalcanal Province. Reptiles are abundant in the region, including crocodiles, skinks, geckos, frogs, snakes, and lizards. However, comprehensive data on the density of endemic or threatened reptile species within the corridor is lacking. - Invertebrates: invertebrate communities in Solomon Islands include a myriad of organisms such as insects, spiders, crustaceans, and mollusks. - Birds: The study corridor is known to harbor a substantial portion of bird species found in Solomon Islands, with approximately 184 out of 246 described species recorded (Avibase, 2023) (Ceccarelli, et al., 2018). <i>Columba pallidiceps</i> (Yellow-legged Pigeon), <i>Aplonis brunneicapillus</i> (White-eyed Starling) and <i>Eurostopodus nigripennis</i> (Solomons Nightjar) are threatened species likely to occur in West Guadalcanal Province.	- Mammals: In Central Province, up to 60 terrestrial and marine mammal species have been identified or are potentially present (IBAT 2023). Terrestrial mammals primarily consist of rat and bat species endemic to Solomon Islands, as reported in Guadalcanal Province. Threatened species that may occur are <i>Anthops ornatus</i> (Solomons Leaf-nosed Bat), and <i>Hipposideros dinops</i> (Fierce Leaf-nosed Bat). - Reptiles and amphibians: Solomon Islands boast 21 native described frog species (Rowley, 2020), with several of these amphibians inhabiting the study corridor. IBAT (2023) identifies approximately 55 reptile species that may inhabit the study corridor, with two classified as vulnerable or critically endangered. Twenty-one frog species are native to Solomon Islands, with several likely to be in Central Province. - Invertebrates: Solomon Islands host a high diversity of invertebrate species, although many remain undocumented (Dunn, 2006). - Birds: The study corridor is known to harbor a substantial portion of bird species found in Solomon Islands, with approximately 184 out of 246 described species recorded (Avibase, 2023). (Ceccarelli, et al., 2018). - IBAT (2023) reports bird species like the <i>Reinwardtoena crassirostris</i> (crested cuckoo-dove) and <i>Numenius tahitiensis</i> (bristle-thighed curlew) may occur within the study sites (Gilman, et al., 2006).

3.2.9 Aquatic ecology

Tourism developments can impact freshwater ecosystems through land clearance, sedimentation through run-off during construction, consumption of freshwater resources potentially in short supply, pollution of rivers and creeks through poor waste or wastewater management. With limited waste services and infrastructure in the study corridor, tourism developers need to consider managing these potential impacts from the outset. Without this, the buildup of plastics in water courses impacts freshwater ecology and over the longer term, eroding the appeal of a tourism destination.

Solomon Islands freshwater ecosystems include approximately 80 freshwater fish species, 43 species of crustaceans and 175 freshwater insect species. Across the study corridor streams and rivers run from higher points of the islands to the coast. The estuarine/brackish water environments created at the river mouths provide nursery habitat for marine animals and diadromous species, though the higher reaches of river systems are expected to hold the most freshwater biodiversity (SPREP, 2019). Table 18 provides an overview of aquatic ecology in the study corridor.

3.2.10 Marine ecology

Tourism is an industry that both relies on and impacts healthy marine ecology. Impacts can occur from site development that removes or degrades habitat, such as mangrove systems. Land reclamation, dredging and excavation, construction of jetties and coastal protection work all impact natural ecosystems either directly or through sedimentation, erosion and pollution.

Marine plastic is accumulating at alarming rates and without proper waste management systems, tourists with their high consumption levels can exacerbate this issue. Within the study corridor, there are no waste collection services, plastic recycling, or proper disposal facilities.

Further impacts occur through high visitation rates, with diving, snorkeling and fishing activities creating disturbances if not managed carefully. Coastal developments with bright lights can disturb turtle nesting and migratory bird movements. Littering and taking of souvenirs such as shells, either directly or in the form of locally made handicrafts, place further strain on coastal ecosystems.

Table 18: Summary of aquatic ecology factors

Factor	Guadalcanal Province	Central Province
Freshwater ecology	- Prawns, <i>bahovu</i> (freshwater fish), tilapia and water cress are key resources in the study corridor. - Mozambique tilapia (<i>Oreochromis mossambicus</i>), introduced in the 1950s, is now cultured on a low scale in Solomon Islands (MFMR and WorldFish, 2022). Tilapia is an invasive species by nature and could threaten native or endemic freshwater species if prevalent in the natural systems (MFMR and WorldFish, 2022). - Guadalcanal Province is viewed by MFMR as a prime site for aquaculture development as there are large freshwater rivers and lakes. Freshwater systems are inhabited by a diverse group of goboid fish (Polhemus, Dan A; Englund, Ronald A; Allen, Gerald R; Boseto, David; Polhemus, John T, 2008).	- Prawns, <i>bahovu</i> (freshwater fish), tilapia and water cress are key resources in the study corridor. - Introduced freshwater plants in the study corridor are not well documented, though <i>eichornia crassipes</i> (water hyacinth) may be present. Invasive flora can smother habitat and compete with native or endemic species (Polhemus, Dan A; Englund, Ronald A; Allen, Gerald R; Boseto, David; Polhemus, John T, 2008). - Edible plants like watercress are integral resources for communities (MFMR and WorldFish, 2022).

Solomon Islands is part of the Coral Triangle, a marine area in the western Pacific Ocean that includes waters off Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. Hosting more than 2,000 species of reef fish and six of the seven marine turtle species, the Coral Triangle is known as the center of the world's marine biodiversity (WWF, 2024), making marine biodiversity a key asset to manage and conserve. Critical marine/aquatic habitats present in the study corridor are estuaries, coastal fringe reefs, and isolated reef systems. Sections of the study corridor, namely Marau Sound and Central Province reefs, are important habitat for corals, reef species, mangroves, and seagrasses. The Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion is a biologically significant ecosystem (WWF, 2003).

There is an increasing demand for marine resources with growing demand underpinning the widespread use of more efficient and often destructive fishing methods (Kile, 2000). In addition to impacts from unsustainable fishing, reefs and fishing grounds are subject to a variety of other damage resulting from land-based human activities and incursions.

Between 2014–2017, the SIG worked with the Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Management in Pacific Island countries project (MACBIO) team to research, assess, and synthesize data into maps that document Special and/or Unique Marine Area (SUMA). The methodology included a workshop conducted in July 2017, bringing together environmental specialists from across Solomon Islands to determine the location and boundaries of each SUMA, and to discuss and rate them in accordance with their attributes (Ceccarelli DM, 2019). The final list of SUMAs includes the following sites from within or near the study corridor (see Map 5 for distance of SUMAs to study corridor):

- West Guadalcanal Marine Area
- Marau Sound
- Area between Russell Islands and Guadalcanal
- Russell Islands.

Sea turtles are a keystone species and understood to be an important part of their environment. Turtles help control prey, such as leatherbacks consuming jellyfish or hawksbills eating sponges that compete with reefs. Turtle nests provide nutrients to coastal vegetation, with hatchlings providing a food source for many animals. Green turtles grazing on seagrass is an important way to maintain seagrass bed health.

However, turtle populations are under pressure from indiscriminate harvesting of turtles and their eggs, impacts of sea level rises on nesting beaches, bycatch in industrial fishing, and ingestion of plastics.

A regulation enacted in 1998 protects turtles during peak nesting periods, June–July to August and November–December to January. Turtles and their eggs can only be harvested from February to May and during September and October (Kile, 2000).

Trochus (*Trochus hurstoni*) is a gastropod shellfish occurring throughout the corridor. The harvested trochus provides meat, while the shell is used to make button blanks, the base component used in the process of making buttons. Surveys have shown that even with a legal-size limit of between 8–12cm, trochus is showing signs of over exploitation (Kile, 2000). However, many communities in Solomon Islands practice some form of *Tabu* (periodic closure) to allow replenishment.

Efforts to farm and export live coral have proved economically unfeasible, largely due to the high transportation costs (Lal and Kinch 2005). The export of live corals seemed to have ceased in 2016. However, raw (dead) corals, mainly sourced from the Nggela and Marau Sound, continue to be legally exported, including large shipments of blue coral (*Heliopora coerulea*), thin birdsnest coral (*Seriatopora hystrix*) and cauliflower coral (*Pocillopora damicornis*), primarily to the United States (van der Ploeg J, 2020). Coral is also harvested locally for consumption where ground coral 'flour' is orally consumed with betel nut.

Solomon Islands has one of the most diverse coral reef systems in the world, with 485 coral species and 1,019 fish species recorded in its waters, and coral reefs covering around 5,750km² (van der Ploeg J, 2020). However, coral reefs are under increasing pressure from overexploitation of resources, habitat loss and land-based runoff and pollution. It is expected that climate change will exacerbate these threats.

More than 90 percent of inshore coastal areas, reefs and islets are owned and managed under the customary marine tenure system, where family units, clans or tribes have rights to access and use marine resources. This kinship group ownership system is recognized under the Constitution. Management of marine resources under the customary marine tenure system include limited entry, closed seasons, closed areas, size limits, species prohibitions and restrictions on the use of fishing equipment.

Coral reef conservation efforts largely depend on the attitudes and practices of communities owning them. Observations made during site inspections demonstrated that marine resources had been heavily exploited with noticeable impacts at most locations.

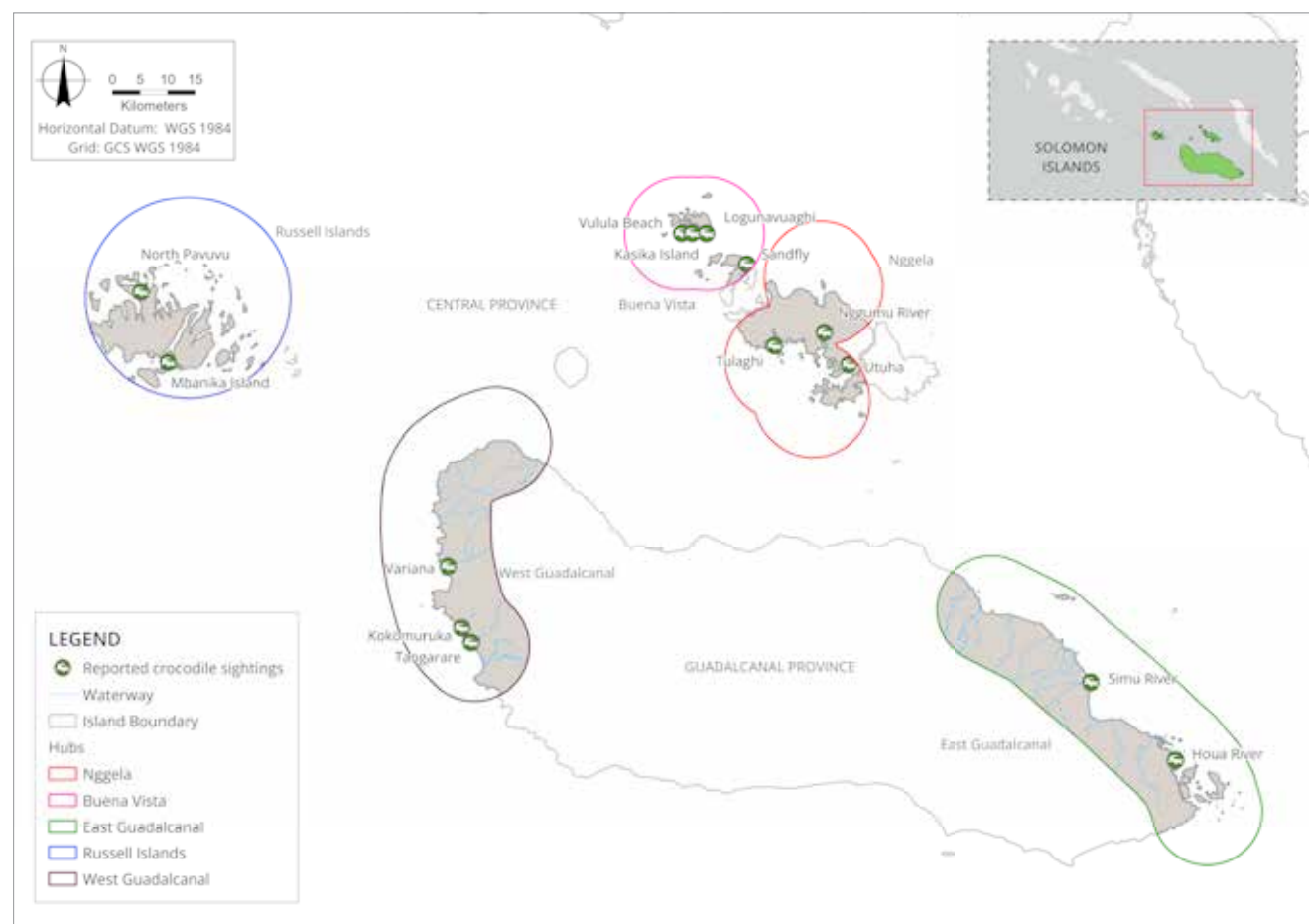
One important aquatic consideration is the saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*), known to occur in the study corridor. This species is an important part of the aquatic and estuarine ecosystem, but is also relevant from a hazard management perspective as they frequently use the sea to move between river systems. Map 9 provides an overview of known crocodile sightings based on crocodile hotspot data and stakeholder interviews at the study sites.

In interviews during consultations at sites, instances of crocodile interactions were noted and included within site assessments, as well as added to the map as areas with documented crocodile sightings.

The number of crocodiles has some uncertainty due to limited research, but it is estimated there are between 1,400–2,300 non-hatchling saltwater crocodiles across the main hotspots in Solomon Islands. In Central Province, the population is estimated at 180–267, and in Guadalcanal 90–143 (Van der Ploeg, et al., 2019).

Crocodiles are the largest living reptiles with aggressive tendencies, inhabiting estuaries, swamps, mangroves, and other tidal areas. They were once hunted commercially for meat and skins. Since the 1993 hunting ban, populations of crocodiles have increased. Crocodiles are listed under the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species (CITES) and have cultural significance for many Solomon Islanders.

Map 9: Reported crocodile sightings in the study corridor



The National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan 2016–2020 identified the need to develop a management plan for estuarine crocodiles. SPREP funded a consultancy to support development of national saltwater crocodile management and harvest-monitoring plans. In May 2024, the MECDM informed the study team that the document was not yet available, as it needed approval by the Cabinet prior to public release.

In a 2018 survey across Solomon Islands, 83 fatal crocodile attacks were recorded, including 31 child fatalities. Crocodile attacks have occurred across Central Province, with a fatality in June 2023 at a diving location in Nggela Island. A 2019 WorldFish report stated fishing was the primary activity taking place when crocodile attacks occur (Van der Ploeg, et al., 2019). On top of this are many instances of serious injury and trauma related to crocodile attacks (Current Conservation, 2023). This is an important risk to consider for tourism operators. The other relevant aspect in Solomon Islands is

there are significant cultural belief systems in place, with more than half of villagers surveyed stating that crocodiles were sacred animals (Current Conservation, 2023) and widespread customary restrictions were in place related to the killing and consumption of crocodiles. Coexistence relates to in-depth knowledge of crocodile behavior and ecology, which are often interwoven with totems and taboos that affect human behavior. Communities believe these practices reduce the likelihood of being preyed upon by crocodiles.

Table 19 provides an overview of marine ecology in the study corridor. Much of the data was ascertained from IBAT reports (IBAT, 2023), supplemented with additional research and discussions. It is important to note that the data is not always wholly accurate and updated, and any development proposals need to undertake site-specific marine ecology surveys.

Table 19: Summary of marine ecology within study corridor

Factor	Guadalcanal Province	Central Province
Marine environment	- The study corridor areas of West and East Guadalcanal in Solomon Islands exhibit remarkable marine biodiversity: - West Guadalcanal Marine Area: Recognized as a SUMA, this area boasts coral reefs, seagrass beds, and serves as habitat for turtles, dugongs, and cetaceans. - Marau Sound: Also designated as a SUMA, it hosts endangered species such as turtles, dugongs, and bumphead parrotfish. It is a biodiversity hotspot, particularly for seabirds, and features extensive coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds. - Located at the eastern end of Guadalcanal Island, Marau Sound’s habitat is characterized by a lagoon-like inlet surrounded by fringing reefs and numerous small islands. Seagrass beds within the inlet provide crucial habitat for various marine species. - Seagrass beds: The study corridor encompasses 80 percent of described Indo-Pacific seagrass species, which are vital ecosystems supporting fisheries and juvenile fish. - Mangroves: Marau Sound boasts the highest number and coverage of mangrove areas in Guadalcanal Province, contributing significantly to coastal ecosystem health. - The Marau Sound area is considered a key site within the Bismarck Solomon Seas Eco-region, highlighting its ecological significance on a broader scale.	- IBAT (2023) reports for Central Province identified more than 1,650 species of ray-finned fish species (Actinopterygii), 490 corals, 46 sea cucumber species and 40 species of Chondrichthyes (sharks, rays, cartilaginous fish) that may be present in the study corridor. - Invertebrate species that have a high market value are lower in numbers in Central Province compared to other parts of Solomon Islands (MFMR and WorldFish, 2022). - Extensive reef systems and smaller islands are present on the northern side of Russell Islands. - A high biomass of key fisheries species is present (snapper, surgeon fish, emperors, and parrotfish). - North of West Russell, Pavuvu Island has been identified as a SUMA. It was nominated as it is a green and hawksbill turtle nesting area, and a hotspot for crocodiles and sharks.

Factor	Guadalcanal Province	Central Province
Coral reef systems	- The western tip of Guadalcanal Province in the study area has a shallow and deep coral reef habitat. - In Marau Sound, there is a high-water exchange rate that results in clear water conditions and allows corals to flourish within the sound (Ceccarelli, et al., 2018). - The extensive reef systems amongst small islands are valuable for ecotourism operations.	- Coral reefs in central seascape are less exposed to climate change, with scientists prioritizing this area due to regenerative potential for re-seeding global coral reefs (WWF, 2023). - In the Russell Islands SUMA, the reefs are complex and interspersed with sand and seagrass meadows. The area is rich in biodiversity with high live coral cover.
Biodiversity values	- Western Guadalcanal Hub is bordered by clusters of species rich coral reefs inhabiting a large diversity of species. This area includes the Tiaro Bay LMMA. - Eastern Guadalcanal Hub has a high density of key environments for habitat and biodiversity, including nine MMAs.	- Nggela Islands have extensive lagoon and reef systems amongst the raised coral atoll islands to the north. This area is home to a species-rich environment. - Russell Islands is an area with high biodiversity and listed as an ecoregional important area within the Bismarck Solomon Seas Eco-region. - Sites in Nggela Islands are within 10km of the Nggela KBA.
Fishing resources	- In the 2019 Census, 41 percent of households in Guadalcanal (excluding Honiara) were engaged in fisheries for subsistence (26 percent), sale (1 percent), or both (14 percent). - Important resources for local diets include eel, prawns, tuna, snapper, marlin, reef fish such as parrot and surgeon fish. Snapper, jawfish, grouper and bream are high value and usually sold (MFMR and WorldFish, 2022). - Overfishing by communities is problematic in West Guadalcanal with its narrow fringe reefs located in densely populated areas (van der Ploeg J, 2020). This has potential implications for nature-based ecotourism.	- In the 2019 Census, 72 percent of households were engaged in fisheries, with approximately 28 percent for household consumption, 1 percent for sale, and 44 percent for both. - Key resources for local communities include fin fish, invertebrates such as trochus, clams, mud crabs, squid, and crayfish, bêche-de-mer species, and some seaweeds.
Estuarine crocodiles	The WorldFish 2019 report estimated 60–88 sub-adult crocodiles and 30–55 adults present in locations within the study corridor in Guadalcanal Province (Van der Ploeg, et al., 2019).	The WorldFish 2019 report estimated 108–165 sub-adult crocodiles and 72–102 adults present in locations across Central Province (Van der Ploeg, et al., 2019).

3.2.11 Socio-economic environment

A summary of the socio-economic environment for Guadalcanal and Central Provinces is outlined in Table 20, with the population density shown in Map 10. Data is extracted from the 2019 Census (SINSO, 2023), with

Guadalcanal data not including Honiara city. Statistical data was supplemented with insights gathered during the broader consultation process.

Map 10: Population density and location of villages in the study corridor

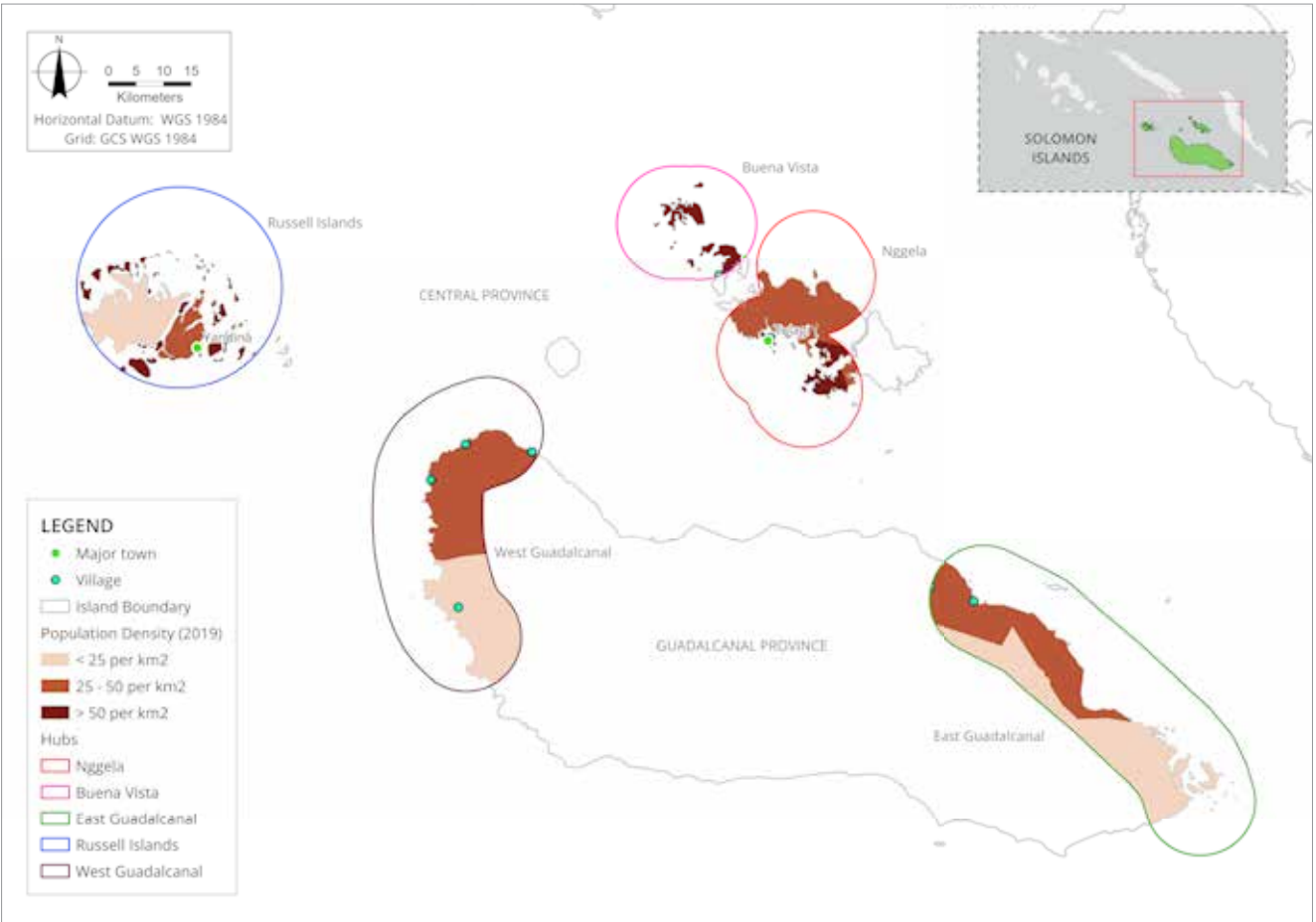
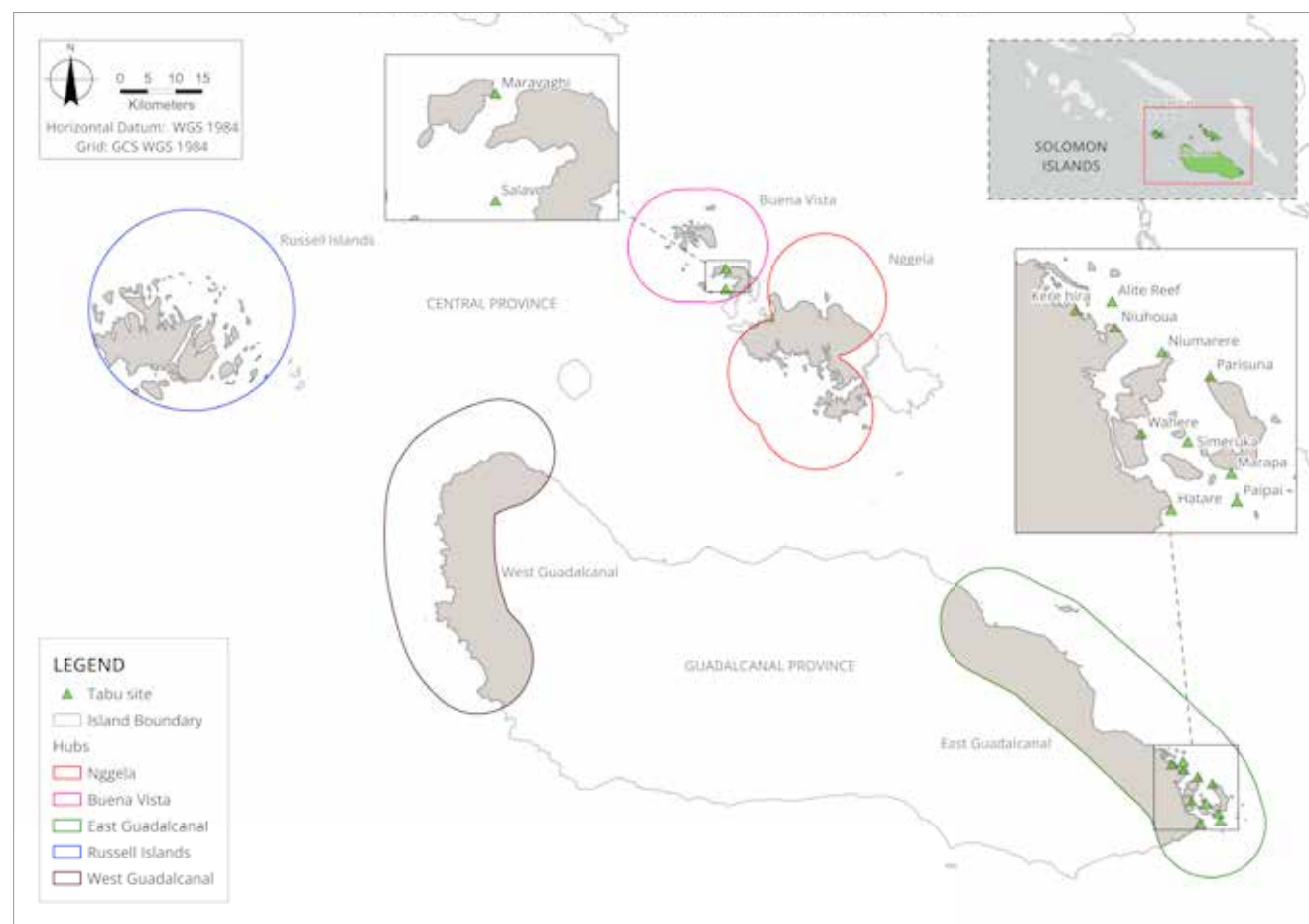


Table 20: Summary of socio-economic factors from 2019 Census

Factor	Guadalcanal Province	Central Province
Population and demography (2019 Census data)	- Total population: 154,150 people. - Increase between 2009–2019: 45.4 percent. - Population projection by 2025: 184,000. - Population density: 29 people per square kilometer. - Males: 51.3 percent. - Females: 48.7 percent. - Median age: 21 years.	- Total population: 30,326 people. - Increase between 2009–2019: 16.4 percent. - Population projection by 2025: 34,809. - Population density: 49 people per square kilometer (highest in Solomon Islands at the time of the 2019 Census). - Males: 50.9 percent. - Females: 49.1 percent. - Median age: 21 years.

Map 11: Known cultural and *Tabu* sites in the study corridor



Factor	Guadalcanal Province	Central Province
Indigenous people, culture and religion	• Religion - Church of Melanesia: 32 percent. - Roman Catholic: 30 percent. - South Sea Evangelical Church: 17 percent. - Seventh Day Adventist: 12 percent. - United Church: 9 percent. - Christian denominations and faiths: 10 percent. - Religion statistics only available at national level. • Ethnicity - Melanesian: 98.2 percent. - Polynesian: 1 percent. - Residents of other ethnicities, including Micronesians, Chinese and Europeans: 0.8 percent. - A large proportion (95 percent) of the population in Guadalcanal Province is Indigenous to the area. Some migrant workers/settler communities are located near northwest Guadalcanal Province and Marau Sound.	• Religion - Church of Melanesia: 32 percent. - Roman Catholic: 30 percent. - South Sea Evangelical Church: 17 percent. - Seventh Day Adventist: 12 percent. - United Church: 9 percent. - Christian denominations and faiths: 10 percent. - Religion statistics only available at national level. • Ethnicity - Melanesian: 95.7 percent. - Polynesian: 4 percent. - Residents of other ethnicities, including Micronesians, Chinese and Europeans: 0.3 percent. - Consultations indicated that a large proportion (95 percent) of the population in Central Province is indigenous to the area. Some migrant workers/settler communities are located in Yandina.

Factor	Guadalcanal Province	Central Province
Economy	• Labor force participation rate (proportion of population employed or actively seeking employment): 57.8 percent. • Males currently employed: 53.3 percent. • Females currently employed: 46.7 percent. • Unemployment rate: 8.36 percent. • Barriers to labor participation: - Transport/bad weather. - Belief that no work is available. - No desire to work. • Primary industry: agriculture, forestry, and fishing (72.4 percent of all employment). • Underage labor: 21.9 percent of employees aged 12–18 years employed in Solomon Islands are in Guadalcanal Province.	• Labor force participation rate (proportion of population employed or actively seeking employment): 53.6 percent. • Males currently employed: 53.2 percent. • Females currently employed: 46.8 percent. • Unemployment rate: 3.54 percent. • Barriers to labor participation: - Full-time homemaker. - Experiencing disability. - No desire to work. • Primary industry: agriculture, forestry, and fishing (86.6 percent of all employment). • Underage labor: 4.2 percent of employees aged 12–18 years employed in Solomon Islands are in Central Province.
Education and literacy	• Population aged over five years who attend school: 30.9 percent. • Population aged over five years who have never been to school: 17.3 percent. • Females who have never been to school: 19 percent. • Males who have never been to school: 15.7 percent. • Population who leaves school early: 51.8 percent. • Primary school completion as highest form of education: 46.5 percent. • Total literacy rate: 81 percent. • Female literacy rate: 80 percent. • Male literacy rate: 82 percent.	• Population aged over five years who attend school: 37.8 percent. • Population aged over five years who have never been to school: 12.9 percent. • Females who have never been to school: 16.1 percent. • Males who have never been to school: 9.9 percent. • Population who leaves school early: 49.3 percent. • Primary school completion as highest form of education: 48.5 percent. • Total literacy rate: 83 percent. • Female literacy rate: 81 percent. • Male literacy rate: 85 percent.
Health	• Average age for women to give birth to first child: 24 years. • Indicators of child mortality in Guadalcanal Province were all lower than in Solomon Islands overall. • Male life expectancy: 53.3 years. • Female life expectancy: 57.6 years.	• Average age for women to give birth to first child: 24 years. • Rates of child mortality were higher in Central Province than the national average (and was the highest of all provinces). • Male life expectancy: 56.1 years. • Female life expectancy: 58.3 years.

Factor	Guadalcanal Province	Central Province
Households	• Number of households: 28,876. • Average occupancy per household: 5.3. • Primary source of household income: - Sale of crops: 47.3 percent. - Wages: 27 percent. • Households with leases on customary land: 62.4 percent. • Main type of dwelling: detached (89.2 percent) and made from wood (59.4 percent).	• Number of households: 5,915. • Average occupancy per household: 5.1. • Primary source of household income: - Sale of crops: 43.7 percent. - Sale of fish: 23.5 percent. • Households with leases on customary land: 69 percent. • Main type of dwelling: detached (94.6 percent) and made from traditional materials (55.4 percent).
Gender and disability inclusion	• Gender - Women experiencing domestic and family violence at the hands of their partner: 64 percent (data at national level) (IWDA, 2018). - Consultations for the ESDS indicated that women in Guadalcanal Province are at high risk of SEAH, particularly in regions where forestry is a key industry. Two West Guadalcanal Hub areas were identified as high-risk (Tangarare and Marau Sound). • Disability - Proportion of the population who experience disability (noting this is potentially underreported in Census data): - 9.8 percent with seeing difficulty. - 5.3 percent with hearing difficulty. - 7.8 percent with walking difficulty. - 7.9 percent with remembering difficulty. - 4.6 percent with self-care difficulty. - 3.1 percent with communicating difficulty.	• Gender - Women experiencing domestic and family violence at the hands of their partner: 64 percent (data at national level) (IWDA, 2018). - Consultations in Central Province did not provide any insights into SEAH. However, research has shown a strong correlation between logging camps and fishing boats, with exploitation in Solomon Islands (US Department of State, 2021). • Disability (noting this is potentially underreported in Census data) - Proportion of the population who experience disability (noting this is potentially underreported in Census data): - 11.4 percent with seeing difficulty. - 6.2 percent with hearing difficulty. - 9.2 percent with walking difficulty. - 8.8 percent with remembering difficulty. - 4.4 percent with self-care difficulty. - 3.2 percent with communicating difficulty.

3.2.12 Infrastructure and services

Table 21 provides a summary of infrastructure within the study corridor, sourced from the 2019 Census (SINSO, 2023) and National Infrastructure Investment Plan (SIG, 2013) while Map 12 offers a visual representation of this information. Planned infrastructure is also presented in Table 22, sourced from the National Infrastructure Investment

Pipeline (MNPDC, 2021) under the National Infrastructure Investment Plan (NIIP) and from research of donor programs. Dates of implementation are included where possible, but most investments are highlighted as priorities under the NIIP without implementation timeframes available.

Map 12: Infrastructure in the study corridor

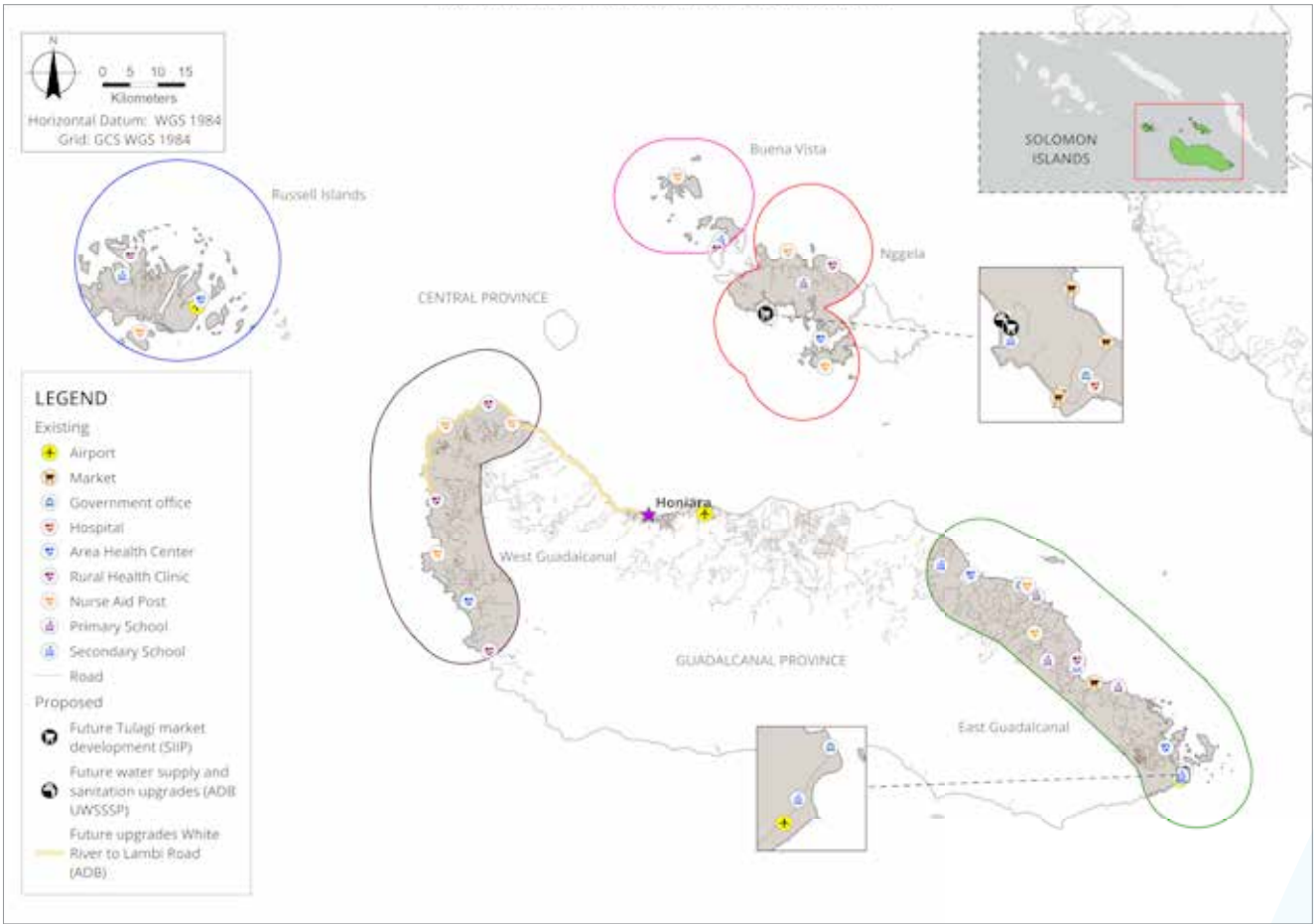


Table 21: Summary of existing infrastructure in the study corridor

Factor	Guadalcanal Province	Central Province
Transportation services	Airports - Honiara International Airport. - Marau Airport, but currently closed due to a land dispute between local landowners and airport trustees. Solomon Airlines has suspended flights since January 2022. Prior to the suspension of flights, Solomon Airlines was operating three flights per week. - Avu Avu Airport on south coast is not a destination for commercial flights, but can be used by charter flights or emergency services. It has a grass runway and no instrument approach procedures. Roads - Honiara has a good road system that links the capital with nearby settlements along the central north coast of the island. - Road infrastructure to West Guadalcanal Hub is poor in many areas, lengthening travel times and acting as a barrier for tourism. Beyond Lambi Bay in the West Guadalcanal Hub, communities are only accessible by boat. - The road network to the eastern side of Guadalcanal Province is poor. Marau Sound is not accessible by road.	Airports - There are no commercial flights into Central Province. - There is a small airstrip at Yandina that has not been operational since the 1990s. It has a grass runway and no instrument approach procedures. Roads - The road network in the Central Province is limited.
	Sea transport - Using boats is currently the only option to access several areas in the study corridor. There are no commercial passenger boat services, with the only option to hire a local boat, which are readily available. - Maritime safety is a key challenge with limited support systems. - The passage to East Guadalcanal Hub can be challenging in high swell conditions, making the travel uncomfortable and long (up to six hours from Honiara to Marau in poor weather conditions).	Sea transport - Boats are the major source of transportation around island groups in Central Province. - Maritime safety is a key challenge with limited support systems.

Factor	Guadalcanal Province	Central Province
Energy infrastructure	• Outside of the Honiara grid, rural areas mainly use generators, kerosene, firewood, solar panels, and batteries. • 87.1 percent of households in Guadalcanal Province are reliant on solar power for lighting and other domestic electrical use. • 8 percent are connected to the main grid. • The province has potential for renewable energy like solar, wind, and hydro power. A notable project is the Solar Electric Village of Sukiki, providing electricity to 50 households.	• As many areas are remote and isolated, access to electricity is limited. Primary energy sources include generators, solar and biomass. These systems service households and businesses rather than a broader network. • 94.4 percent of households rely on solar power for lighting and other domestic electrical use. • 3.7 percent are connected to the main grid. • Central Province has potential for renewable energy development, including geothermal, wind, and hydro power.
Water supply	• Outside of Honiara, communities rely on rainwater harvesting, groundwater wells and springs. • 19.9 percent of water is sourced from unprotected springs, 16.1 percent from piped water outside of the house, and 15.7 percent from public taps. • Challenges in the province include water shortage, water quality concerns, water losses, and wastewater management issues. • Most households can collect drinking water in less than 10 minutes' walk from their dwelling (53.2 percent).	• Rainwater harvesting, wells, and springs serve as primary water sources. • 37 percent of households collect rainwater and 27.9 percent access water from public taps. • The main issues include water scarcity, contamination, and lack of storage.
Waste management infrastructure and services	• There are no sanitary landfills in Guadalcanal Province outside of Honiara. • From Census data, 3,331 households in the province have access to waste collection services. • The majority reported disposing of waste through burning, burying or dumping (usually in community designated areas).	• There are no sanitary landfills in Central Province. • From Census data, 6 percent of households use their backyards for waste disposal, with the remainder using community designated areas for burning and burial. • In 2019, JICA under the J-PRISM program supported the MECDM to facilitate a waste management workshop in Tulagi to enhance knowledge of waste systems for stakeholders in Central Province and develop a Waste Management Plan for Tulagi.
Sanitation	• 15,803 households have no access to proper toilet facilities and practice open defecation (55 percent of households). • 3,575 households have flush to septic tank facilities. • 2,749 households use flush pit latrines. • A total of 32 percent of households have improved sanitation facilities (flush to septic or pit latrines, pit latrines with slab, ventilated improved pit, or composting toilets).	• 554 households (9 percent) have improved sanitation systems. • The majority of households still practice open defecation (5,294 households, or 90 percent).

Factor	Guadalcanal Province	Central Province
Telecommunications	• 39.1 percent of the population own a mobile phone, and 60.9 percent do not have a phone. • A larger proportion of males (45.8 percent) have a mobile phone compared to females (32.2 percent). • The vast majority of those who own a mobile phone are employed (98.9 percent). • 16.6 percent of the population use the internet. Of those who have internet access, 59.5 percent are male, and 40.5 percent are female.	• 30.6 percent of the population own a mobile phone, while 69.4 percent do not have a phone. • A larger proportion of males (39.3 percent) have a mobile phone compared to females (21.5 percent). • The majority of those who own a mobile phone are employed (95.8 percent). • 2.1 percent of the population use the internet. Of those who have internet access, 65.5 percent are male, and 34.5 percent are female.
Health and medical services	• There are 40 health facilities across Guadalcanal Province (outside of Honiara). These include: • 21 nurse aid posts, which provide general clinical services and essential trauma care (outpatient only). The posts are open when visiting nurses are rostered and lack essential equipment and medicine. • 13 rural health clinics, which provide general clinical services and outpatient care, as well as some specialist services, such as family and reproductive health. The clinics do not have the equipment and medicine essential to save mothers' and children's lives (World Vision, 2015). Often buildings are in a poor state of repair (Short, 2021). • Six area health centers, which provide general clinical services and outpatient care, as well as specialist services and community health.	• There are 22 health facilities located in Central Province. These include: • 13 nurse aid posts, which provide general clinical services and essential trauma care (outpatient only). The posts are open when visiting nurses are rostered and lack essential equipment and medicine. • Four rural health clinics, which provide general clinical services and outpatient care, as well as some specialist services, such as family and reproductive health. The clinics do not have the equipment and medicine essential to save mothers' and children's lives (World Vision, 2015). Often buildings are in a poor state of repair (Short, 2021). • Four area health centers, which provide general clinical services and outpatient care, as well as specialist services and community health. • One hospital (located in Tulagi).

Proposed Infrastructure

Table 22: Summary of proposed infrastructure in the study corridor

Project	Donor	Description
Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project, 2019 (ADB, 2023a)	Asian Development Bank (ADB) Co-financers: World Bank, European Development Fund	In collaboration with the SIG, this project aims to help improve access to safe water and improved sanitation, improve hygiene behavior and raise awareness. It will assist Solomon Islands Water Authority (SIWA) to improve its operational, technical, and financial sustainability. The project includes activities across five sites, including Honiara. The following objectives are planned to be achieved by 2027 in Tulagi, Central Province: • Rehabilitate and expand the existing water supply systems. • Construct new sewage pumping stations and reintegrate the existing ones. • Replacing existing wastewater outfalls in a state of disrepair with new ones.
Solomon Islands Infrastructure Program (SIIP) (SIIP, 2023)	Australian Aid	SIIP is redeveloping markets across Solomon Islands to grow local economies. A new market house for Tenaru (Guadalcanal Province) is being scoped, with minor works underway to redevelop the existing Tulagi market in Central Province.
Solomon Islands National Broadband Infrastructure Project (SINBIP) (SIG, 2023b)	SIG	The SINBIP includes construction of up to 161 telecommunication towers planned with the recent signing of a contracting agreement. It is unclear where the infrastructure will be built.
Upgrading of West Guadalcanal Roads from White River to Lambi (ADB, 2023b)	ADB	The Sustainable Transportation Infrastructure Improvement Program (STIIP) involves the upgrade of the current sealed road section and rehabilitating existing unsealed roads. Works include widening the road shoulder and improving drainage.
Tulagi Ring Road Rehabilitation	Listed in NIIP	This project aims to improve the current gravel road, connect new roads, and install appropriate drainage.
Rural Water	Listed in NIIP	Is focused on building rural water supply initiatives for schools, clinics, and villages. It includes developing procedures to engage the community in maintaining village water supply systems.
Provincial Landfills Infrastructure Development	Listed in NIIP	Aims to develop landfill design, identification of land, preliminary evaluation, and feasibility studies. Social and environmental protection is a focus, as is developing capacity and operational infrastructure support.
Rural Health Centers (primary health care services)	Listed in NIIP	Redevelopment of currently operating rural health facilities in all provinces of Solomon Islands.
Renewable Energy Investment	Partially funded. Listed in NIIP	A hybrid power system will be installed in boarding schools with current electrical grids to provide a consistent and dependable power supply. The system combines solar panels, a diesel generator, and battery storage. To power the grid and store energy produced by photovoltaic panels, this solar hybrid system will include battery banks. It will also feature hybrid power inverters to power the grid during the day and charge batteries during periods of excess photovoltaic generation.

4. Risk (Register) assessment

4.1 CONTEXTUAL RISKS

4.1.1 Overview

IFC's contextual-risk framework provides an indicative level of risk based on international datasets and analysis for all sectors in the country. These broader contextual risks were reviewed in relation to tourism investment, with results of high and moderate risks presented in Figure 2.

The red shaded boxes depict high risk, while yellow boxes highlight moderate risk. For Food Security and Health, the 2021 ESDS rated this as a moderate risk. This has now been upgraded to high risk. Conversely, the 2021 ESDS report rated Reprisals as high risk, but this is now rated as moderate.

Indicators identified as being the highest contextual risks for tourism in Solomon Islands are further analyzed and described in Sections 4.1.2 to 4.1.11.

4.1.2 Workplace exclusion and discrimination

High Risk

The contextual risk of workplace exclusion and discrimination can lead to social unrest and undermine economic growth for all. The tourism industry is not immune from this risk, as it relies on a workforce that can provide services that meet expectations, whilst being set within a local community environment. While workplace practices can build community through equitable employment and opportunities, or pre-existing tensions can also be exacerbated. In the worst-case scenario, these tensions can spill over into conflict or reprisals.

Inequalities in Solomon Islands are rooted in histories and traditions that can emphasize and exacerbate difference. The traditional *Wantok* system of community kinship can create cultural strength in some respects, but equally can emphasize difference and foster division. Discrimination based on *Wantok* can underpin corruption and nepotism by those in positions of power (Equal Rights Trust, 2019).

Stakeholder engagement for the ESDS indicated that gender inequality is perceived by those consulted as a prominent issue in Solomon Islands. However, when interviewed for the ESDS, local villagers commonly recognized employment opportunities for women in local communities and held a

positive perception of women participating in the workforce. Data collected for the 2019 Census indicated that males were over-represented in the paid labor force compared to females (Section 3.2.11).

People with disabilities in Solomon Islands face additional barriers when accessing the workplace and can regularly experience exclusion and discrimination based on disability. Analysis conducted by Strongim Bisnis¹¹ identified key issues faced by people living with disabilities in Solomon Islands, including a minimal level of basic skills, mobility, stigma and depending on the level and type of disability, limited communication capacity and social skills (Gwao, 2022). Physical barriers to participation are compounded by attitudinal barriers, with stigma a key barrier to workplace inclusion (CARE, 2020). There is no specific legislation or policy that protects the rights of people with disabilities from workplace exclusion and discrimination.

Other risks relating to gender and disability are described in Section 4.1.11.

Discrimination based on an individual's place of origin or birth has been an influential cultural and social dynamic in Solomon Islands. This inequality between different groups sparked into violence in 1998, leading to years of conflict, and a long-standing divide between people from Guadalcanal and Malaita Provinces, which has had lasting impacts on the social and economic situation of different ethnic groups (Equal Rights Trust, 2019). There is often discrimination experienced by both groups, particularly with regards to economic opportunities, employment, and land titles (Equal Rights Trust, 2019).

The tourism sector includes roles in retail, hospitality, beauty and personal care that are more frequently staffed by women. Development of the tourism sector in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces has the potential to provide opportunities for addressing workplace discrimination, particularly based on gender and ethnicity.

11 Strongim Bisnis is an initiative funded by the Australian Government, partnering with SIG and the private sector, to empower sustainable business growth. <https://www.strongimbisnis.com.sb/>

4.1.3 Deforestation and other threats to natural resources

High Risk

Deforestation and threats to natural resources are a key risk to consider when developing tourism opportunities. The state of the natural environment provides a drawcard to visitors, and any degradation has the potential to negatively impact the visitor experience and erode the reputation or image of Solomon Islands as a destination.

With the highest percentage of forest cover in the Pacific Islands, the 2015 Forest Resource Assessment found that approximately 78 percent of the land in Solomon Islands was covered by forests (FAO, 2015). Primary forests make up half of the country's forest area, and only 1 percent is plantations, noting that most forested land is in customary ownership (FAO, 2015). With the land and forest resources owned customarily by people, logging companies are requested to harvest resources in exchange for direct payment to customary owners. Whilst this has been an important contributor to GDP and local economic development, timber extraction has been undertaken at an unsustainable rate, leading to degradation of forests (JICA, 2020).

Unsustainable commercial logging is the primary driver of deforestation in Solomon Islands. Land clearance to establish industrial plantations, mainly palm oil, along with agriculture and subsistence farming, creates additional risks of cumulative impacts on natural resources. The country exported more than three million cubic meters of logs in 2017. This has been conservatively estimated as 19-fold higher than an estimate of an annual sustainable harvest (Global Witness 2018). The following increases the negative impacts of logging operations:

- Illegal logging (clearance without permission from landowners), including logging outside of concession boundaries, encroaching into areas without permission or harvesting protected species.
- Companies do not conduct environmental impact assessments nor follow legal and best-practice requirements to minimize environmental (and social) impacts.

- While the SIG has sound technical capacity in approvals and monitoring processes, funding and human resources are often limited for monitoring the compliance of widespread and often inaccessible logging sites across Solomon Islands.

Deforestation carries far-reaching consequences, affecting both biodiversity and the well-being of rural communities. As forests diminish, accessing essential forest resources for housing, food, and clean drinking water becomes increasingly challenging. Much deforestation occurs on extensive, steep terrain. This leads to erosion, sediment buildup, soil degradation, and reduced fertility. Ultimately, these changes diminish land productivity and result in losses of both terrestrial and marine biodiversity (ADB, 2012).

From 2002–2022, Solomon Islands lost 1,400km² of primary forest. This loss accounted for 65 percent of total tree cover loss in Solomon Islands during the given period (Global Forest Watch, 2023).

Other threats to natural resources include mining, clearance of land for large-scale agriculture, and land clearance through increased population pressures. Solomon Islands has significant mineral deposits such as gold, nickel and bauxite, providing economic and employment opportunities, along with the potential for significant environmental impacts. With national palm oil exports estimated at US\$37.5 million in 2022 (OEC, 2023), this is a significant industry. Given global concerns about the environmental impacts of oil palm, such as land clearance and degradation, a working group has been established to address how to provide a national interpretation and implementation of sustainability indicators for the industry (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, 2023).

When considering the context of natural resource degradation and deforestation, tourism can offer alternative economic pathways. But it must consider how to undertake this without cumulative impacts, instead seeking to enhance natural assets that underpin the tourism experience.

4.1.4 Government capacity in protected area management

High Risk

As a country with diverse and abundant natural resources, management of conservation outcomes is particularly challenging amidst rapid industrial practices, such as logging and industrial fishing. Pressure for economic development and the rapid pace of change provides the operating context for potential tourism businesses. As demonstrated in key SIG policies, improving sustainability of resource management and protected area management is a key commitment. However, resourcing and capacity constraints are a significant challenge to gain traction on the ground. With the contextual risk of limited government capacity to manage natural resources and protect key biodiversity areas, tourism investment can be directly impacted.

Tourism investors and operators can potentially play a role in directly addressing this risk. If a tourism venture is leveraged on the natural features of a protected or planned protected area, it is in its interest to strengthen the management of this asset. An important aspect of protected marine areas is the policy to scale-up community-based resource management (CBRM) initiatives as a pathway to collaborate with traditional owners to manage resources sustainably and enhance livelihoods (SIG, 2021). Recognizing that 90 percent of inshore coastal areas are under customary marine tenure (SIG, 2021), tourism investors and operators need to understand that improving natural resources and protected area management needs collaboration with traditional people who control, own, manage and use coastal resources within their customary boundaries.

JICA supported a capacity development project with the MOFR during 2017–2022, with the overall goal to promote sustainable forest resource management. The MOFR Corporate Plan 2019–2022 incorporated several new sustainable forest resource management initiatives. This work was reviewed and updated with JICA's support, with the new Corporate Plan 2023–2026 delivered in 2022. The corporate plan details forest policy, priority execution plans, divisional planning and activities for 2023–2026 (JICA, 2020).

JICA also supported development of the Long-Term Sustainable Forest Resource Management Policy, which details over-arching policy objectives, presents the organizational vision, current status of forest resources, challenges of the sector, and priorities for sustainable resource management. Having sound planning processes in place can improve

the ministry's resource utilization and capacity to prioritize measures to improve sustainability (JICA, 2020).

Under the Forest Value Enhancement Project, implemented under the MCC SITHP, the SIG is supported to generate more reliable and sustainable benefits from the country's natural forest resources through reducing environmental impacts, increasing forest production revenue and equitable disbursement to communities, and regulatory forms (with adequate enforcement measures) to balance utilization of forests for logging and non-logging purposes (SITHP, 2024).

In the mineral resources sector, inconsistent management and low levels of regulatory capacity have inhibited investment by responsible mining companies and have allowed poor-performing operators to gain a foothold in the sector (World Bank, 2021b). Governance is further challenged by competing interests. The resources policy of Solomon Islands presents an external framework applied to traditional systems such as collective landownership, kinship systems and cultural rights. Neglecting key tribal interests and goals in mineral resource policy sets the conditions for conflict rather than long-term stability for social and economic development (Naitoro, 2000). The *Mines and Minerals Act 1990* was updated to provide better protections for stakeholders under the *Mineral Resource Bill 2022*, along with establishment of a Mineral Resources Special Fund and a Solomon Islands Minerals Advisory Centre. However, passage into law is delayed due to COVID-19 impacts, and ongoing procedural issues.

The key challenge is achieving sustainability on the ground, having appropriate resources for law enforcement, monitoring, and policy implementation. As an example, the chief advisor from JICA supporting the MOFR stated that the government agency responsible for monitoring tax payments from the logging industry was understaffed, making the accurate payment of taxes difficult to achieve. This loss in revenue directly impacts the government's capacity to resource monitoring and enforcement, which increases the potential for corruption and unsustainable practices. The advisor also stated that sustainable forest resource management was difficult if the logging industry remained dominated by foreign companies and workers (Iroga, 2022).

The Solomon Islands National Environment Management Strategy 2020–2023 provides a cross sectoral approach to improve the sustainability across the seven facets of the Solomon Islands State of the Environment report prepared by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme

(SPREP): culture and heritage, atmosphere and climate, land, marine and coastal, freshwater, biodiversity, and the built environment. The strategy acknowledges the limits in human resources, technology and funding, and the ongoing reliance on development partners. It sets out to address these limitations through coordination and collaboration across ministries, municipal and provincial agencies, NGOs and external partners. Tourism projects can play an important part in enhancing natural resource management at a local level, supporting conservation efforts, and working with traditional owners to create alternative livelihoods grounded in sustainability.

4.1.5 Food security and health

High Risk

Notably, while the 2021 ESDS study in Western Province rated this contextual risk as 'moderate', it has been increased to 'high' risk given the following health-related issues. In addition, COVID-19 impacts rolled back critical development gains in child and maternal health, with evidence that GBVH increased during the pandemic (SIG, 2021) and that higher food prices reduced access and affordability of healthy diets. The pandemic also increased pressure on health services and infrastructure through the need to resource the health crisis response.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports that one-in-10 Solomon Islanders are undernourished, and 12.7 percent of the population live below the poverty line. Malnutrition is a serious issue in Solomon Islands, with 15.5 percent of children under five years old classified as underweight (FAO, 2021). At the other end of the scale, a large proportion of the adult population in Solomon Islands experience obesity (34.3 percent of males and 47.4 percent of females). Both statistics indicate unhealthy food and eating behaviors, often driven by food scarcity and an unbalanced diet. Data collected by FAO also indicates that a large proportion of Solomon Islanders' daily diet is typically made up of carbohydrates, whilst consumption of protein is reducing (FAO, 2021). This was confirmed during consultations with village members, which indicated rising challenges with over-fishing leading to food scarcity.

Although tourism operations could stimulate the local economy and potentially increase local markets and produce availability, it could also further reduce availability for local communities through preferential supply of goods to tourism operators. The presence of tourists in remote areas could also

mean fishing greater amounts to provide locally caught fish to the tourist market, which could change the availability of fish in local areas. Tourism operations could also lead to marine restrictions being placed on local reefs to protect their value for recreation for tourists, which could further limit the protein available to local communities, and further increase their reliance on carbohydrates. In addition, tourism could bring more people into the cash economy through payment of wages, which could drive a greater reliance on low-quality processed food purchased from stores. Should local people be employed at tourism operations, this may reduce the time available for gardening, collection of traditional food, or subsistence fishing.

A further health risk in the study corridor is the spread of communicable diseases, including malaria, dengue fever, zika virus and SARS-CoV-2. Malaria, dengue fever and zika virus are mosquito-borne viruses, with incidences able to be reduced through environmental controls that reduce stagnant water breeding areas, and use of mosquito nets, residual spraying, and mosquito repellents. Other communicable disease risks can be reduced with good hygiene practices by staff and guests.

4.1.6 Reprisals risk

Moderate Risk

Rated as 'high' in the 2021 ESDS study in Western Province, this contextual risk has decreased to 'moderate' although it remains a contextual risk of significance. This reduction in risk reflects the ongoing rebuilding efforts since the worst of the civil unrest during the 1990s. Reprisals are considered any act of retaliation by an individual or group. Solomon Islands has a history of reprisals, including throughout the tensions that led to civil unrest in the 1990s (Section 3.1.7). During consultations, examples of reprisals were provided in relation to tourism operations. These included instances of tourism operations being set on fire, which ultimately led to their closure. Consultations for the ESDS indicated that reprisals posed a risk to future tourism operations, particularly if evident in the past. Community members felt that ongoing and genuine engagement with local communities and Indigenous groups was critical to reducing risk of reprisals.

The U.S. Department of State also pinpointed a fear of reprisals as a key barrier to people reporting human rights abuses or misconduct, including in the workplace (U.S. Department of State, 2022). Tourism investors would need to be aware of this when managing staff and implementing operational policies.

4.1.7 Labor policies

Moderate Risk

Labor policies and legislation are defined and implemented by the SIG. A number of these policies, including the minimum legal age for employment, do not align with the International Labour Organization (ILO). This means children as young as 12 years old can legally enter formal employment in Solomon Islands, and in some informal industries it is much younger. This poses a risk for tourism investors, who may either directly or indirectly utilize child labor as part of their operations or supply chains.

In 2022, ILO worked with key stakeholders in Solomon Islands to identify potential improvements to labor policies, through development of a National Employment Policy (ILO, 2022).

Solomon Islands has occupational health and safety legislation, which outlines the requirements for keeping people safe at work. Tourism investors would need to implement operational procedures in line with this legislation at any tourism site. The *Labour Act 1996* also restricts children and young people from certain work, with no child under the age of 12 years to be employed in any capacity.

However, these provisions are inconsistent with the ILO Minimum Age Convention 1973, No.138, which Solomon Islands has ratified. The international convention requires that a minimum working age should not be lower than 14 years (12 years for light work) for all types of work where the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed. In addition, while the *National Penal Code 1963* and the *Immigration Act 2012* set out provisions to prohibit child SEA/H, the actual situation on the ground deviates from standards set by the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Solomon Islands is a signatory.

The *Safety at Work Act 1982* focuses on the health and safety of employees and workers, particularly in the industrial or construction sectors, including the tourism industry. Provisions include requirements for first aid training.

Labor policies also need strengthening to eradicate discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, or disability, as described in Section 4.1.2, providing inclusive and safe workplaces for all. Tackling exclusion requires strengthening labor policies and legislation. This encompasses not only removing barriers, but also considering policies to promote women and people with disabilities to leadership positions,

capacity building support to marginalized community members, and celebrating successes to remove stigma.

4.1.8 Access to basic infrastructure and services

Moderate Risk

Most people across Solomon Islands experience limited access to basic services and infrastructure, particularly those living in rural areas and people with additional needs, such as those with disabilities. Limited services and infrastructure pose a challenge for tourism operators, particularly those distant from Honiara, as it could increase upfront development costs, as well as potential safety risks for guests required to travel by boat to Honiara to access medical care. Although the presence of tourism would increase pressure on infrastructure such as waste, power and water, the tourism sector's development would potentially create uplift for surrounding communities as support infrastructure is installed (power, internet, waste, sanitation, and water utilities). Over time, successful tourism operators could drive a greater need for infrastructure, such as airports and hospitals, which would benefit local communities.

The last comprehensive national survey of health facilities indicated that most facilities operated without proper water and sanitation, electricity and basic medical equipment. A serious shortage of clinical equipment and medical supplies, and the use of old and poorly maintained equipment were noted (WHO, 2015). Clinics are reportedly still in urgent need of upgrades, repair or renovation (Short, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic added a further strain on the country's fragile health system, with approximately 26,000 recorded cases and 199 deaths recorded at the time of research (Worldometer, 2024).

4.1.9 Rural-urban disparities

Moderate Risk

While the majority of Solomon Islands' population live in rural areas, they experience disparities compared to those in urban areas, including access to infrastructure, employment, education, housing and basic services like water, electricity, and healthcare. Therefore, private sector investments in rural areas are likely to face community expectations for some of these gaps to be filled by a project developer. While those living in rural areas rely more on subsistence-based livelihoods for survival, they tend to enjoy a greater sense of social cohesion than their urban-based counterparts engaged in a formal economy.

The tourism sector provides an opportunity to benefit rural communities, as tourism sites are more likely to be developed outside of urban centers. This could create opportunities for enhanced or new infrastructure, employment, provision of goods, services and training for those living in rural areas. However, these benefits would only be possible through local employment and procurement practices, and long-term partnerships with local communities to maximize benefits.

4.1.10 Illegal hunting and wildlife trade

Moderate Risk

As the global trade in wildlife targets rare species, with the high level of endemism in Solomon Islands this increases the risk of illegal hunting and trade. Endemic parrots, skinks and birdwing butterflies are all high demand species. Whilst there can be a legal and sustainable trade that contributes to income if adequate oversight is in place, unregulated trade has the potential to impact rare or endangered species (Fotheringham, 2023).

Hunting of some species, including dugongs, is illegal in Solomon Islands under the Fisheries Management (Prohibited Activities) Regulations 2018, with punishments of four months' imprisonment and/or a fine of SI\$40,000. However, this legal protection applies to a limited number of species and can be inappropriate and unenforceable when it conflicts with traditional harvesting for subsistence. All five species of turtles found in Solomon Islands are listed as endangered or vulnerable under the IUCN Red List. However, harvesting of species, particularly the hawksbill and green turtles, has been practiced for generations. Inadequate protections, with under-resourcing of compliance and monitoring activities, hinders efforts to protect wildlife from over-exploitation.

Wildlife hunting can impact tourism operators, particularly those offering nature-based experiences such as diving and snorkeling. Declines in species diversity and abundance reduces the quality of the tourism experience, while exposure to practices such as consumption of turtles and their eggs can erode a country's reputation in the eyes of visitors who place a high value on wildlife.

4.1.11 Gender and social inclusion

Moderate Risk

Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH), or domestic and family violence, are common issues experienced by women in Solomon Islands, with 64 percent of women reporting abuse at the hands of a partner or family member (IWDA, 2018). A report by the U.S. Department of State in 2023 indicated that human trafficking (labor and sex trade) remained a prevalent issue in Solomon Islands, and that women and children are particularly vulnerable to the risk of trafficking. Vulnerable women include Solomon Islanders living in remote and rural areas, and women from other countries immigrating to Solomon Islands to seek employment opportunities. However, men and women experience lasting impacts from GBVH and SEAH. The report found that family members were often the facilitators of trafficking, and women in areas close to forestry operations were commonly affected (U.S. Department of State, 2023). The risk of SEAH was confirmed by stakeholders during consultations for the ESDS.

Tourism sector development could exacerbate risks to women, particularly in areas with known SEAH challenges. Risks to women and children posed by the tourism sector could be through:

- Presence of tourists increasing demand for labor leading to greater migration of women to rural areas. The presence of tourists could also increase demands for sex work in local areas.
- Employment opportunities for women changing family dynamics and potentially exacerbating occurrences of domestic and family violence from perpetrators.
- An increase in income for local families leading to a potential rise in alcohol consumption and abuse linked to anti-social behavior and GBVH.
- Pressure on supply chains and local producers leading to increased incidences of child labor.

Women continue to encounter various forms of gender-based disparities in society, impacting their ability to participate equally in various aspects of life. Discrimination is widespread, and this is perpetuated by negative cultural attitudes and stereotypes regarding women's roles and positions in society. Women actively participate in political, civil, economic, and church activities.

However, they remain significantly marginalized in decision-making processes (Equal Rights Trust, 2019) and are poorly represented in leadership roles, such as CEOs and board positions, with Solomon Islands recording the lowest level of women's representation on boards in benchmarking across the Pacific. At 11 percent, compared to an average of 21 percent (PSDI, 2021b), this demonstrates a need to address barriers faced by women to realize leadership roles.

The tourism and hospitality sector generally employs a high number of women in customer services, cleaning and cooking roles. However, women are not well represented in management or leadership positions. This perpetuates stereotypes that men are more suited to leadership roles, at the cost of greater economic security and status for women.

The socio-economic baseline (Section 3.2.11) also found that overall, women are more vulnerable than men based on reduced access to education, employment, and telecommunications. These statistics underpin a broader issue in relation to diminished opportunities for women, and therefore a lower capacity to participate in the workforce, particularly at a leadership level.

The Labour Act prohibits women to work at night (6pm to 6am). However, there are exceptions for women employed in management or in connection with a hotel, bar, restaurant or club. Although tourism operators would likely qualify for this exemption, this poses a risk to tourism investors, as there may be heightened levels of risk for women, such as when travelling to or from work. Businesses in the supply chain may not qualify for exemptions to this prohibition under the Act.

Eleven percent of the national population, five years and over, is reported to have at least one form of functional disability (SINSO, 2023). Traditionally, support has been entirely through the *Wantok* system, without a safety net at a State level, or a rights-based framework to remove barriers to social and economic participation.

People with disabilities also face additional barriers to equal participation in society. Discrimination against people with disabilities in Solomon Islands starts prior to people reaching working age, occurring as early as primary school. Data collected by UNICEF shows that only 2 percent of children with a disability attend primary school, which limits opportunities later in life (Gwao, 2022). Accessing the workplace is also challenging. Analysis conducted by Strongim Bisnis identifies that the main issues affecting people living with disabilities in Solomon Islands are an average minimal level of basic skills, mobility, stigma, and depending on the level and type of disability, communication capacity, and undeveloped social skills (Gwao, 2022). Physical barriers to participation are compounded by attitudinal barriers, with stigma a key barrier to workplace inclusion (CARE, 2020).

Despite these traditional barriers, there has been significant recent progress at a policy level with the SIG signing the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in 2008, and ratifying it in June 2022. The National Disability Inclusiveness Development Policy 2022–2031 was launched in 2022 and sets a vision for equal participation in national development. This is further supported with the Rehabilitation Strategic Plan 2022–2031, the first of its kind in the Pacific, highlighting the role of rehabilitation to improve health and functioning, increase participation and inclusion, and save money in longer term health costs (SIG, 2022). Further, a new Building Code, yet to be adopted, specifies the need for disability access audits for public buildings. This service is supplied by local disability advocacy organizations, and regardless of the status of the revised draft Building Code, can provide a tangible way to reduce barriers to participation in tourism workplaces. Improving access can also enhance Solomon Islands as a destination for tourists with disabilities.

In addition to considering gender and disability inclusion for the workforce, tourism developers need to further consider inclusion for tourists. Lack of accessibility for people with disabilities or elderly guests can erode the visitor experience, and place guests at risk of injury.

4.2 CORRIDOR RISKS

The previous section refers to the over-arching contextual risks that apply at a national level. When describing risks at a corridor level, this refers to risks that apply to the specific study area, incorporating the land areas of 31 sites and five hubs within Guadalcanal and Central Provinces. The corridor risk assessment process looks individually at the following risks:

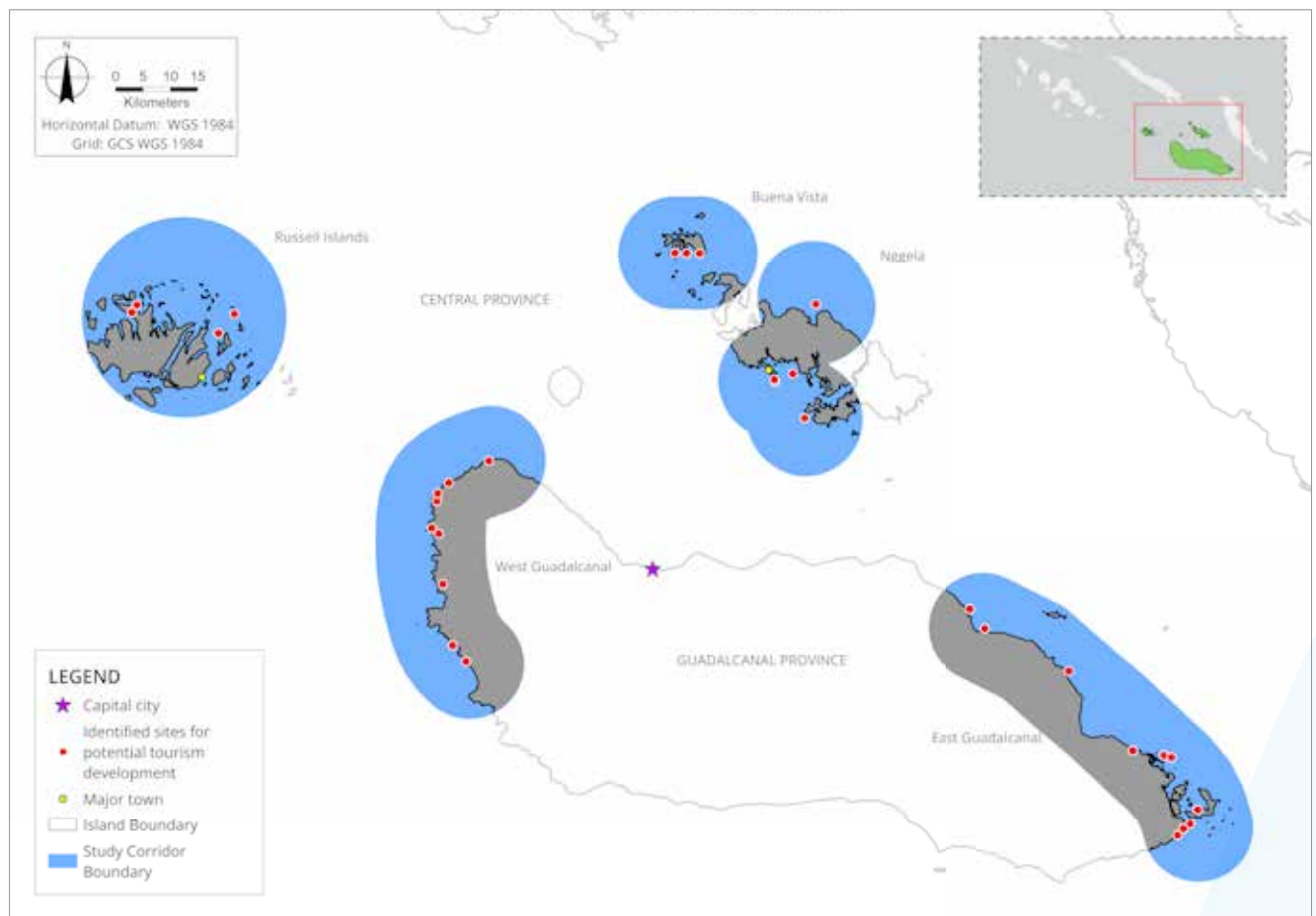
- Environmental risks (terrestrial and marine biodiversity).

- Social risks (such as land use, population density, social vulnerabilities, land tenure, UXO hazards, distance from infrastructure such as airports and hospitals, and cultural heritage), noting that some attributes were homogenous issues across the study corridor and unable to be mapped. These issues are discussed in the text analysis only.
- Natural hazard risks, particularly cyclones, earthquakes, and tropical storm events.

These individual risks are then collated to provide an overall snapshot of the combined risks across the corridor.

Map 13 provides the boundaries of the study corridor.

Map 13: Boundaries of study corridor



4.2.1 Environmental risks

Terrestrial environment

Low-risk areas

Low-risk areas are locations that represent low biodiversity and have limited ecological value. They include areas that comprise monoculture (for example, oil palm and copra plantations, plantation forestry blocks on Russell Islands), cultivated or any other areas significantly modified by human activity, including development of urban and village areas. Tourism ventures are unlikely to create compounding environmental impacts from land clearance and terrestrial biodiversity loss in areas classified as low risk. However, potential developers will need to ensure that all relevant statutory requirements are met and address potential risks to the terrestrial environment on a site. These areas are likely to be consistent with the definition of modified habitat under PS6 of IFC PS.

Oil palm and coconut plantation border coastal areas of the Russell Islands are considered low-risk areas despite the designation of the West Pavuvu KBA.

Moderate-risk areas

Most moderate-risk terrestrial areas within the study corridor are associated with previously logged areas away from the coast. These areas exhibit moderate to high levels of environmental condition and integrity, meaning that environmental indicators – such as water quality and terrestrial biodiversity – are in reasonable condition as logging generally has been historical (more than 10 years ago). Forests have been allowed to regenerate without further interference. These areas may provide key resources and habitat to threatened species as well as important ecosystem services.

Other terrestrial areas of moderate risk are associated with larger offshore islands, usually with some evidence of occupation, such as a small village or isolated settlement. The land is subject to some level of resource usage, including gardens and coconut plantations, regenerated logged areas and small settlements amongst larger areas with more intact terrestrial eco-systems.

Proximity to KBAs is part of the consideration, although it is noted that some KBAs such as Guadalcanal Watersheds have been subject to extensive logging. As such, a site-based approach will provide more accurate data on proximity to key habitat and biodiversity resources.

Development proposals for these terrestrial areas require further site-level detailed investigations to determine whether a potential investment site and its area of influence is consistent with modified habitat, natural habitat or critical habitat under PS6 of IFC PS (including previously logged areas that still provide some habitat value).

The Gela KBA encompasses the Nggela Hub and some of the Buena Vista Hub, with Mount Gallego KBA within proximity to the West Guadalcanal Hub. Buena Vista and Russell Islands also have some mangrove forests.

High-risk areas

High-risk terrestrial areas have high ecological value, such as important ecosystems or habitats which require sustainable natural resource management and/or protections.

High-risk areas broadly fall into three categories: 1) upland areas of ridges and mountains that have not been logged due to accessibility constraints, 2) small islands with vulnerable littoral ecosystems that support breeding areas for internationally-listed threatened species including turtles and migratory marine birds, where development would present high risks to the environment, and 3) intact mangrove forests providing habitat and coastal protection systems.

Development projects in these areas present a high risk to vulnerable ecosystems. Biodiversity action or management plans would be required to protect critical habitat.

Development within these areas should be highly constrained, with consideration given to siting of infrastructure, to avoid unnecessary land clearance.

However, despite these risks, there are opportunities for sensitively locating infrastructure and minimizing other impacts, along with working with local communities to enhance the area's biodiversity values as a marketing asset for the development.

At a corridor level, there were no high-risk areas mapped for terrestrial environment indicators.

Marine environment

Low-risk areas

The vast majority of low-risk marine areas included within the study corridor are open ocean areas, not likely to incur significant impacts from tourism development. Low-risk marine areas that include reef systems are primarily associated with highly damaged areas from fishing pressures, coral extraction, and other intensive resource use, resulting in lower environmental significance. These are usually in proximity, around 2–5km, to more densely settled areas along the coastline and on islands.

Low-risk marine areas in inshore localities are associated with coastal development, for example, clearing of mangroves. Low-risk inshore localities are also associated with poor water quality, often because of land clearance associated with logging activities in catchments adjacent to these environments.

There are limited constraints in low-risk areas when developing a tourism operation. Potential developers will need to ensure the development meets all relevant statutory requirements and addresses potential risks to the marine environment on a site. Developers should conduct baseline assessments, implement sound design to avoid and mitigate impacts, and ensure appropriate management practices are in place to prevent ocean pollution from poor waste, wastewater management or sedimentation. Preventing the flow of plastic into the ocean and reducing the use of plastic is a key consideration given the mobility of this pollution and its impacts.

At a corridor level, low-risk areas for marine environment indicators are those areas not within SUMAs and MMAs.

Moderate-risk areas

Moderate-risk marine areas were primarily associated with coral reef systems of smaller island conglomerations, particularly reef systems of the Russell Islands in Central Province and fringe reefs of Guadalcanal Province. Most such areas support widespread settlement where fishing pressures are likely.

Some areas have been classified as SUMAs under the MACBIO project. These sites are considered in terms of risk from a tourism development perspective, with areas defined as moderate or high risk. These SUMA sites offer opportunities and risks for the tourism sector.

At a corridor level, moderate-risk areas for marine environment indicators are those within the northwestern coastline of Guadalcanal, which hosts a series of shallow reefs forming a barrier on the outer edge of the shallow shelf. The West Guadalcanal marine area, extending for 33km, was classified as a SUMA and rated 10.5 out of 12, indicating its high value.

Marau Sound also has a high level of marine biodiversity and is a key habitat in the area, as reflected in its identification as a SUMA located in the southern area of East Guadalcanal Hub. The northern coast of Russell Islands also hosts a SUMA around Pavuvu Island, which contains important green and hawksbill turtle nesting areas and has a rich biodiversity. SUMAs cover large areas and indicate the need for sensitive development that carefully considers potential impacts on marine values. As such, sites that border any SUMA areas are flagged as of moderate risk. Other moderate-risk marine environments include Buena Vista Islands and the northwest edge of Nggela Islands, which feature several locally managed marine areas.

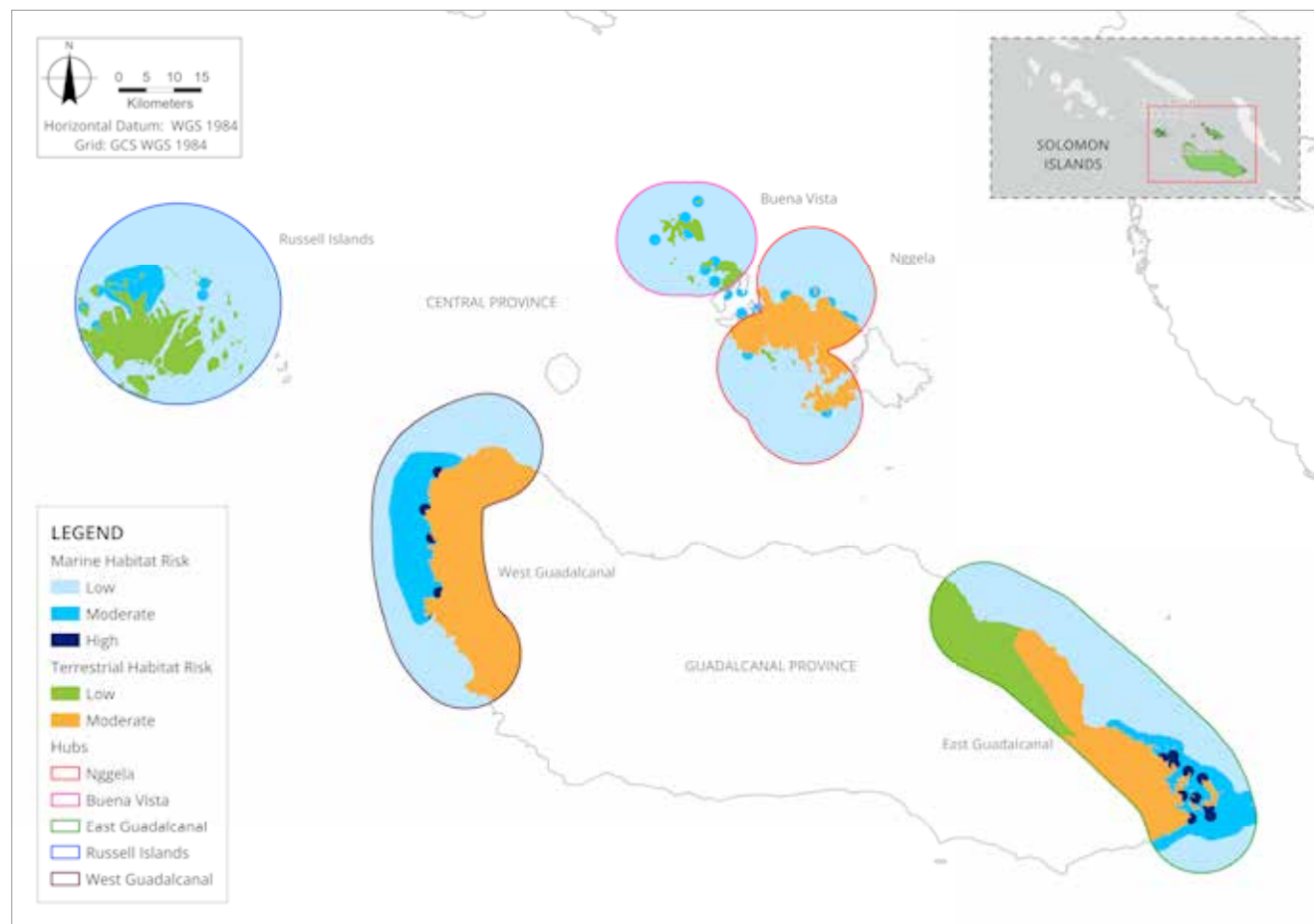
High-risk areas

Two key areas in the corridor have multiple locations mapped as high-risk marine areas. These locations are centered on reefs of outstanding known and published biodiversity values. These locations include MPAs or MMAs in Marau Sound in Eastern Guadalcanal Hub, and within the West Guadalcanal Hub. In the case of Marau Sound, the entire area is already defined as moderate risk due to the SUMA area, but sites that also include an MMA or MPA are flagged as high risk to indicate both the opportunity and risk associated with development. Development within these areas should be limited and will require strong mitigation and management controls to ensure any impacts are minimal. Biodiversity action or management plans should be prepared to meet good international industry practices for protection of critical habitat.

While small tourism activities or development projects may be perceived to not have significant impacts, careful planning to avoid and mitigate impacts in a high-risk area identified as critical for ecosystem processes is essential. Ongoing management and oversight to prevent run-off, over exploitation of natural resources, plastic pollution, or impacts on breeding areas is required. Tourism can also be of benefit if linked to conservation efforts, awareness raising and benefit sharing with local communities.

The environmental risk areas in the study corridor are illustrated in Map 14.

Map 14: Environmental risk areas at the corridor level



4.2.2 Social risks

The following section presents a qualitative assessment of social risks at a corridor level, based on secondary data sources, information from stakeholders and observations during site visits. A number of these risks are homogenous across the study corridor or only available as a risk rating on a site basis. As such, the corridor analysis of social risk is presented largely in the narrative form. Where data is available to quantify risk, it is presented as 'low', 'medium' or 'high' risk under each heading as follows and in Map 15.

Presence of people and livelihoods

The presence of people and livelihoods is relatively homogenous throughout the study corridor with no areas differentiated in low, moderate or high-risk categories, with more detailed analysis available at the site level.

The majority of sites are located within or near existing villages, although some small island sites are more remote. Proximity to communities offers access to a workforce, while local residents can benefit from potential access to job opportunities, training, and income generation such as sales of produce, fish and handicrafts as per community preferences. However, these opportunities must be carefully balanced with the need to avoid impacts on local-level food security. Lack of local skills can also drive an influx of migrant workers into an area, with potential impacts on social cohesion and added pressure on local resources as well as infrastructure and services.

Coconut plantations and gardens are spread throughout the corridor, correlated to settlements. If gardens and crops are on a development site, there is a likelihood of economic displacement. Restriction of access to land or marine

resources through tourism development can directly impact subsistence lifestyles for landowners, occupiers or users, and create potential conflict. Negotiations and compensation would need to consider the presence of gardens and crops, with clear communication and transparent processes to avoid hardship or escalation of claims.

The presence of people presents a physical displacement risk. In instances where there are informal or formal buildings and structures, land clearing for tourism development could result in resettlement and potential conflict between the community and developer. This could increase the cost and timeframe of developments, with safety and security risks, along with costly delays and erosion of trust.

However, the presence of people also provides an opportunity in terms of an accessible local workforce. Tourism development can bring social and economic benefits to women and men, but also exacerbate existing disparities. Developers should, therefore, exercise best efforts to ensure a fair distribution of benefits, with attention to those most vulnerable.

Proximity to infrastructure and access to services

Infrastructure is a significant constraint for tourism development in the study corridor. As demonstrated by the closure of Marau Airport at the time of research, a lack of accessibility can completely change the viability of a tourism enterprise. The road network is also underdeveloped or in poor condition, with road access from Honiara only available in half of the West Guadalcanal Hub and not present to East Guadalcanal Hub. Most identified sites throughout the study corridor rely on boat access. This lack of proximity to accessible transport options must be considered a risk, particularly in the case of medical or natural disaster evacuations. With a large proportion of transport in the study corridor by boat in open water, this poses a risk, particularly in bad weather. Strengthening regulations, enforcement of safety requirements and boat operator training is essential to improve transport safety.

Access to telecommunications varies across the corridor. Tourism can be a catalyst for improved services through increased demand, which may facilitate additional investment in an area. There are also options for private investment in infrastructure such as Starlink for tourism sites, as demonstrated by the Olatsara Retreat in West Guadalcanal that invested in this service to improve its offering to tourists. In corridor areas with poor access to telecommunications, such as Russell Islands,

this creates a barrier to management of bookings and guest communications.

Electricity is limited throughout the study corridor, with grid connections not an option in most sites. Therefore, investors need to consider self-sufficient energy sources such as solar (photovoltaic and thermal panels) with inverters or batteries, and generators as a backup power source. This increases capital investment costs – but as a critical need for most tourism infrastructure to power lighting, hot water, and sanitation – it is a good hedge against a rise in energy prices and reduced grid dependency.

Health system infrastructure is also a risk for tourism in the study corridor. Whilst the network of nursing posts and rural health clinics are well established, the facilities are intermittently staffed and do not have the necessary levels of medical equipment and supplies to manage life-threatening situations. Often the buildings themselves are in poor condition. Medical evacuations must be considered in tourism planning, along with having adequate supplies and first aid responders on-site to manage a medical emergency of a guest or staff member.

As reported in Section 3.2.12, sanitation services are lacking across the corridor, particularly in Central Province. However, a tourism development can be self-sufficient and develop the required sanitation systems on-site. A poorly designed or managed sanitation system has a risk of environmental impacts, with drainage systems and outfall pipes potentially overloading and affecting the receiving environment and impacting on the tourism experience. Investors and designers need to implement environmentally-friendly infrastructure of adequate capacity and consider ongoing operations and maintenance to mitigate this risk. With malaria and dengue fever already present in the corridor, other infectious diseases such as COVID-19 or influenza viruses place increasing pressure on inadequate medical services. Tourists can exacerbate these risks by increasing demands on services.

Waste management services are not in place across the study corridor, with communities managing their own waste through dedicated burning and burial areas. This creates a challenge for tourism, as environmentally sound waste disposal, in terms of GIIP, is not available. Investors and operators will need to consider means to implement on-site solutions such as waste avoidance, collection for recycling and transport back to Guadalcanal, on-site utilization of organic waste as animal feed and/or compost feedstock, and waste disposal options for residual waste.

Low-risk areas

These areas of the corridor have good accessibility from Honiara, considering ease of access for tourists, and potential for evacuation in case of medical emergency or natural disaster. The area within 30km of Marau Airport will be considered low risk once the facility re-opens, but without this critical infrastructure a boat ride of four to five hours is considered high risk. The corridor area in close proximity from Honiara by boat, such as Tulagi, is also considered as low risk. The areas within 15km of a hospital are considered low risk, but this only includes areas close to Tulagi Hospital.

Moderate-risk areas

The northern area of West Guadalcanal presents moderate risk in relation to infrastructure, as it is accessible by road from Honiara, with rural health clinics readily accessible, noting any significant illness or injury would require transport to Honiara. The northern sides of Nggela Sule and Nggela Pile, and the Buena Vista Islands and Sandfly Passage are considered moderate risk given the further distance required for boat travel, and reliance on rural health clinics.

High-risk areas

The southern part of West Guadalcanal Hub is only accessible by boat from Honiara, or by road access to Lambi and then boat access to travel further south. Russell Islands are considered high risk given the travel distance of 88km in open water taking four to five hours. These areas have access to rural health clinics, but evacuation options in medical emergencies need to be considered.

Access to land and natural resources

Access to land and natural resources is affected firstly by the status of the land title, and secondly by perceptions and local practices. Low-risk sites are those on registered rather than customary land, but this risk profile can change to moderate or even high if there are existing disputes or tensions. These risks are relatively homogenous throughout the study corridor with more detailed analysis undertaken at the site level.

Accessing customary land or natural resources on land or the marine environment can be a complex process, with implications for tourism developers in the case of limited clarity over user rights. An example is Marau Airport, developed over two land parcels with the smaller portion being customary land. An ensuing dispute over the land resulted in the suspension of flights from January 2022 and disruption to tourism and community access.

As is the case for the 31 identified potential tourism sites, focusing on land away from customary title is one aspect of mitigating risk of potential dispute.

However, even secure land tenure through a registered title does not prevent disputes in the case of differing perceptions of legitimacy of a title. It is important to undertake appropriate consultations with the affected and engaged community leaders as well as landowners and users to firstly map traditional practices and perceptions of land ownership and user rights. Indigenous terrain mapping is one tool that can provide this framework in a respectful and comprehensive manner from the outset (see Section 3.1.7).

Community cohesion

Community cohesion is also a relatively homogenous risk throughout the study corridor, with more detailed analysis undertaken at the site level.

Although the local community can benefit through earning income from tourism, opportunities and benefits may not be distributed equitably, exacerbating existing tensions or creating new disputes. This risk is heightened in areas of the corridor where the logging industry has resulted in an influx of settlers into an area and created ongoing tensions.

From a governance perspective, strengthening cohesion within communities is an important means to improve the investment environment in the corridor. Community bodies with authority for resource management, such as village development or CBRM committees, can provide a mechanism for sound local development. This can be progressed at provincial government level, working with locally based committees to develop a blueprint for their communities. To mitigate the risk of dispute over access to natural resources, such as for visitors to dive on reefs or walk through villages, tourism investors and operators must understand and then integrate with local visions and by-laws. Having clear protocols in place also prevents unauthorized demands for fees from tourists, which can create confusion and a diminished visitor experience.

During stakeholder engagement, community-based tourism (CBT) was raised as a potential model with merit for effective community partnerships and harnessing support for local tourism ventures. Potential investors may consider integrating CBT elements into their business model where feasible.

Presence of cultural heritage

While Solomon Islands, including Guadalcanal and Central Provinces, have a rich cultural and historical heritage, there are challenges in the protection and maintenance of artefacts and sites due to the absence of a comprehensive system to map and register sites of significance. *Tabu* or sites of cultural heritage importance are present across the corridor. Given the lack of site registration and mapping, the risk is viewed as homogenous. Tourism development generates an opportunity to improve the awareness and management of cultural heritage, but this will require a respectful consultation process, and ongoing dialogue during design and construction. In addition to sites of cultural or spiritual significance, WWII artefacts and sites are present in the corridor, particularly in Tulagi, West Russells and West Guadalcanal. These sites and artefacts present an opportunity for tourism as part of historical WWII treks or site visits.

Potential for UXO

Low-risk areas

Areas in the East Guadalcanal Hub have had no UXO discoveries and removals, and there is limited WWII history in the area, such as battles or landings. Other areas rated as low risk are in Buena Vista and the northern side of Ngella Islands. However, even in low-risk areas, there is still a need for caution.

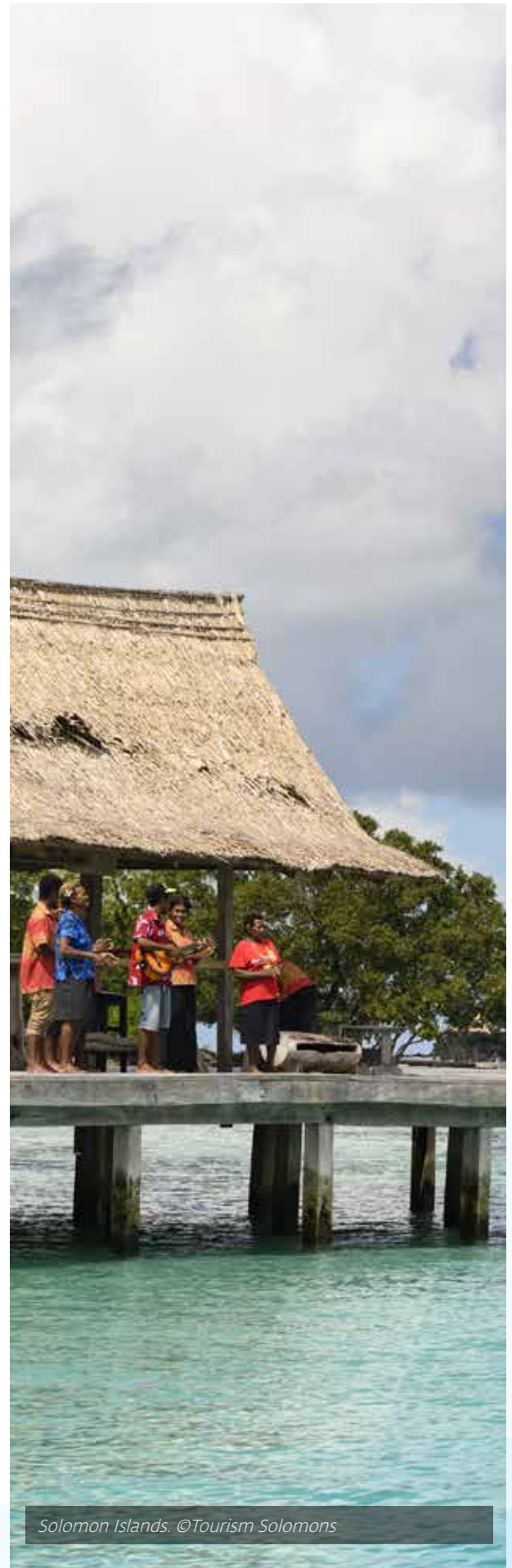
Moderate-risk areas

The area at the northern end of East Guadalcanal Hub, around Aola Bay, is considered moderate risk due to records of a marine landing in this area during WWII. Other moderate risk areas include the southern half of West Guadalcanal Hub.

High-risk areas

As presented in Section 3.2.6, UXO risk is high in the Russell Islands, the southern coast of Ngella Islands and the northern part of West Guadalcanal. See Map 4 for UXO risks in the study corridor. However, even on sites where the risk is low or moderate, caution must be exercised. Information on risk will continue to be developed through the work of the Halo Trust and Solomon Islands Police Force in 2024 and 2025.

Potentially fatal consequences could result from tourism developers not undertaking vigilant UXO clearance during construction. It is possible to mitigate UXO risk through this clearance work. Therefore, ongoing vigilance at all study sites, including education and awareness for guests and staff, is an essential component of risk mitigation.



Solomon Islands. ©Tourism Solomons

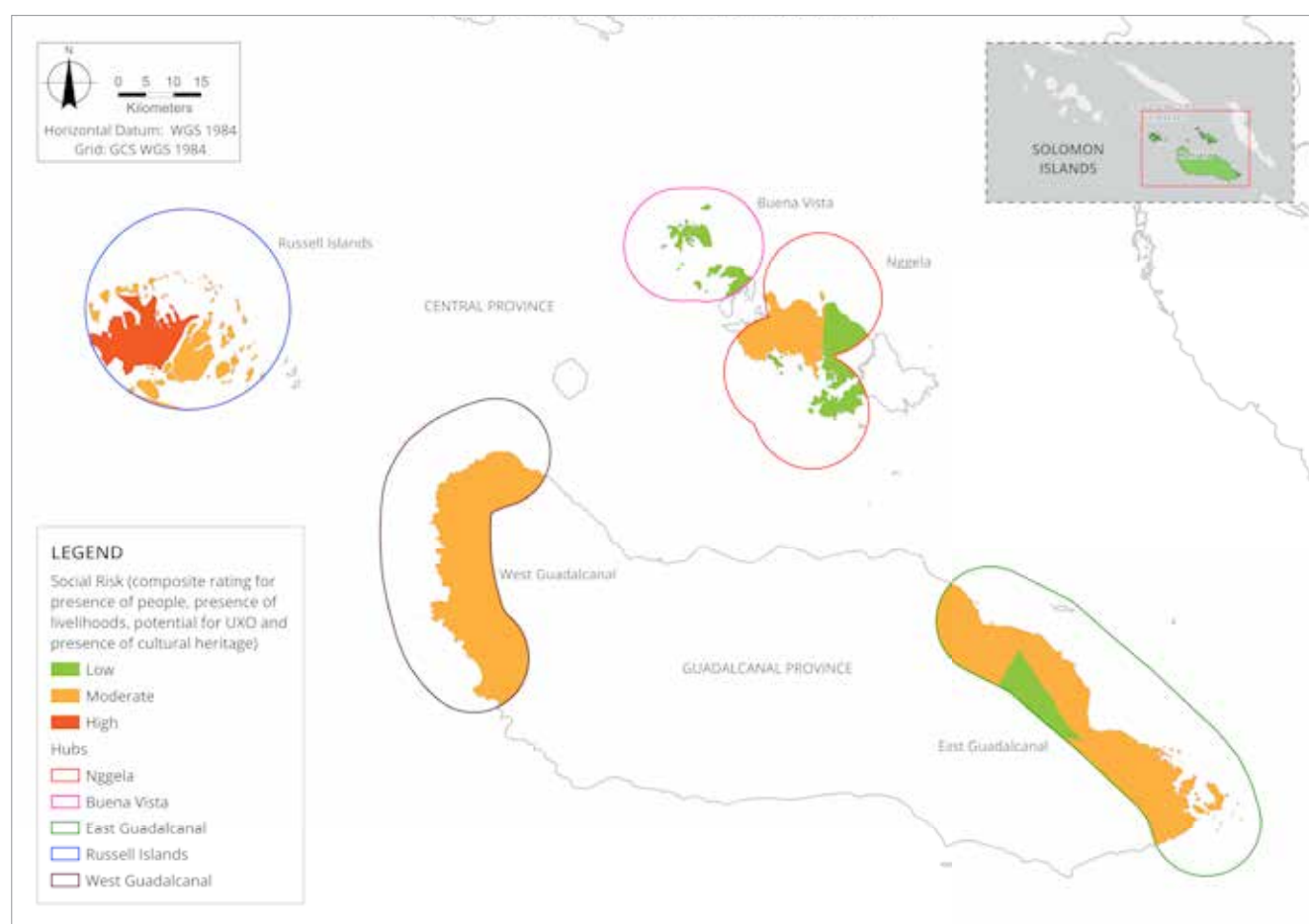
Measured social findings

A quantitative assessment of measurable risk factors was undertaken and presented in Map 15.

The following aspects were considered part of social risk mapping:

- Distance from urban center (the more isolated a site, the more challenging it is to access skilled labor force and services).
- Population density (fewer people in the vicinity can constrain local workforce availability, including access to skilled labor and services).
- Distance from nearest airport (considering ease of access for tourists, and potential for evacuation in case of medical emergency or natural disaster).
- Distance from hospitals (considering access to medical care for emergencies and support to tourists).
- Likelihood of UXO (risk assessment based on WWII history and Solomon Islands Police Force reported discovery and disposal records).

Map 15: Social risk areas at the corridor level



4.2.3 Natural hazard risks

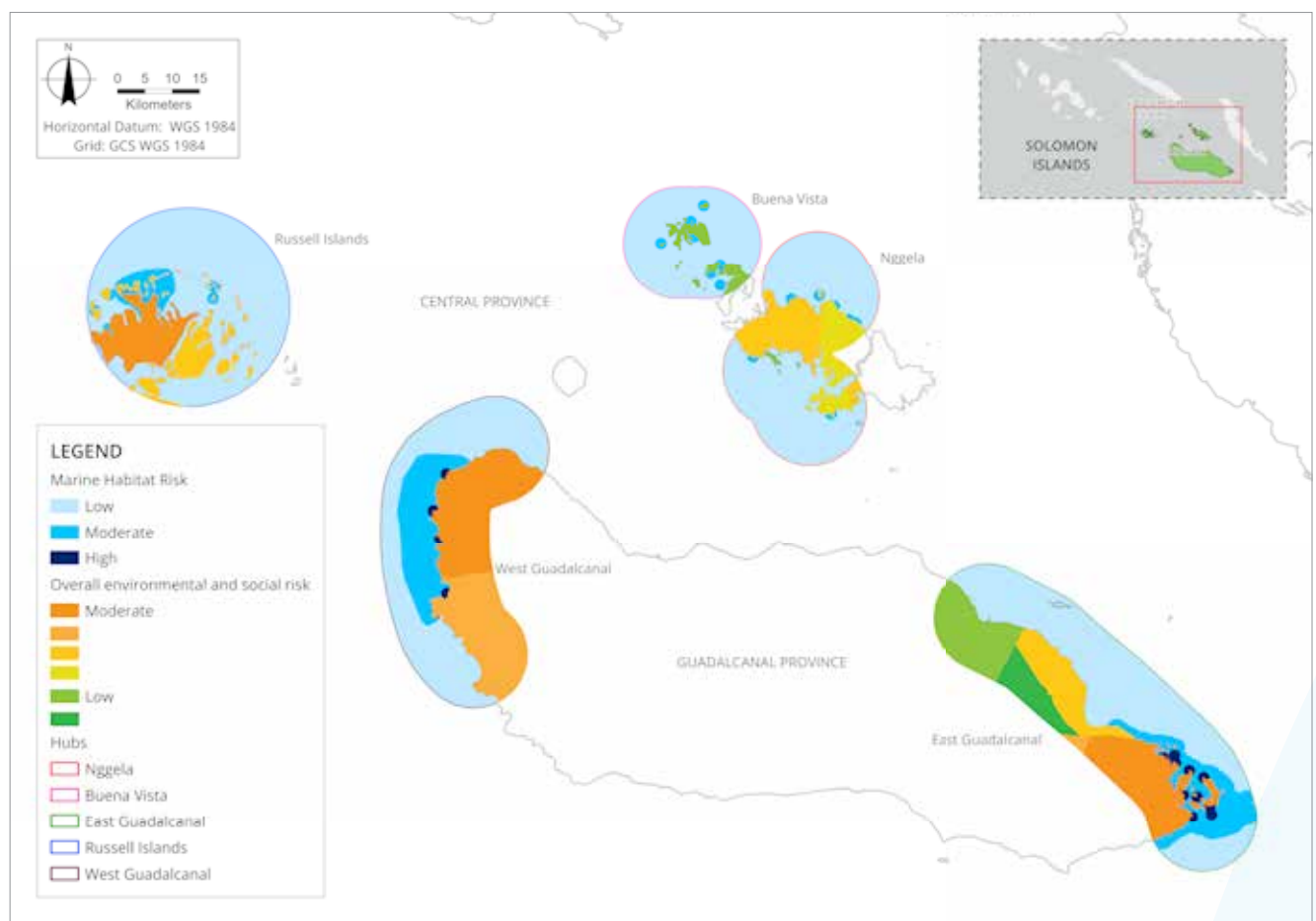
The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) was established in 2006 to provide low- and middle-income countries with tools and information to better understand and reduce vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change. The ThinkHazard! tool is designed for use at country or local levels depending on country data availability. The Solomon Islands ThinkHazard! report (Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, 2020) provides country level data for natural hazards outlined in Figure 3.

The risk ratings are based on comprehensive analysis as part of the ThinkHazard! national assessment process. These risks cover all parts of the study corridor, with potential impacts from natural hazards widespread across the corridor, although individual sites will have varying levels of protection and resilience.

4.2.4 Combined corridor risk

The combined corridor risk encompassing the environmental and social risk assessment is shown in Map 16.

Map 16: Overall environmental and social risk areas at the corridor level



4.3 SITE RISKS

4.3.1 Environmental findings

The environmental assessment was assigned a weighting of 40 percent in the multi-criteria analysis to provide an overall risk rating for each site.

Appendix D provides a detailed dashboard for each site, presenting site data and risk ratings. The overall risk rating for each site may be different from the individual environmental

(or social or natural hazard) risk assessment ratings when considered along with the other weighted risk criteria. The marine and terrestrial risks were rated independently for each of the 31 potential investment sites.

An overview of the environmental risks across all sites is presented in Table 23 and in Map 17.

Map 17: Environmental risk ratings at identified sites

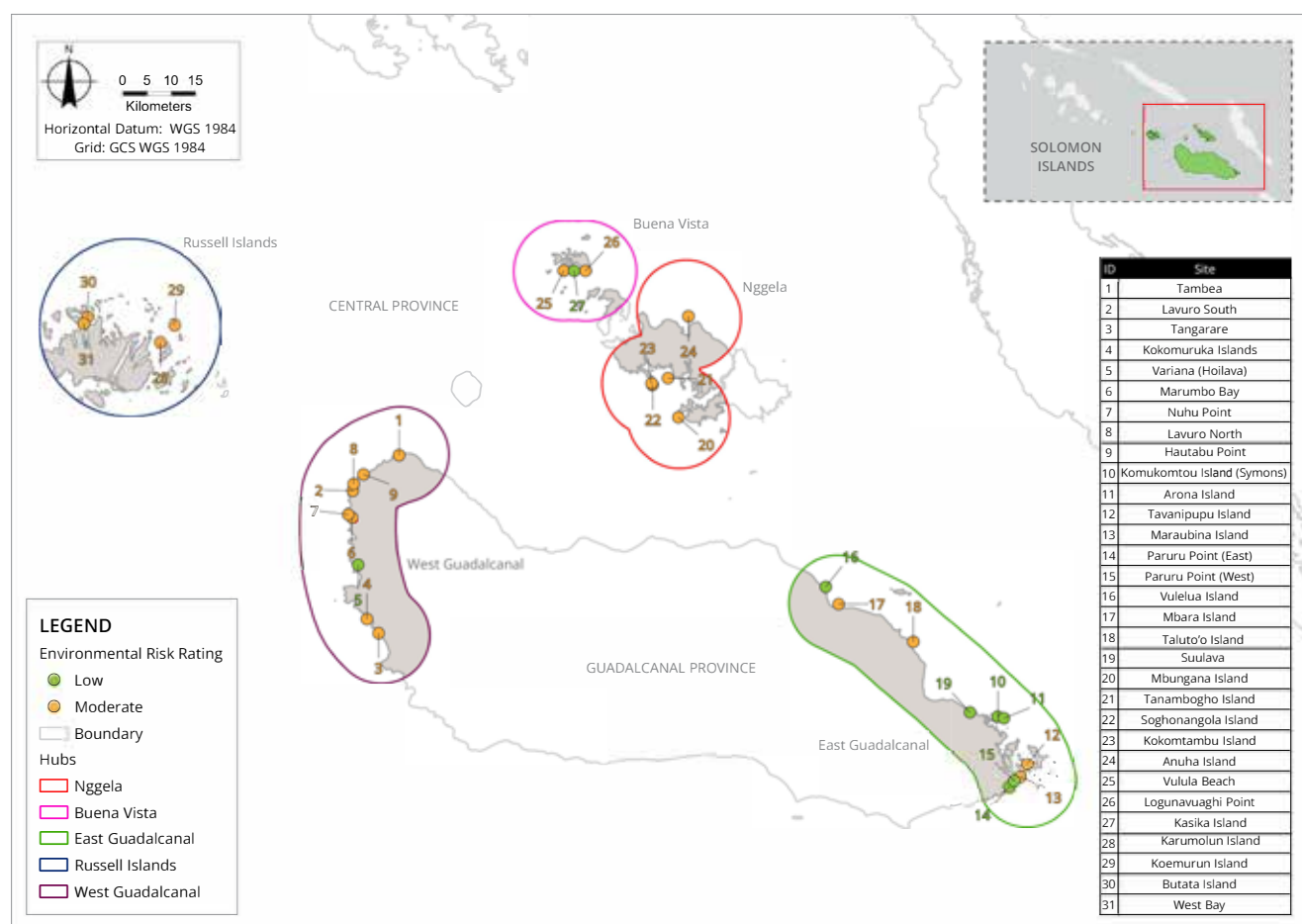


Table 23: Summary of analysis of identified site environmental risks

Risk	Rating	Number of sites	Description
Terrestrial biodiversity	Low	12 sites	There are limited constraints associated with development in these low-risk terrestrial environments, with land generally already cleared through plantations, logging and/or settlements. Tourism developments are unlikely to cause habitat loss or degradation, or species disturbance. However, this relies on developers applying good international industry practices to identify, avoid, minimize, and mitigate the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of projects on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Mitigation examples include implementing good waste management practices and control of invasive species or weeds. Restoration activities can be undertaken as part of site development to enhance habitat. Tourism provides an opportunity to enhance terrestrial biodiversity through habitat protection, enhancement or restoration.
	Moderate	17 sites	Sites of moderate risk indicate significant existing terrestrial values on the site, providing biodiversity values and ecosystem services. Importantly, the siting of infrastructure must be undertaken to avoid impacts on terrestrial biodiversity as the first step in the mitigation hierarchy, with effective design and environmental management during operations. Sites with a moderate rating indicate that features, such as healthy coastal and secondary growth forest, are present and potentially add to the amenity of the site and tourism experience.
	High	2 sites	Tourism and infrastructure development is not recommended in high-risk terrestrial areas unless impacts can be avoided or mitigated, and significant positive impacts can be generated. Most sites are highly constrained by their physical size, such as small islands limited in scope for development. The two high-risk sites (Mbungana Island and Kokomuruka Islands) contain valuable terrestrial biodiversity with remnant primary forest, while sago palm wetlands and saltmarsh are present on Mbungana Island. It is noted that both sites contain high value terrestrial biodiversity, but this is limited to a portion of the overall title area. If infrastructure can be sited away from the high-risk zone, this may not preclude tourism development, and instead feature these areas as an asset. It is noted that any terrestrial features of significance can also be a tourism asset if positive impacts are enhanced through implementation of conservation and restoration efforts.

Risk	Rating	Number of sites	Description
Marine biodiversity	Low	9 sites	There are few environmental constraints associated with development within or adjacent to low-risk marine areas. These areas have been degraded by human impacts in the vicinity, such as fishing (particularly if unsustainable methods were used), coral harvesting and run-off from practices, such as logging. These areas may also be impacted by poor waste management practices in nearby settlements. The sites are not close to MMA/ <i>Tabu</i> sites, or important marine habitat. Nonetheless, development should follow the risk and impact-identification process. There is an opportunity to collaborate with the local community in marine environment restoration projects to restore marine eco-system health and build tourism appeal.
	Moderate	12 sites	These sites have attributes of good marine biodiversity or habitat and despite evidence of resource utilization such as fishing, ecological processes retain a high degree of functionality. Sites may be close to MMA/ <i>Tabu</i> locations, indicating marine ecosystems of value in the vicinity. Sites with CBRM systems in place indicate a level of resource management. Hence, developers and operators need to consult with communities on how to collaborate for improved outcomes. Tourism development may disrupt and damage such ecological processes and biodiversity in these areas. The moderate-risk rating indicates that tourism developments need to consider siting, infrastructure design and activity controls to minimize impacts on the marine environment. The rating also indicates an opportunity, not only as a tourism drawcard, but to enhance conservation outcomes through increasing livelihood opportunities, such as reef tourism.
	High	10 sites	Tourism development is not recommended without significant impact avoidance and mitigation measures in place. These sites are classified high risk given the vulnerabilities of the ecosystems. The areas may be identified as SUMAs, contain turtle nesting areas, or be known to host rich biodiversity in coral reef or seagrass systems. High-risk areas require significant investment to mitigate and manage the following risks: • Measurable adverse impacts on the biodiversity values of critical habitats and on the ecological processes supporting these values. • Net reduction in the global or national/regional population of any critically endangered or endangered species over a reasonable period. It is noted that some sites situated within a high-risk marine environment may also offer opportunities to enhance positive impacts. A high-risk rating may not preclude tourism development if risks are avoided or mitigated through appropriate siting of infrastructure and mitigation measures. Tourism can benefit marine ecosystems through increasing conservation awareness and providing a business case for conservation where local communities can derive economic benefits from conservation-based tourism.

4.3.2 Social findings

A summary of the risk assessment conducted for each site is provided in Table 24 and illustrated in Map 18. Individual site assessments are provided in detail in Appendix D of this report. The assessment was conducted in line with the approach outlined in Section 2.1.3.

A summary of the overall social risk rating for each identified site is provided in Section 4.3.4 (noting that this represented 40 percent of the weighting of the total risk for each site).

Map 18: Social risk ratings at identified sites

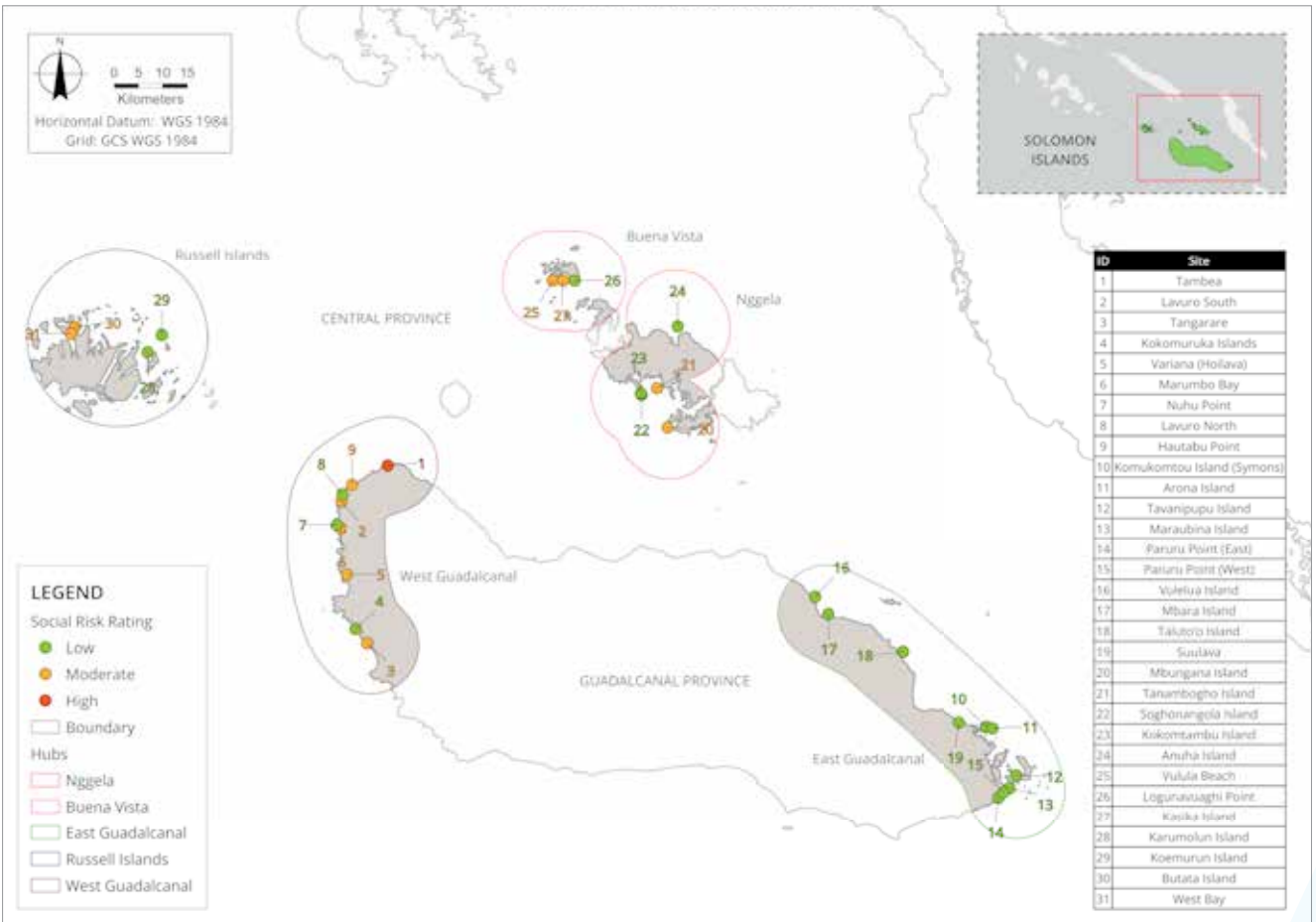


Table 24: Summary of social risks for identified sites

Risk	Rating	Number of Sites	Description
Presence of people	Low	20 sites	These identified sites have no human occupation, aside from those responsible for care of the land title. Some sites may have some structures, but do not house a permanent population and are only used for temporary or short-term stays as people transit through the area. The risk of resettlement is considered low for these sites, with limited impact from any development on these sites. It should be noted that the lack of population on-site may present a challenge for sourcing a local workforce, and consultations would need to occur with the nearest village to confirm the availability and capacity of workforce.
	Moderate	7 sites	These sites have a permanent population of up to 50 people. Communities are well established and located on-site for at least one generation. However, they may not be Indigenous to the area or be titleholders. Therefore, they have little to no decision-making ability regarding future development of the land. There are several dwellings and structures, for living and storage of boats, on-site. Structures could also include other sensitive infrastructure, such as places of worship, health clinics or schools. There may be some resettlement required, with the sites and people living there potentially impacted by development. Ongoing collaboration with communities located both on and near sites would be required. Tourism could be developed if local communities' land use and traditional livelihoods are considered to avoid or minimize its effects on their way of life. Tourism developers could also benefit the local population through prioritizing local employment, resources, and services.
	High	4 sites	These sites have a large permanent population, with communities on-site for at least two generations. Sites may also have limited ability for development due to several dwellings, structures, and infrastructure utilized by other people from surrounding communities. Tourism development on these sites may lead to resettlement, conflict relating to land use and access as well as cultural conflict. Ongoing collaboration with communities located on-site and nearby would be required. The four sites with significant presence of people are Tambea, Tangarare, Variana (Hoilava) and Hautabu Point.

Risk	Rating	Number of Sites	Description
Presence of livelihoods	Low	12 sites	These sites are not used for gardening or plantations by owners, occupiers, or nearby communities. Some sites may still be utilized for hunting, harvesting or collection of natural resources.
	Moderate	19 sites	These sites may have gardens and crops that support an individual, family or community, but there is still space for development without large impacts on these areas and the corresponding livelihoods they support. On these sites, tourism can be developed considering the local communities' land use and/or traditional livelihoods, to avoid or minimize impacts on their way of life. There are opportunities associated with livelihood activities on-site, particularly gardening and fishing, resulting in access to fresh produce for tourists and income generation for people who own the gardens. Constraints would include impacts on livelihoods as well as land and reef access disputes and claims.
	High	No sites	These sites are largely covered in crops and gardens with limited space for development. Tourism development on these sites would likely require removal of crops relied upon by the surrounding community. As such, it is important for investors to work with communities to ensure any impacts are carefully managed. There were no sites categorized as high-risk from a livelihoods perspective.
Potential for UXO	Low	17 sites	Low-risk sites are those with no confirmed UXO discoveries, or documented WWII occupations of sites or battlefields. They include West Guadalcanal Hub sites further down the west coast from Nuhu Point, the East Guadalcanal Hub area below Aola Bay, and most of the northern part of Central Province. However, appropriate due diligence prior to any ground disturbance is essential.
	Moderate	6 sites	These sites do not have a documented history of UXO findings by the Solomon Island Police nor do history records highlight site occupation, training areas, or intense battles during WWII. However, the sites are within 10km of those flagged as high risk. As such, they require additional caution in development of a site. These sites include Vulelua Island and Mbara Island near Aola Bay, and sites situated on the southern side of Nggela Islands. Whilst there have been no reported discoveries in Solomon Islands Police records, this is related to the level of development (ground disturbances) at sites. Therefore, it cannot be assumed there is no UXO present, and a thorough risk assessment is required prior to development.
	High	8 sites	These sites are those with confirmed UXO discoveries on or in the immediate vicinity of the site, or sites situated in areas with documented WWII battles, including multiple bombings and heavy fighting. Sites in West Guadalcanal Hub closer to the northern coastline and the Russell Islands group are assessed as high risk, with developers strongly advised to undertake site-based assessments and clearance work prior to development. It is also advised that tourists are informed about appropriate responses if suspected UXO is sighted.

Risk	Rating	Number of Sites	Description
Presence of cultural heritage	Low	22 sites	Sites ranked as low risk have no known cultural heritage (either <i>Tabu</i> sites, WWII historic, graves or other <i>Kastom</i> significance) connected to them. While Solomon Islands in general, including Guadalcanal and Central Provinces, have a rich cultural and historical heritage, there are challenges in the protection and maintenance of artefacts and sites as they are not registered. For locations where it is not possible to confirm <i>Tabu</i> or cultural heritage importance, there is a remaining likelihood of cultural significance located in the area. It is, therefore, important to consider cultural heritage on any site without this layer of verification. Tourism development generates an opportunity to improve the awareness and management of cultural heritage. For projects resulting in a ground disturbance and depending on the site's location, a "chance find" procedure should be developed that addresses and protects cultural heritage finds made during a project's construction or operation phases.
	Moderate	7 sites	Moderate-risk sites are those where cultural heritage sites have been identified, but are sparse and therefore any impacts are likely to be avoided during the construction and operation of any tourism venture. Siting of infrastructure is important, with design informed by meaningful consultations with local communities. Such consultations can also help explore communities' interest in showcasing potential cultural heritage to tourists as a livelihood activity.
	High	2 sites	These sites have several cultural heritage sites, with limited space available to develop around them or tourism development impacts cannot not be avoided or mitigated. As such, there is a risk associated with potential loss and damage to sites of cultural significance and conflict with local communities. Where the risk and identification process determine a potential impact on cultural heritage, tourism developers will engage competent professionals to assist in the identification and protection of cultural heritage. This will be achieved by ensuring that internationally recognized practices in addition to applicable law for the protection, field-based study and documentation of cultural heritage are implemented. This will include consultations with the community. In one high-risk site, Vulula Beach, there is a <i>Tabu</i> site where women are not permitted, which may present a constraint for tourism. Another site at Tambea features graves at a coastal area where a previous resort was located.

4.3.3 Natural hazard findings

A summary of the natural hazard findings for the 31 sites is provided in Table 25 and illustrated in Map 19. Individual site assessments are detailed in Appendix D of this report. The assessment was conducted in line with the approach outlined in Section 2.1.3.

A summary of the overall natural hazards risk rating for each identified site is provided in Section 4.3.4 (noting that this represented 20 percent of the weighting of the total risk for each site).

Map 19: Natural hazard risk ratings at identified sites

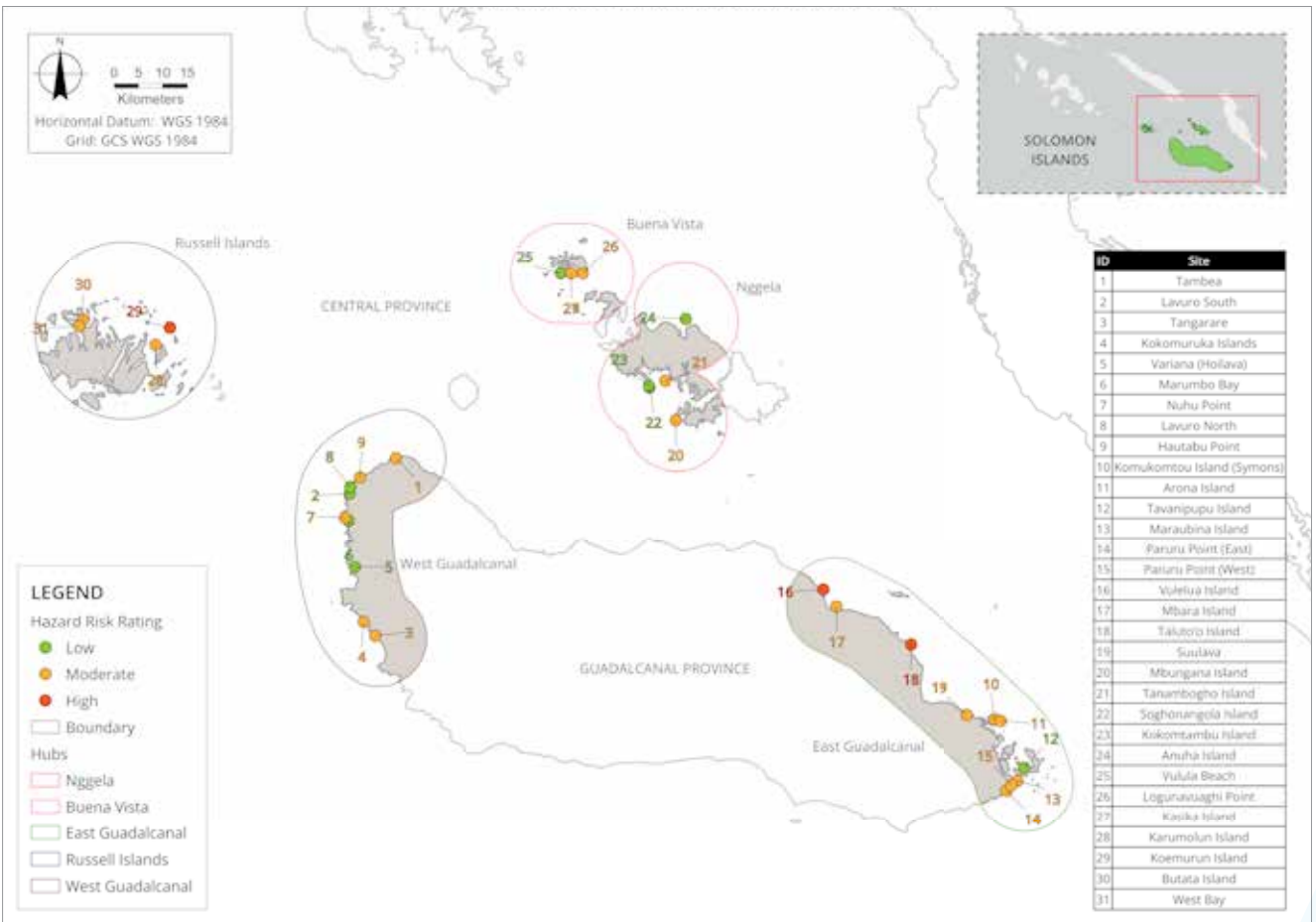


Table 25: Identified site analysis of natural hazard findings and risk assessments

Risk	Rating	Number of sites	Description
Coastal vulnerability	Low	6 sites	These sites are in sheltered locations with some elevation. There is no evidence of coastal erosion.
	Moderate	20 sites	The majority of sites fall within this category. There is no evidence of erosion, with some protection from fringing reef systems. However, parts of the coastal site or island are more exposed, particularly to erosion through storm surges or rising sea levels.
	High	5 sites	Low-lying coral sand islands with little elevation are high-risk sites. These sites are already showing signs of coastal erosion. These more exposed sites are located in parts of East Guadalcanal (Arona Island, Vulelua Island and Taluto'o Island) and the West Russells (Karumolun Island and Koemurun Island).
Sea level rise	Low	8 sites	Low-risk sites have higher ground levels with only a small portion less than 1m above sea level. These sites allow for retreats and shelters in case of storm surges and sea level rises.
	Moderate	19 sites	Moderate sites are likely to experience the effects of sea level rises, but can still provide occupants with some options to retreat. Infrastructure design needs to consider adaptation in the design phase.
	High	4 sites	High-risk sites are mostly low-lying and coastal with a large proportion of land vulnerable. They run the risk of inundation and damage from exposure to sea water during storm surges or flooding events. This could potentially impact buildings and cause human injury if building maintenance is not kept up. Design of infrastructure must take future sea level rises into account. Sites vulnerable to sea level rises are located in parts of East Guadalcanal (Maraubina Island, Vulelua Island and Taluto'o Island) and West Russells (Koemurun Island).

4.3.4 Combined environmental, social and natural hazard findings

As per the methodology described in Section 2, a multi-criteria analysis that combined all quantitative ratings with applicable weightings was undertaken for each site.

This provided a final rating of low, moderate or high risk for each site. This is summarized in Table 26, and within each site assessment dashboard in Appendix D. Map 20 presents the results for the overall risk ratings.

Map 20: Overall environmental, social and natural hazard risk ratings at each site

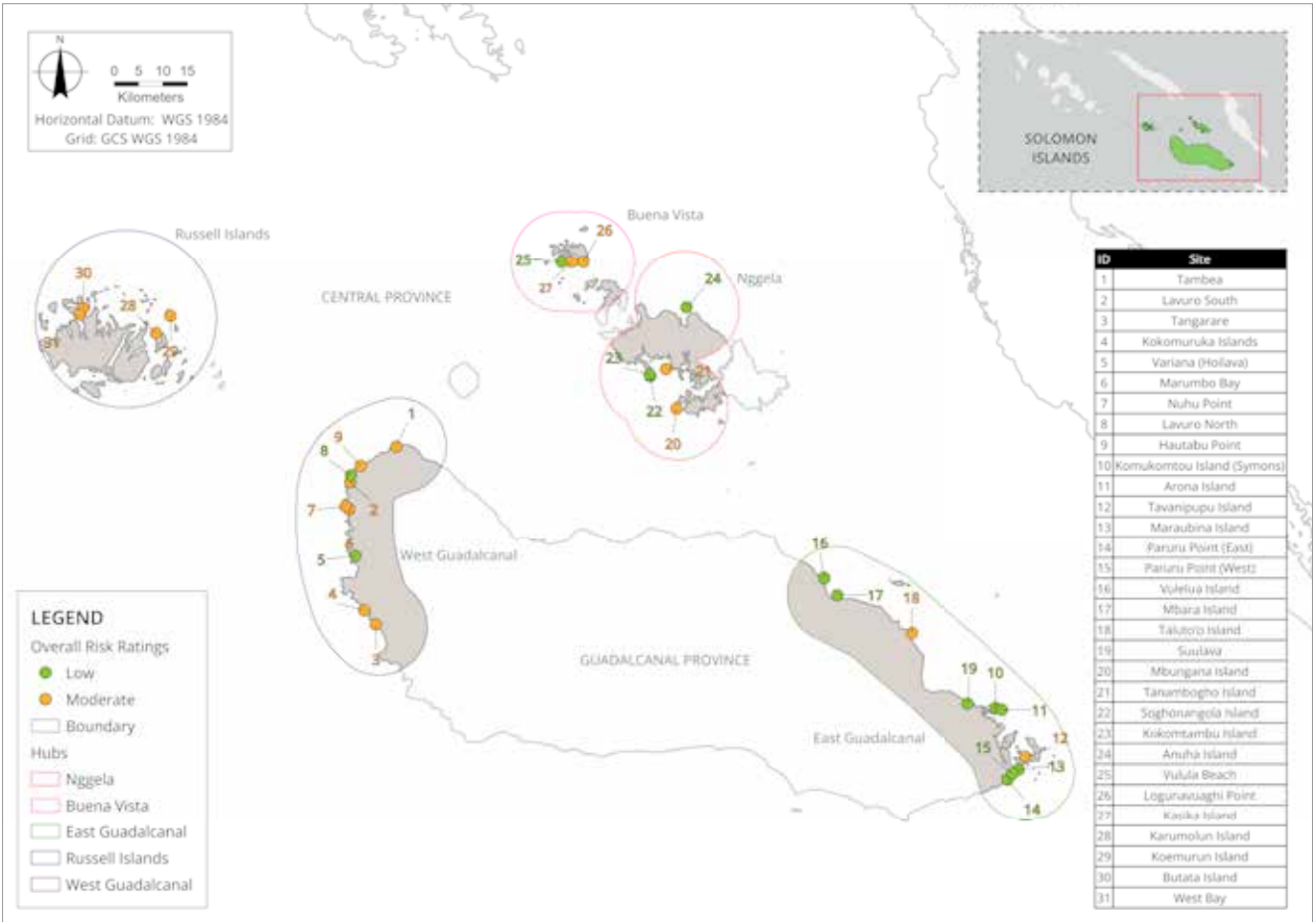


Table 26: Summary of all combined site ratings based on multi-criteria analysis

ID	Hub	Site Location	Identifier	Environmental	Social	Natural Hazards	Overall
1	West Guadalcanal	Tambea	190-002-0002	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate
2	West Guadalcanal	Lavuro South	190-005-0002	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate
3	West Guadalcanal	Tangarare	202-002-0011	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
4	West Guadalcanal	Kokomuruka Islands	202-001-0001	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate
5	West Guadalcanal	Variana (Hollava)	190-006-0001	Low	Moderate	Low	Low
6	West Guadalcanal	Marumbo Bay	190-004-0003	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate
7	West Guadalcanal	Nuhu Point	190-004-0002	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate
8	West Guadalcanal	Lavuro North	190-005-0001	Moderate	Low	Low	Low
9	West Guadalcanal	Hautabu Point	190-011-0001	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
10	East Guadalcanal	Komukomtou Island (Symons)	207-001-0003	Low	Low	Moderate	Low
11	East Guadalcanal	Arona Island	207-001-0002	Low	Low	Moderate	Low
12	East Guadalcanal	Tavanipupu Island	222-001-0004	Moderate	Low	Low	Moderate
13	East Guadalcanal	Maraubina Island	222-005-0001	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Low
14	East Guadalcanal	Paruru Point (East)	222-002-0038	Low	Low	Moderate	Low
15	East Guadalcanal	Paruru Point (West)	222-002-0039	Low	Low	Moderate	Low
16	East Guadalcanal	Vulelua Island	193-002-0002	Low	Low	High	Low
17	East Guadalcanal	Mbara Island	205-002-0001	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Low

ID	Hub	Site Location	Identifier	Environmental	Social	Natural Hazards	Overall
18	East Guadalcanal	Taluto'o Island	206-002-0001	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate
19	East Guadalcanal	Suulava	206-004-0001	Low	Low	Moderate	Low
20	Nggela	Mbungana Island	181-006-0001	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
21	Nggela	Tanambogho Island	181-001-0005	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
22	Nggela	Soghonangola Island (Double Island)	181-001-0001	Moderate	Low	Low	Low
23	Nggela	Kokomtambu Island (Double Island)	181-001-0002	Moderate	Low	Low	Low
24	Nggela	Anuha Island	169-005-0001	Moderate	Low	Low	Low
25	Buena Vista	Vulula Beach	168-001-0001	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low
26	Buena Vista	Logunavuaghi Point	169-004-0001	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate
27	Buena Vista	Kasika Island	169-007-0001	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
28	Russell Islands	Karumolun Island	177-006-0004	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate
29	Russell Islands	Koemurun Island	166-001-0001	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate
30	Russell Islands	Butata Island	165-003-0001	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
31	Russell Islands	West Bay	165-002-0010	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

For each site, the weighted scores were aggregated to provide a total risk rating score for environmental, social and natural hazard risks for the 31 sites, along with an overall combined risk rating. The results are:

Environmental Risk Rating: 8 sites low risk, 23 sites moderate risk, no sites high risk.

Social Risk Rating: 19 sites low risk, 11 sites moderate risk, 1 site high risk.

Natural Hazard Risk Rating: 9 sites low risk, 19 sites moderate risk, 3 sites high risk.

Combined Risk Rating: 14 sites low risk, 17 sites moderate risk, no sites high risk.

5. Case studies

5.1 ANUHA ISLAND

Anuha Island is located in Nggela Sule, Central Province. The site was successfully developed and operated as the Anuha Island Resort from 1983, a four-star accommodation facility attracting foreign visitors with exclusive villas, along with a restaurant, pool, and cocktail bar in a beautiful setting. Anuha Island is surrounded by a shallow lagoon leading to a coral reef and offers a picture-perfect destination drawcard. Guests were transported by a private airplane or charter boats operated by the resort. It represented a significant investment in infrastructure, including water supply and energy. However, the economic development promised by the tourism venture was in contrast to the aspirations and priorities of some members of the local Indigenous community, and presents a cautionary tale, along with lessons learned.

People were dispossessed or alienated from customary land due to the resort infrastructure development and subsequent blocking of access to the land and sea area of the resort. The perceived loss for community members on Nggela Sule Island physically alienated from their land and ancestors, potentially created resentment towards the developers (Sofield, Butler, & Hinch, 1996). Although the cause of the fire was not confirmed, the resort was burnt down in 1988 and abandoned. To some members of the community, the socio-cultural and psychological values associated with control of their ancestral lands were of greater value than material outputs such as employment (Sofield, et al. 1996).

Although there were clearly complexities beyond this snapshot, this case study underlines the importance of community dialogue, transparency, and shared benefits. Understanding the interactions of customary rights to land and resources compared with the legal title is an important starting basis for planning and due diligence. It is not uncommon for there to be overlapping claims for customary land and resource use. Indigenous mapping can be time-consuming but is viewed as a worthwhile risk mitigation measure. It can create a basis for dialogue, as it shows an interest in and respect for traditional systems. A participatory approach to plan tourism development, and transparent discussions on the expectations and benefit flow is essential, particularly to give all potentially affected persons a voice.

The value of this approach is reiterated in research conducted on engaging Indigenous values as part of a conservation project in Isabel Province. It was found that understanding cultural rights and *Kastom* in relation to natural resource management provided a strong foundation for ongoing conservation work, as understanding rights, practices and values provided the opportunity to find how this intersects with biodiversity conservation. This, in turn, provided a foundation for developing a conservation program, which engaged Indigenous communities on their terms, and improved outcomes (Walter R, 2014).

A co-design process that can showcase local tradition, minimize encroachment on customary rights and share benefits on a collaborative basis may provide an alternative pathway to sustainable tourism investment in Solomon Islands, drawing on available local experts.

Figure 6: Location map and image of Anuha Island



5.2 MISOOL (INDONESIA)

This case study is of interest as it addresses environmental degradation, rather than focusing solely on conservation. The developers and operators of an award-winning eco-resort worked with the government and community to establish a marine reserve, resulting in impressive fish biomass increases and the re-building of reef shark populations. The marine reserve of 1,220km² is leased directly from local families, providing economic incentives for no-take zones in two areas.

Situated amongst hundreds of small islands fringed by coral reefs, the habitat creates an unforgettable tourism experience, with an abundance of turtles, sharks, reef manta rays and oceanic rays, along with rich biodiversity that includes endemic species (ZuBlue, 2020). The interesting aspect of this development is that it was not always an abundant marine environment. Prior to establishment of the resort, the island was a productive shark-finning operation. Unsustainable fishing practices were also evident in areas of reef degradation (Booth, 2021).

The resort developers needed to align environmental outcomes with local benefits. Replacing income from existing fishing practices was essential for acceptance and ownership of ideas. The business has met local expectations, employing more than 250 staff and providing people with training opportunities to move from laboring into skilled jobs, such as dive instructors and chefs (Booth, 2021). The thriving marine life bordering the no-take zones has improved fish catches for livelihoods and subsistence, while marine plastic projects create jobs and income for locals and further improve the marine ecological environment.

Not only can visitors enjoy the benefits of conservation efforts, they can also participate through conservation volunteering in programs such as monitoring and reef seeding. This case study demonstrates that an eco-resort business does not need to be established in a pristine environment. In fact, there are significant benefits to focusing efforts on more degraded environments, providing incentives and benefits to communities to sustain conservation efforts long into the future. Marine biologist Dr Mark Erdmann remarked that Misool represented a pristine reef system, one of only a handful of places where biodiversity was improving rather than declining (Grassroots Volunteering, 2021).



Hulivili. CC image posted on Flickr in July 2010.



6. Recommended actions and Conclusion

This ESDS presents important opportunities to support tourism sector investment in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces. The study recognizes that through a cohesive approach across relevant ministries, stakeholders, and investors, it is possible to capitalize on these opportunities to develop a prosperous tourism sector. This includes strengthening resourcing of the MCT to be more commensurate with other Pacific Island travel destinations and building its capacity to grow tourism in partnership with stakeholders, such as InvestSolomons. Building a sustainable and inclusive tourism sector for the country was the overarching objective in developing the recommendations for this study. The recommended actions are first presented in relation to contextual risks, then corridor and site-based risks, with an emphasis on actions for the SIG, and for investors.

6.1 CONTEXTUAL RISKS

Contextual risks fall outside the control of tourism investors. However, investors should be aware of these risks and where possible, work with national and provincial governments to address and mitigate these risks at an operational level. A summary of the contextual risks identified and assessed is presented in Section 4.1, and the recommended action for the SIG is provided in Table 27.

Table 27: Contextual risks and recommendations

Key Risk	Summary of Risk	Recommended Actions for Government
Deforestation and threats to natural resources	Tourism, particularly eco-tourism, relies on relatively intact landscapes and the conservation of natural resources. Unsustainable logging, mining and fishing practices or other threats to natural resources in the vicinity of a tourism development can negatively impact the visitor experience, potentially reducing revenue and business sustainability.	Short Term • Implement the Long-Term Sustainable Forest Resource Management Policy 2023 with its framework to strengthen capacity for sustainable resource management. Include strengthening of staff resources and capacity building to achieve objectives. • The Forest Value Enhancement Project, also implemented under the MCC SITHP, provides the SIG with a pathway to increase capacity in natural resource management. This can be achieved through legislative reform, increasing revenues and more equitable distribution to communities, and expansion of an economically viable Payment for Ecosystem Services program to generate environmental, economic and social benefits. Medium Term • When updating policy and strategy documents, the Commissioner for Forests to consult organizations with an interest in the conservation and development of forests. This includes consultations with the MCT and provincial or local tourism bodies that rely on natural landscapes for the sustainability of their respective industry. • Consider increasing logging license fees to strengthen resourcing of monitoring and compliance activities.
Government capacity in natural resource and protected area management	There is a sound policy framework in place for natural resource and protected area management. However, resourcing and capacity for implementation remains a significant challenge. Appropriate management of protected areas is fundamental to the promotion of Solomon Islands for its natural values and the development of the eco-tourism sector. Likewise, the capacity of government to sustainably manage natural resources underpins opportunities for Solomon Islands to leverage tourism growth off its natural assets.	Short Term • Continue to support local community efforts to protect and manage natural resources and habitats through the development and implementation of CBRM plans. As part of this, explore collaboration with tourism businesses, or opportunities to develop new tourism ventures with a nature-based focus. Medium Term • Review the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (2016–2020) and the National Environment Strategy (2020–2023). Identify which mechanisms were successful and can be built upon to protect key biodiversity areas from loss and degradation. • Improve compliance for protected area management rules through improved resourcing of enforcement agencies, inspectors, and locally based rangers.

Key Risk	Summary of Risk	Recommended Actions for Government
Workplace exclusion and discrimination	People can be excluded or discriminated against in the workplace for their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability. Tourism development could potentially exacerbate these discriminatory practices if it lacks operational policies or procedures to protect employees from potential discrimination.	Short Term • SIG to continue working with ILO and stakeholders to update policies and promote meaningful employment opportunities, particularly for young women and men, migrant communities, and people with disabilities. • Support the NGO People with Disabilities Solomon Islands in its work to analyze vulnerable groupings and target sector opportunities, particularly for the tourism sector. • Encourage tourism operators and developers to hire those most vulnerable, including women and people who experience disabilities. This includes recruitment processes that support transparency, gender and ethnic diversity, and reduce barriers for people with disabilities. • SIG to pass the National Building Code that includes a new requirement for access audits in public buildings. Medium Term • Consider potential improvements to the legal and/or judicial system to encourage the reporting of workplace discrimination to authorities and the use of a grievance redress mechanism. • Encourage tourism developers and operators to undertake access audits through People with Disabilities Solomon Islands, to remove physical barriers to workplace participation. This will also improve the experiences of guests with disabilities.
Food security and health	Malnutrition and non-communicable diseases from poor diet are serious issues in Solomon Islands affecting those most vulnerable. Tourism could exacerbate this risk through further demands on local crops and fish stocks. A further health risk in the study corridor is the spread of communicable diseases, including malaria, dengue fever, zika virus and SARS-CoV. Tourism could potentially exacerbate this issue or be impacted by local health risks.	Short Term • SIG to continue CBRM support to strengthen local marine resource management. • Ongoing health programs to reduce risk of mosquito-borne viruses and improve hygiene to reduce disease risks. Medium Term • Work with NGO partners to strengthen community awareness of healthy diets. • Encourage and incentivize locally-based agriculture, gardens and aquaculture systems, including provision of training for improved productivity.

Key Risk	Summary of Risk	Recommended Actions for Government
Labor policies	In Solomon Islands, children as young as 12 years old may be allowed to undertake some types of work under the Labour Act. This is not in alignment with the International Labour Organization Convention, which sets the minimum age for admission to employment or work at 14 years old (12 for 'light' work which does not present risk to health or development, or impact school attendance). This gap in the Labour Act may result in child labor practices within the tourism sector. Women working in some industries are not permitted to work after 6pm. This does not apply to women employed by hotels, restaurants, bars or clubs, but may impact women in other industries that support a tourism operation.	Short Term - Government to continue to work with ILO to reform the Labour Act. Reforms to include women's rights to maternity leave and benefits, provision of a clear definition of harassment and sexual harassment, aligning minimum age conditions with the ILO Minimum Age Convention and finalizing a list of hazardous work prohibited for children under 18 years of age. - It is recommended to update the law to remove restrictions on women working at night, whilst strengthening safeguards to provide safe workplaces for women. - The Industrial Relations Unit, under the MCIL, to strengthen monitoring, complaints investigation and enforcement of provisions in the Labour Act on equal pay for equal work. Medium Term - Provincial tourism officers to assist local communities with queries, or concerns regarding existing or proposed tourism developments, improving transparency and opportunities for local inputs. - SIG to develop educational materials and run campaigns to raise awareness of safe labor practices, including workplaces free from discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment. Establish and promote fair and accessible grievance mechanisms.
Access to basic services and infrastructure	Most people across Solomon Islands experience limited access to basic services and infrastructure, particularly those living in rural areas and people with disabilities. This presents a challenge for tourism investors, as it could increase upfront development costs and potential safety risks for guests required to travel to Honiara to access medical care. Access to sites through airports, roads and boats present a risk if transport is too demanding or unsafe. Although the presence of tourism would increase pressure on infrastructure – such as waste, power and water – tourism development could also benefit local communities should infrastructure be developed to manage amenities that could be utilized by the community.	Short Term - Airports are critical infrastructure for tourism. SIG to work closely with community leaders to increase understanding of the broader benefits of improved access, both for planned and existing airports to reduce potential for disruption through disputes. - Establish or work with existing Community Advisory Committees in airport areas, with landowners front and center. The aim is an ongoing forum for engagement and dialogue. - Improve regulations for boat safety and skipper training requirements. Medium Term - Identify areas with poor communication infrastructure, such as Russell Islands, and support improvements. - National and provincial governments to work together to identify opportunities for infrastructure investment to support better access to services, including improved road conditions and potential future airport development. Together with tourism investors, governments may leverage development and mobilization of construction workforces to connect nearby communities to utility infrastructure. - Where possible, national and provincial governments should encourage tourism investors to consider emergency evacuations, such as safe helicopter landing sites or fast boat transport. - SIG to encourage tourism investors to consider including disability inclusive infrastructure to make tourism accessible for all. - Implement the National Waste Management and Pollution Control Strategy, with a particular focus on improving waste management infrastructure and services in rural areas.

Key Risk	Summary of Risk	Recommended Actions for Government
Rural-urban disparities	People living in rural areas of Solomon Islands experience disparities compared to those in urban areas, including access to infrastructure, employment, education and housing. Access to skilled labor may be limited in some parts of Guadalcanal and Central Provinces, particularly areas further from Honiara. Therefore, skilled labor may need to be sourced from other parts of Solomon Islands or in some cases, overseas. Tourism operators have the potential to exacerbate this risk should they rely on labor and products from Honiara or overseas, rather than employing and procuring goods locally.	Short Term - Consider requiring tourism operators to clearly communicate workforce requirements to communities to ensure fair access to job vacancies from applicants who meet relevant criteria. Medium Term - Support local communities and their access to tourism jobs through training, including scholarships to access national or international training opportunities to help improve local skills and capacity.
Illegal hunting and wildlife trade	The global trade in wildlife targets rare species, impacting several endemic species in Solomon Islands. Whilst species are protected under legislation, trade continues as the under-resourcing of compliance and monitoring activities hinders efforts to protect wildlife from over-exploitation. The illegal hunting and trade of wildlife can impact tourism, particularly the eco-tourism market, where participants expect high standards and seek experiences such as birdwatching and diving. Tourism operators have the potential to exacerbate risks if foreign visitors, unknowingly or not, purchase items such as preserved rare butterflies.	Short Term - Increase awareness activities at national, provincial and community levels to provide sound information about the impacts of unsustainable hunting and wildlife trade. Disseminate awareness-raising materials aimed at tourists. Medium Term - Increase the capacity and resources for monitoring and enforcement activities, under the Wildlife Protection and Management Act 1998, to improve detection and prosecution activities.
Reprisals risk	Despite the contextual risk of reprisals moving from “high” in 2021 to “moderate” in 2024, reprisals remain a significant risk for tourism development, with historic examples affecting tourism operators in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces. Whilst at a country level these risks are viewed to be tempering, at a site-based level, without strong community support and a cohesive view of land title status, reprisal risks are important to consider. Despite sites included in this study being registered, views on how land should be used and developed sometimes differed between community and family members, which can lead to conflict. In some cases, members or the majority of community members may feel that tourism operators are not doing enough to benefit local communities, which may lead to conflict and acts of reprisal.	Short Term - SIG to encourage community engagement as well as meaningful and equitable participation in any tourism development to improve relationships and avoid incidences of reprisals and conflict. - SIG to encourage partnerships with local communities. If local communities are partners or shareholders in investments, it can foster collaboration and reduce the risk of reprisals. Medium Term - National and provincial governments seek to improve and implement formal dispute resolution processes on any site with a history of disputes, or where community consultations indicate potential disagreements in the future.

Key Risk	Summary of Risk	Recommended Actions for Government
Gender and disability inclusion	Despite the tourism sector providing improved employment opportunities for women, they are often under-represented in leadership roles. Gender-based violence affects 64 percent of women in Solomon Islands. Patriarchal views can also prevail in some communities, which limits women's access to employment. Women and children are also particularly vulnerable to SEAH, especially near logging operations. Tourism developers could exacerbate risks to women, particularly in areas with known SEAH challenges. Disability inclusion is not widely practiced, with the <i>Wantok</i> system relied on rather than a broader community or national safety net. Tourism development can exacerbate economic and social divisions when inclusion is not considered.	Short Term - SIG and NGOs to continue promoting the business case for women in leadership positions. <i>Leadership Matters</i> is a report that benchmarks women in business leadership in the Pacific, with an update to be published in 2024 (PSDI, 2021b). This will provide a means to measure progress and set new targets and actions to increase leadership opportunities. - SIG to facilitate collaboration between tourism investors and NGOs working to improve disability and gender inclusion to consider these aspects from the early planning stages through to implementation. Medium Term - With high incidences of GBVH linked to logging and extractive industries with large migrant workforces, strengthen the requirements for companies to take action. This can include implementation of a code of conduct, workforce training, and consequences for companies with workers who consistently breach the law. This can also be introduced in tourism businesses. - Strengthen capacities of law enforcement bodies to prosecute persons engaged in SEAH of children and women. This includes introducing penalties for companies, including responsibility for repeated offences by employees (beyond deportation of those committing offences). Raise social responsibility awareness of companies that bring migrant workforces into communities. - Invest in improved services for SEAH/GBVH survivors and localized service providers in areas vulnerable to SEAH, including education campaigns targeting families with young women and children. - Continue to work with stakeholders to strengthen the broader safety net for people with disabilities.

6.2 CORRIDOR AND SITE RISKS

Risks that apply across the study area, particularly hub areas, were identified and assessed in Section 4. Corridor level risks could potentially be reduced with appropriate management and mitigation by the SIG, especially with assistance from donor parties. It is recognized that tourism investors are unlikely to have significant impacts on broader corridor level risks. However, they can make a real difference at site level. As a first step, it will be important to validate findings of the relevant site profile, consulting with the local

community in and around each site. It is recommended that Indigenous terrain mapping and consultations be undertaken to understand complexities and risks relating to land tenure. This includes understanding community dynamics and protocols in relation to land access and use, and resource use.

A summary of these corridor and site risks and recommended mitigation measures is provided in Table 28, recognizing that some aspects require SIG support, whereas other actions are better undertaken by the investor or developer.

Table 28: Corridor and site risks and recommendations

Key Risks	Recommended Actions for the SIG	Recommended Actions for Developers
Environmental risks		
Terrestrial biodiversity - Land clearance for tourism impacts abundance of flora, health and disrupts habitats for foraging, nesting and breeding for endangered or vulnerable species. - Declines in the availability of natural resources for communities, such as firewood and forest products. - Introduction of invasive species and weeds. - Influx of workers creates additional demand on natural resources. - Poor waste management and sanitation can pollute terrestrial environments and impact ecosystems. - Changed water flows or soil erosion through poor construction practices in the development of tourism infrastructure. - Biodiversity loss is a risk to intrinsic ecosystem values, but also to tourism facilities as it can impair the aesthetic or amenity value of the tourism industry. For example, logging or resource extraction in the vicinity of a site can negatively impact a visitor's experience, particularly if focused on nature-based tourism. This, in turn, erodes the marketability of an unspoiled Pacific Island destination.	Short Term - The MECDM to mitigate risks through suitable permit conditions. - Continue to work with the MCC SITHP Forest Value Enhancement Project to improve sustainable management of natural resources. Medium Term - Extend a moratorium on planned and future logging activities near identified potential tourism sites from this study. - Enhance the capacity of the MECDM to oversee the EIA/ESIA process. - Support communities to identify and prevent illegal logging in the vicinity of an earmarked tourism site. - Improve cost recovery fee structures to generate extra income, thereby boosting capacity for compliance monitoring. - Enhance collaboration between agencies to implement cross-cutting strategies, such as the National Biodiversity Action Plan which seeks to build capacity and systems to address biodiversity loss.	- Select sites that avoid high biodiversity risk or implement protection zones around high value biodiversity areas on-site. - Conduct biodiversity surveys, identifying key habitat on-site. - As part of the ESIA process, avoid and minimize land clearance, particularly of any high-risk areas such as primary forest or healthy secondary forest that provides important habitat. - Design and implement mitigation measures in the ESIA to minimize impacts during construction and operations. - Tourism developers can actively enhance terrestrial biodiversity through using native species in landscaping and designing landscapes to enhance habitats. - Engage with local communities on conservation and restoration projects to enhance biodiversity and community goodwill.

Key Risks	Recommended Actions for the SIG	Recommended Actions for Developers
Marine biodiversity Risks of marine biodiversity impacts from tourism development can occur during construction and operations phases including: • Impacts on coral reefs and seagrass through run-off containing sediment or contaminants. This includes run-off from poorly designed, constructed and/or managed septic systems, creating nitrification. • Clearance of important habitat, such as mangroves or coastal species, that impacts biodiversity in the estuarine and marine environments. • Damage to marine ecosystems through construction of marine infrastructure, such as a jetty. • Disturbance to turtle nesting sites. • Increase in the number of workers during construction can place further pressure on natural resources, such as fish stocks. • In areas with a CBRM in place, tourism ventures may block access to monitoring areas and impact ongoing conservation work. • Poor waste management creates marine pollution, with plastic pollution a particular concern. Plastics degrade into micro and nano plastics, which are known to impact the health of freshwater and marine organisms. • Dive boat anchors and snorkelers crushing coral and impacts from fishing in environmentally sensitive areas. • Tourists taking resources, such as shells or increased local harvesting of shells by communities, to make handicrafts for the tourist market. • Decline in fish stocks through catering for tourists without considering local constraints. This can impact local diets and livelihoods. • As is the case for terrestrial biodiversity, there is also a risk that loss of marine biodiversity will impact tourism. Marine biodiversity loss through over-fishing, coral harvesting, unsustainable practices (for instance, dynamite fishing) or impacts from sedimentation and pollution in the broader area can impair the aesthetic, intrinsic or amenity value of a tourism site.	Short Term • The MOFR and partners to continue to seek ways to strengthen livelihoods that do not overexploit marine resources. Using the CBRM strategy, engage local and traditional communities to understand threats to marine ecosystems and improve natural resource management. • The MOFR to seek collaboration with tourism investors and operators to strengthen community-based efforts to improve marine conservation. Medium Term • See above for recommendations regarding MECDM capacity building and resourcing, and for ESIA processes. • The MOFR to strengthen resourcing to support community management of marine areas through the CBRM process, including ongoing feedback and planning with communities on successes and challenges.	• Developers to select sites after considering risks to marine biodiversity. • Check if a CBRM is in place. If yes, a relevant management committee must be consulted, and measures considered to enhance community conservation efforts. Seek to understand traditional knowledge and practices and how they relate to management of marine resources. • Once an appropriate site is selected, undertake ESIA work to assess potential impacts on the marine environment, and ensure they are avoided, mitigated or managed during the construction, operationalization, and closure phases. • Implement waste management systems that prevent ocean pollution, particularly plastic waste pollution. • Consider options to undertake conservation work in collaboration with the local community and tourists, including rehabilitation, restoration work and ongoing monitoring of important assets such as coral reefs, seagrass meadows and mangroves. • Consider options to share benefits with the local community from marine tourism, providing opportunities for local people in employment, such as tour guiding linked to turtle or other conservation sites, or snorkelling/diving guides. • Educate guests on low-impact marine activities, including not extracting resources from the marine environment. • Understand local constraints on fishing stocks, and work with the MOFR and community on sustainable fishing practices, such as only purchasing fish abundant in stock.

Key Risks	Recommended Actions for the SIG	Recommended Actions for Developers
Social risks		
Social cohesion - Disputes over land ownership and access present a risk to tourism developers and operators, both for development of sites and utilizing infrastructure, such as airports. Land disputes have the potential to trigger project delays, business disruptions, and escalate conflicts over loss of property and infrastructure. - Despite all identified sites being on registered land titles, some Indigenous communities may disagree with land tenure on a site, particularly if there has been a history of tribal conflict. Uncertainty around recorded titles and customary land undermines investor confidence.	Short Term - Confine tourism developments to registered land, but ensure adequate consultations with communities, including Indigenous terrain mapping to foster a common understanding of the land title and prevent disputes. - Where differing views on a title are identified, the government should further work with the titleholder and Indigenous communities to resolve any ongoing title disputes and confirm that land is not under a customary land title. - Where there is conflict between Indigenous and settler communities, work with each group to resolve outstanding issues. Medium Term - In communities with Village Development Committees in place, provincial government to build capacity and assist in designing blueprints for communities. Village Development Committees can define how tourism is compatible with broader development goals and seek cohesion on developing opportunities. - Provincial and central government to strengthen community by-laws to improve community governance structures.	- In the early stages of planning, seek engagement with surrounding customary landowners and community leaders. Tourism ventures must integrate with the local vision. Seek understanding of community perceptions and views of title holders to identify potential sensitivities. - Understand who to consult with, engage community leadership and landowners in surrounding areas. Indigenous terrain mapping can provide a good tool to understand local structures and enter respectful dialogue from the outset. Explore local understandings of access to land and natural resources and uncover any overlapping claims. Use this as a basis to start dialogue and planning. - Explore opportunities for joint ventures with local communities to provide direct local benefits and build social license. - Conduct a security risk assessment of the operating environment to prepare for and respond to public and private security risks. A security management plan should follow the principle of proportionality as laid out in IFC PS4, including establishing a grievance mechanism.
Rural-urban disparity The risk of rural-urban disparities is described in Section 4.1.9. The West Guadalcanal Hub is at higher risk due to its proximity to Honiara.	Government action more applicable at contextual risk level (see Table 27).	- Exercise best efforts to procure goods and services locally, if they meet the quality and quantity required by a project. - Encourage local communities to apply for suitable roles. Where possible, reduce barriers to access employment. This includes encouraging women and people with disabilities to apply for positions. - Encourage visitors to buy local products and support the local community. - Encourage local communities to produce goods for sale to tourists, avoiding competition with existing providers. - Run 'village tours' for tourists to engage with local communities in a culturally sensitive manner and purchase arts and crafts, if available, only after consultation and agreement with local community.

Key Risks	Recommended Actions for the SIG	Recommended Actions for Developers
Gender and disability inclusion Gender-based and disability inclusion risks are described in Section 4.1.11. The West Guadalcanal and East Guadalcanal Hubs have a higher risk of gender-based risks due to the proximity of large logging operations. Inclusion risks are likely to be consistent across the study corridor, but with some nuance at the community level.	Government action more applicable at contextual risk level (see Table 27).	- Understand barriers to inclusion for women and people with disabilities in the local community and discuss solutions. Set specific targets for employment of women, and work with local families to raise awareness of women's attributes in the workplace. This could also include access to training. - Seek to identify women suitable for leadership business positions and provide capacity building to support gender equity in the workplace. - In planning phases, undertake a disability access audit in collaboration with an NGO, such as People with Disabilities Solomon Islands, to improve experiences for elderly and disabled guests, and reduce barriers to workforce participation. - Develop and implement a workplace code of conduct to prevent harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace. - Consider actions to reduce risks to women workers, including measures to protect women traveling to and from the workplace at night. - Encourage tourists to observe cultural practices when visiting villages, including dressing appropriately. - Implement zero-tolerance policies for staff and guests with regards to gender-based violence, child exploitation and harassment. - Implement a grievance redress mechanism with a dedicated channel for women to provide feedback or air concerns, including a channel for submitting grievances anonymously, and without risks of reprisal.

Key Risks	Recommended Actions for the SIG	Recommended Actions for Developers
Presence of people and livelihoods - Developing land plots used by the community as a source of income, livelihoods or for living purposes can increase the risk of resettlement (physical and/or economic displacement). - People can also impact tourism through demanding fees to access resources, such as reefs.	Short Term - If resettlement impacts are unavoidable, consider the mitigation hierarchy and applicable IFC PS as a framework of good international industry practice, in addition to national applicable laws. - Work with project developers to encourage investment in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces to support alternative livelihoods, in consultation with those affected, when relevant and applicable. Medium Term - Support community planning measures and governance by-laws to prevent ad hoc charging of access fees or discuss potential access fees and how this will support the local community and environment prior to formalization. - Collaborate with project developers on ongoing monitoring of livelihood restoration if impacted by the project's development.	- Tourism development creates significant change at a local level. To improve community cohesion and trust, early dialogue and open/ ongoing consultations are critical. - Avoid development in highly populated areas used as sources of income and livelihoods. - Identify those impacted by the development and prioritize their access to employment and procurement opportunities, when possible. - Maintain communities' access to natural resources used as a source of income or livelihoods in an alternative area on-site. - Avoid resettlement where possible. When unavoidable, undertake resettlement and livelihood-restoration planning, implementation, and monitoring in accordance with applicable national law and IFC PS as a framework of good international industry practice. This includes, when applicable, providing compensation at replacement costs and assistance prior to taking possession of land and assets required for the project, and in consultation with those affected (see also IFC PS1, PS5 and PS7). - Adverse impacts on Indigenous peoples shall be avoided already at project design and site selection phase. The effectiveness of impact avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures is enhanced if the points of views of Indigenous peoples on matters that affect them are taken into consideration and form part of project decision-making processes. In the special circumstances described in paragraphs 13–17 of PS 7, the client's engagement process will ensure the FPIC of the affected communities of Indigenous peoples.

Key Risks	Recommended Actions for the SIG	Recommended Actions for Developers
Presence of infrastructure Infrastructure in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces, including transportation and access to healthcare, is limited and may be inadequate for tourism development and operations. Should tourists need medical care they may be required to travel by boat for long distances.	Short Term - Work with stakeholders to re-open Marau Airport as soon as possible, as this infrastructure is critical to tourism development in East Guadalcanal. - Prioritize the upgrading of infrastructure like roads, hospitals, clinics, jetties and ports to align with the timeline of priority sites identified for tourism development. Medium Term - Understand the limitations of clinics in proximity to tourism sites and use the opportunity to work with tourism operators in the vicinity to strengthen capacity of rural health clinics to serve communities and tourists. - Improve maritime infrastructure and safety measures, including minimum boat transport standards and operator training.	- Prioritize sites with enabling infrastructure for access or develop self-sufficient and safe means of transport. - Devise appropriate maritime safety precautions and contingency plans, including training for staff. - Develop contingency plans in the event of poor weather or a safety event that requires medical treatment. - Support medical treatment and/or first aid training and capacity building in local communities and own staff. - For remote sites, consider including a helicopter landing area for emergency evacuations. - Collaborate with communities on environmental awareness and/or waste management processes. - Where possible, develop supporting infrastructure that enables improvements to the wider community (power, water, telecommunications). Avoid adding pressure to existing infrastructure and services. Assess potential impacts and how to avoid, minimize or mitigate them. - Consider incorporating disability inclusive elements into the design of infrastructure to encourage accessible tourism and make the workplace disability friendly.
Potential for UXO - Given the WWII history with intense battles and occupied sites, particularly in the northern area of West Guadalcanal, the Russell Islands and parts of Nggela, there is a high risk of UXO discoveries during site development. - UXO discoveries are related to likelihood of presence, and land use. In areas with limited development, there may be no records of UXO discoveries and removals. However, this lack of discovery does not infer that the risk is lowered. - UXO may also be present outside the site in areas that guests may explore, such as neighboring villages and diving sites. - UXO if disturbed can lead to fatalities, injuries and property damage.	Short Term - SIG is currently working with the Halo Trust to undertake detailed surveys through analysis of historical data, ground assessments and interviews. This work will inform prioritization of clearance work for the SIG. - SIG to continue the partnership with the Halo Trust to improve awareness and assist with signage to provide communities with an understanding of risks and appropriate responses. Medium Term - SIG to ensure comprehensive mapping is in place for UXO identification and clearance and proactively clear sites following GIIP. - SIG to develop a digitized record that can be accessed online to disseminate information on UXO presence for communities, developers, and tourists.	- For all development sites, hire experienced UXO specialists to conduct due diligence and detailed risk assessments of the potential for UXO at development sites. If the study shows a high likelihood of UXO, then surveys should be undertaken to identify type, quantity, location, and clearance techniques. The information in this ESDS is based on local consultations and public records. Therefore, while it can be considered a starting point, it does not exclude risks of UXO presence. This includes all moderate or low-risk sites where developers are strongly recommended to undertake due diligence. - Any discoveries must be the basis of a stop work order until site clearance has been completed. - Provide tourists with education materials and train staff on recognizing UXO and steps to inform management to instigate a report to the Solomon Islands Police.

Key Risks	Recommended Actions for the SIG	Recommended Actions for Developers
Presence of cultural heritage - Cultural heritage can be poorly documented, or information about the specific locations of sites can be withheld for cultural reasons. - Sites relating to WWII have also been lost or damaged over time. - Whilst communities may be aware of cultural sites, some have lost significance over time, or are only significant to specific tribes or families. - A lack of information or misinformation provided by community members may result in damage or loss of cultural heritage due to development. - Tourism operations have potential to exacerbate risks to cultural heritage, with visitors purchasing or removing cultural or WWII artifacts.	Short Term - As a part of permit conditions, the MECDM to consider a requirement for developers to have a 'chance find procedure' in place. Medium Term - SIG to collaborate with NGOs and research institutes to consult local communities to identify a process for recording and protecting sites of cultural heritage.	- As any cultural heritage, art and music may be culturally sensitive, conduct an assessment of potential risks and / or rewards by consulting with relevant communities before their use, including for purposes such as naming project sites and pieces of equipment, as prescribed in IFC PS8. A cultural heritage management plan may be required to ensure management of key sites identified during the assessment for preservation. - Consult with local Indigenous communities, with support from relevant NGOs and research centers, to identify where cultural sites may be present. - Work with local communities and Indigenous people to make sure cultural practices are observed on each site by staff/ contractor/ subcontractors where appropriate. - Preserve and protect any sites of cultural heritage located on-site. This includes educating visitors on the importance of leaving all artifacts in-situ (cultural and WWII artifacts). - If identified as appropriate by local communities and authorities, cultural sites can be utilized for tourism experiences and engagement. - Develop provisions for managing 'chance finds' through a procedure applied if cultural heritage is discovered.
Presence of estuarine crocodiles Crocodiles are likely to be present at several sites. They are highly mobile, and human-crocodile interactions risk fatality or serious injury. For tourists, knowledge of habitats and ways to mitigate risk are likely to be poor.	Short Term - Continue to work on monitoring human-crocodile interactions to understand risk on an ongoing basis. - Finalize and implement a National Crocodile Management Plan and Harvest Monitoring Plan. Medium Term - Provide education and awareness materials, including signage to be erected at crocodile hotspots. - Assess root causes of increasing conflicts and ensure local health clinics are well equipped and trained on administering adequate treatment for example, antibiotics.	- Understand the risks of crocodile encounters in relation to the site for development. - As part of local consultations, seek advice and local knowledge on likely hotspots and historical encounters. Indigenous knowledge is an important resource to understand local crocodile risk. - In areas where this risk is present, make sure all guests understand where crocodiles are likely to be encountered, and ways to minimize risk. Ensure all staff have been adequately trained on risks and how to tend to injuries and administer first aid.

Key Risks	Recommended Actions for the SIG	Recommended Actions for Developers
Natural Hazard Risks		
Coastal vulnerability/sea level rises - Parts of the corridor are in low-lying coastal areas. Some areas are more exposed than others, particularly those with less protection from in-shore or fringing reef systems. - Sites with less coastal protection and low-lying topography are vulnerable to coastal inundation from storm surges. - Sea level rises may impact the utility of some sites, as well as their value and amenities. Tourism infrastructure may have a shorter lifespan as the site conditions change. - Sites impacted by sea level rises and inundation are also more at risk from broader social conflicts as land resources for development become scarcer.	Short Term - Increase awareness and community-based vulnerability assessments, adaptation and resilience planning. - Improve multi-sectoral collaboration and information sharing to build knowledge, along with coordinated efforts in adaptation and resilience approaches. Medium Term - Undertake coastal inundation and tsunami risk mapping. - In areas identified as high risk, consider longer term strategies of retreat and protection mechanisms, including nature-based solutions and engineering protections. - Improve protection in coastal zones, with mangroves, salt marshes and wetlands preserved for biodiversity and coastal resilience for local communities.	- Undertake an assessment of likely sea level rise scenarios, and the potential impacts on coastal amenities and assets, as well as local vulnerability. Select site and plan siting of infrastructure based on vulnerability assessments. - Protect and enhance coastal vegetation on the site and collaborate with the SIG and communities to improve conservation and resilience outcomes for the broader area.
Natural hazards - There are no detailed hazard mapping or multi-criteria hazard risk assessments specific to the corridor or hubs. - The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) has limited capacity and resources to plan and respond to natural disasters. There are limited early warning systems, and executing emergency and evacuation procedures in a timely way is challenging. This risk is exacerbated with the isolation of some identified tourism sites within the corridor.	Short Term - Improve capacity building, training and budgetary support for the NDMO. Medium Term - NDMO to develop early warning systems for natural disasters and assess ways that communication can reach all people. - NDMO to work with provinces and local communities to build awareness and capacity, and design disaster response plans. - Deliver training to local communities, including remote areas and islands to respond to natural disasters. This training can help improve resilience. Community-based vulnerability assessments and resilience planning are an effective means to reduce risk. Evacuation planning (including identification of suitable buildings) and communication planning can assist with disaster preparedness. Equally, social mapping is important to identify vulnerable people in the community who may need assistance in the event of a natural disaster.	- Understand potential for natural hazards in the area. - Design and build infrastructure to local regulatory standards and referencing GIIP to withstand extreme events where possible. - Consider if any facilities can be utilized by communities in an evacuation situation, and work with local leaders to consider opportunities for collaboration. - Undertake emergency planning, identifying muster points and exit routes. Ensure plans can be understood by all local staff and cater for foreign guests, considering different language requirements and needs of guests and staff with disabilities. - Undertake resilience training with staff, which would include scenario planning, preparation, response, and first aid.

6.3 MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS

It is recommended that the MCT take a lead role in the oversight of actions. Whilst the recommended actions encompass multiple stakeholders within the SIG, the MCT is strongly encouraged to analyze progress across all actions on an annual basis. This would provide a measurement of progress, along with highlighting constraints. The monitoring could also inform ongoing planning for the tourism sector.

It is recommended that the monitoring of progress includes an annual analysis with coordination by the MCT national office, and engagement of MCT officers at the provincial level to track the following:

- Number of existing tourism investments within each of the respective provinces.
- Number of proposed and new tourism investments within the respective province, including their status (early investigation, EIA and development application, design, construction, operation).
- Annual tourism sector survey to identify constraints, risks and opportunities as seen by industry stakeholders including soliciting feedback on use and uptake of various tourism-related materials made available to investors, such as Site Profiles (in this report), among others.

- A tourism sector survey to also seek data on policies, activities and attitudes related to inclusive workplace and procurement practices, social license and benefit sharing, and environmental safeguards and conservation.

To discuss annual findings and feed this into ongoing strategic priorities, it is recommended that the MCT initiate an annual tourism workshop in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces to discuss findings with key stakeholders from tourism businesses, relevant government ministries, NGOs and community-based organizations.

It is recognized that an over-arching constraint is the limited resourcing of the MCT, and that there is a need to strengthen the tourism sector through improved funding for the ministry. Without increasing funding to be more commensurate with other Pacific Island travel destinations, the sector will continue to face multiple barriers. Opportunities to build a sustainable and inclusive tourism sector for the country will require a SIG vision and realistic funding to achieve the potential of Solomon Islands as a unique and popular travel destination.

7. Conclusion

This report is a resource to inform the siting of tourism projects and the mitigation of risks. It provides data on the social, environmental and natural hazard risks and the opportunities that can be leveraged through tourism development at the contextual, corridor and site levels. The report represents findings from research, consultations and field visits in 2023, and requires regular reviews and updates.

The following are key themes from the data analysis, stakeholder engagement and site visits:

- This study reinforces Solomon Island's potential to capitalize on its unique biodiversity found nowhere else, with 72 bird species endemic to the country, the second highest coral biodiversity in the world, and one of the most biologically rich terrestrial and marine environments on the planet. These natural assets are highly sought after by tourists seeking unique nature-based experiences.
- The culture of Solomon Islands is also a rich asset that can be showcased to visitors. Traditional art, music, food, and the warm hospitality in rural areas can generate once-in-a-lifetime experiences for tourists.
- There is an opportunity to offer close and authentic engagement with local culture and the unique natural environment, leveraging what Solomon Islands has to offer that differs from anywhere else. Developing carefully planned tourism infrastructure and activities has significant economic potential to bolster local livelihoods, inclusion and enhance ecosystems.

While tourism development can help reduce a reliance on logging that is threatening biodiversity and impacting the wellbeing of communities, it is critical the SIG tackle illegal logging and consider logging moratoriums, particularly on or near identified potential tourism sites. Risk of GBVH is heightened around areas with logging activities, and increasing deforestation has both immediate and longer-term impacts, including the erosion of natural assets that underpin a thriving tourism sector.

Tourism can strengthen important conservation efforts. Protection of turtle nesting grounds, protection and rehabilitation of forests or coral reefs can be enhanced if local communities can derive value from the protection of these natural assets. In this way, tourism can have a positive impact on ecosystems rather than adding cumulative impacts to existing threats.

However, if the bulk of tourism development in Solomon Islands does not follow good international industry practice, this can result in significant cumulative impacts with adverse physical and social implications on Solomon Islands as a destination, and on its tourism industry.

For tourism to truly boost Solomon Island's economy for all, barriers to employment for women and disabled populations must be removed, including enhancing access to finance for local SMEs in the sector. Transparent benefit-sharing frameworks developed in consultation with communities can help get early buy-in from stakeholders. A social license is vital to ensure long-term viability and support for any tourism initiative. Any ambiguities around land-related concerns should be addressed as early as possible by drawing in locally pioneered processes like Indigenous terrain mapping. This helps build trust with communities and local ownership in the process.

Well-planned tourism development, including accessible infrastructure and utilizing sustainable materials/resources, has significant potential. However, this relies on appropriate investment by the SIG. With the right resourcing and a cohesive approach to support the tourism sector, there is potential to develop Solomon Islands into an important eco-tourism destination in the region.

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Solomon Islands. © Becky Last.

Appendix A

Methodology

DEFINITION OF STUDY AREAS

A description of the study areas used for the ESDS profiles is shown in Table A.1.

Table A.1: Study area definitions

Study area level	Geographical area	Description
Contextual	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands-specific information is used to provide context to the E&S and natural hazards baseline. Inherent E&S and natural hazard risks related to the tourism sector, or Solomon Islands in general, cover aspects that investors would not have control over, but which could negatively impact a project's ability to be consistent with IFC's PS requirements.
Corridor	Guadalcanal and Central Provinces	Corridor-level information is used to identify potential risks and opportunities specific to the entire study area, based on regional-level factors such as environment, history, governance, sectoral development and infrastructure. In this study, the corridor encompasses areas in two provinces.
Hub	5 hubs West Guadalcanal Hub (includes northwest of Guadalcanal Island down to south of Tangarare) East Guadalcanal Hub (includes area known as Marau Sound) Nggela Hub (includes Nggela Pile and Nggela Sule) Buena Vista Hub (includes Buena Vista and Sandfly Islands) Russell Islands Hub (includes East Russells and West Russells)	A 'hub' refers to a group or cluster of sites in close geographic proximity, and which may share similar risks and opportunities (for example, presence of workforce, infrastructure, and accessibility constraints). Hubs do not denote specific governance boundaries, but are clusters of selected sites in identifiable geographic areas used to convey mapping information where appropriate.
Site	31 sites	Thirty-one individual sites were shortlisted by the ALTIF team (IFC, MCT, MCC and Tetra Tech) and provided to the study team. All sites are registered under the Land and Titles Act with the SIG, meaning they are not classed as customary land and are, therefore, preferred for development. Registered land holds fewer land tenure risks than customary-owned land. Sites vary in size. For the purposes of this assessment, sites are considered in their entirety.

REVIEW OF DESKTOP INFORMATION

The ESDS was informed by a desktop review of available literature, Geographic Information System (GIS) and other relevant data, previous environmental and ecological assessments as well as social research reports developed for other projects or country-specific datasets. Together, they informed the baseline assessment at national and corridor levels.

GIS MAPPING

The purpose of GIS mapping was to compile readily available spatial information into one location, and map this available information to enable field verification.

The type of information that was considered for key indicators of the study is listed below:

Table A.2: GIS data researched

Potential risks to tourism development and potential E&S and natural hazard impacts of tourism development	Sought after GIS spatial data
• Ability to develop adequate and needed accommodation services, considering natural hazards, fire and other environmental constraints. • Effects of climate change, natural disasters, or other factors: coastal erosion, increased soil salinity, sea level rises, coral bleaching (affecting tourism attractions and fish breeding grounds).	• Areas more subject to natural hazards risks per type of hazards. • Contour mapping, ocean/river/drainage, major watershed boundaries. • Drought-prone areas. • Flood-prone areas. • Hydrography or hydrology. • Planning zones, areas of industrial development. • Potential sea level rises (Land use contours to enable mapping of inundation areas). • Soil salinity data. • Unstable land.
• Biodiversity, including high- conservation-value land area loss, removal of mangroves, damage to coral reefs and forests and impacts on ecosystem for human use.	• Areas of known biodiversity, protected environments, native forests or vegetation. • Any other notable high conservation value, significant or sensitive sites.
• Disruption of flora and fauna. • Ecosystems damaged by logging: destroyed reefs (from runoff), rivers prone to flash floods or changing course, land erosion, landslides. • Pollution (air, water, noise, solid waste, and visual).	• Known/widely recognized key ecosystem services. • High-risk/important ecological areas. • Key aquatic (marine and freshwater) species distribution/range: migratory, limited range, endemic, exotic and invasive, critically endangered/endangered, breeding areas. • Known reef locations and condition, breeding grounds for land or sea species. • Natural forest cover: existing and changes over time/integrity (ie: how long ago was it subject to cyclone, forestry). • Protected areas: existing and proposed (including heritage sites and precincts, key biodiversity areas), boundaries, purposes, values and jurisdiction. • Known contaminated sites. • General environmental data in Solomon Islands.

Potential risks to tourism development and potential E&S and natural hazard impacts of tourism development

Sought after GIS spatial data

• Lack of infrastructure and services to support tourism development. • Inadequate sewage, wastewater and solid waste disposal and treatment, including waste generation and affluent discharge. • Unemployment linked with the seasonality of tourism activities. • Increase in traffic.	• Available infrastructure, underground services (water, power, wastewater, storm water, gas, petroleum), locations of infrastructure facilities (ie: wastewater treatment, dumps, water treatment, power generation). • Existing and planned infrastructure (ports, including planned extensions and docks, types of business, ferry/boat services, hotels/guesthouses, waste management facilities). • Road networks and grading (collector road, local road, dirt road, track). • Wastewater treatment facilities location, size and type of treatment. • River/sea transportation extent.
• Social cohesion issues and related conflicts. • Impact of religious organizations and beliefs. • Influx of labor, child labor, forced labor and SEAH. • Lack of available land due to current land management, land title, legacy, community dispute issues. • Law and order issues near communities.	• Conflict areas. • Areas of known community disputes/ legacy issues, village names and locations. • Areas with safety concerns. • Religious sites, locations or meeting places of religious organizations. • Village names and locations. • Population distribution. • <i>Kastom, Tabu</i> sites. • Historical and World Heritage sites. • Levels of unemployment. • Household income by locality. • Administrative boundaries (based on hub and corridor areas above).
• Loss of land and fishing grounds, involuntary resettlement and impacts on livelihoods.	• Land use. • Land tenure types (crown, registered, unregistered, customary), ownership • Fishing and production areas (farming and forestry areas). • Commercial and artisanal fisheries areas.
• UXO: unexploded ordinance left from WWII battles.	• UXO locations (WWI and WWII unexploded ordinance). Areas cleared of UXO.

Sources harvested for reliable data include those listed in Table A.3.

Table A.3: Datasets reviewed for relevant information

Organization	Website
AquaMaps	https://www.aquamaps.org/
Archiuk	https://www.archiuk.com/cgi-bin/
Biodiversity A-Z	https://biodiversitya-z.org/content/solomon-islands
BioOne	https://bioone.org/ContentImages/
Bio-oracle	http://www.bio-oracle.org/
Blue Habitats	http://www.bluehabitats.org/
CEIC Data	https://www.ceicdata.com/en/solomon-islands/
CITES	https://www.speciesplus.net
Coral Reef Watch	https://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/satellite/index.php
Corals of the World	http://www.coralsoftheworld.org/page/home/
E Bird	https://ebird.org/
EN Climate Data	https://en.climate-data.org/
FishBase	http://www.fishbase.org/
Geoscience Australia, GRID- Arendal and Conservation International	http://grid-arendal.maps.arcgis.com/
Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)	https://www.gbif.org/
Global Earthquake Model Foundation	https://www.globalquakemodel.org/product/global-seismic-hazard-map
Global Surface Water	https://global-surface-water.appspot.com
Global Witness	https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/forests/paradise-lost/
HALO Trust	https://www.halotrust.org/
Humanitarian Data Exchange	https://data.humdata.org/dataset/
IBAT Alliance	https://ibat-alliance.org/
ICUN Red List	https://www.iucnredlist.org/search
International Finance Corporation	https://www.ifc.org
ISSG	http://issg.org/database/species/
Key Biodiversity Areas	https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/kba-data/request
Map Hubs	https://www.maphubs.com/

Organization	Website
Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Management in Pacific Island Countries (MACBIO) project.	http://macbio-pacific.info/Interactive-Atlas/
MicroData	https://microdata.pacificdata.org/index.php/
National Statistic Office, Solomon Islands Government, Census 2019.	https://solomons.pogis.spc.int/
NGDC NOAA	https://maps.ngdc.noaa.gov/viewers/hazards/
OPAC SPC	http://opac.spc.int/cgi-bin/koha/
OpenStreetMap Foundation	https://download.geofabrik.de/australia-oceania/solomon-islands.html
Open Knowledge - World Bank	https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/
ORCHA	https://data.humdata.org/
PacGeo	http://www.pacgeo.org/
Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative (PCRAFI)	http://pcrafi.spc.int/layers/geonode:solomon_islands_vector
Pacific Climate Science	https://www.pacificclimatechangescience.org/
Pacific Data	https://pacificdata.org/
Pacific Herbarium Database	https://serv.biokic.asu.edu/pacific/portal/collections/
PRDRSE For All - SPC	http://prdrse4all.spc.int/countries/solomon-islands
Reef Base	http://www.reefbase.org/gis_maps/
Safeground	https://safeground.org.au/project/solomon-islands/
Solomon Islands Environmental Data Portal	https://solomonislands-data.sprep.org
Solomon Islands Government	https://solomons.gov.sb
Solomon Islands Government - Ministry of Forestry and Research	http://mofr.gov.sb/foris/maps.do
Solomon Islands National Statistical Office	https://www.citypopulation.de/en/solomon/admin/
SPC	http://oceanportal.spc.int/
SPREP	https://www.sprep.org/
Think Hazard	http://thinkhazard.org/en/
UN OCHA	https://www.unocha.org/publications
UNDP	https://www.undp.org/
UNEP - Protected Planet	https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/SB
UNEP WCMC	https://data.unep-wcmc.org/

Organization	Website
United Nations Databases	http://data.un.org/en/iso/sb.html
University of Auckland	https://uoa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/
World Data	https://www.worlddata.info/
World Database on Protected Areas	https://www.protectedplanet.net/en
World Health Organization	https://www.who.int/countries/slb/en/
World Nomads	https://www.worldnomads.com/
Solargis	https://solargis.com/

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

Targeted consultations with key stakeholders were undertaken to inform the ESDS at the contextual and corridor levels. The purpose of stakeholder consultations was to:

- Understand government and community perspectives and aspirations for tourism development.
- Identify potential E&S and natural hazard impacts or benefits, and suggestions regarding opportunities to mitigate negative impacts and enhance benefits.
- Collaborate with key stakeholders to communicate and refine the vision for sustainable tourism development.
- Gain insights into the E&S and natural hazards baseline characteristics of the corridor and hubs.
- Gain a broader understanding of the customary community structure and beliefs, and how these factors may influence tourism development.
- Understand the roles, interests, and influence of different stakeholders within communities near identified sites.

Stakeholders were identified and prioritized based on their level of influence and interest in tourism development in Solomon Islands. Stakeholders were consulted through semi-structured interviews, both face-to-face and via videoconferencing. Consultations were informed by IFC's Spectrum of Engagement (IFC, 2007), with key issues raised then documented within the internal Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

SITE VISITS

Site visits for the ESDS were conducted between 25 September 2023 to 15 October 2023. The study team visited each identified site (31 in total) and collected primary E&S and natural hazard data through observations during each site walk-over and consultation with community members. The study team was comprised of two social specialists and two environmental specialists and a staff member from IFC during the site visits. Data collected through site visits included:

- Documenting specific infrastructure and environmental features.
- Field observations of terrestrial plants and habitat, and fauna.
- Observations of land topography, coastal natural protection systems, and evidence of erosion.
- Marine/reef inspections, where relevant and possible.
- Quantitative and qualitative data from interviews with community members (where available) and local stakeholders. A structured question guide was used for each community interview to ensure consistent information was documented.

Information was collected based on indicators relevant to IFC PS. Data collected through site visits were a critical input to the assessment of environmental, social, and natural hazard risks.

RISK ASSESSMENT

There is limited published guidance on landscape level assessments for evaluating risks to social and natural environments. However, there is similarity with Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) methodologies. The methodology adopted for this ESDS borrows from the Myanmar CIA/SEA approaches and was refined for the tourism sector through the Western Provinces ESDS to deliver contextual, corridor, and individual site-specific assessments (IFC, 2021a). These risks were considered at a landscape level and further site-specific studies, such as ESIA's, would need to be conducted by developers to determine specific E&S and natural hazard risks.

Contextual risk

In accordance with IFC's 2012 Sustainability Policy, the categorization process requires considering "inherent E&S and natural hazard risks related to a particular sector as well as the context of a business activity's setting".

Contextual risks, when viewed from both a private sector and E&S perspective, are an important aspect of presenting the complete picture when considering risks in a given country. Contextual risks refer to risks in the external environment (a country, sector, or subnational level) that the client does not control, but which could negatively impact a project or private sector entity's ability to meet IFC's PS.

Data pertinent to contextual risks was collected using the IFC's Contextual Risk Framework and validated during stakeholder consultation and site visits.

Corridor risks

Corridor risks relate to general E&S and natural hazard risks that may manifest across the study corridor and can be differentiated at a broader scale. Measurement of corridor-level risks is primarily based on findings at site level when they present a pattern across the corridor, supplemented by secondary data. Data interrogated at corridor level includes key biodiversity areas, protected areas (marine and terrestrial), population density, distance to infrastructure such as medical facilities and airports, land tenure and use, social vulnerabilities, tourism facilities, planned infrastructure, cultural heritage and UXO hazards.

Key risks at corridor level were identified, qualitatively described and assessed, and where possible mapped spatially using GIS. The mapped risks allow areas of the corridor to be highlighted as susceptible to higher or lower E&S and natural hazard impacts, which can guide investors in their decision-making.

Reliable data with finer details differentiating areas of the Guadalcanal and Central Provinces was combined with on-site observations and reviews of recent aerial photos to map key E&S and natural hazard indicators wherever possible across the study corridor. Capturing relevant data required consultations with SIG ministries and non-government organizations (NGOs), accessing international partnership databases, including the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, supplemented by utilization of other accessible research and online spatial data portals.

The interpretation of corridor-level data by level of risk (low, moderate, and high), indicates both challenges and opportunities. The corridor level risk ratings must, therefore, be interpreted as flagged issues rather than 'no-go' development zones.

Environmental indicators

The resulting environmental indicators adopted for the study are summarized and presented in more detail in Table A.4.

- **Conservation areas:** Location/status of locally, nationally, or internationally recognized areas of conservation significance, including Marine Protection Areas (MPA), Community-Based Management Areas (CBMA), and Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMMA).
- **Location of fauna/flora of conservation significance:** This indicator is a standard international best practice when considering the potential risk of development within a particular area.
- **Terrestrial habitat condition and integrity:** In the absence of species-specific location data, essential habitat factors and their condition and integrity were adopted as a surrogate measure to indicate likely areas of habitat and resource utilization by species of conservation significance.

- **Terrestrial landforms and types:** Landforms and types of the terrestrial environment were used as an indicator of potential risk at a study corridor level. This included, for example, slopes above 30 percent, cliff areas, floodplains and associated drainage depressions (freshwater swamps). At a site level, these factors were able to be more closely delineated and verified during field inspections.
- **Marine ecosystems:** Encompassing a variety of habitats and types, marine ecosystems include coral reefs, seagrass meadows, mangroves, and intertidal systems. Direct information on the condition and integrity of various marine ecosystems was not available as mappable digital data. Since each ecosystem's vulnerability to development varies, their individual degree of vulnerability, as established through the scientific literature referenced in this report, was used as an indicator of potential environmental risk at a study corridor level with field verification at a site level.
- **Coral reefs:** The type and location of a coral reef system determines, to a large degree, its level of vulnerability. Barrier and ribbon reefs, owing to their distance from land and configuration, are less vulnerable to impacts from onshore pollution (such as sediment from logging and clearing operations, or nutrients from villages and towns), compared to atoll or fringing reef systems. More remote reef systems, from densely settled areas, are also less likely to be overfished due to limitations on accessing these reefs by small village boats.
- **External data:** Digital databases, GIS mapping and published reports were used to establish the locations and risk bands (low, moderate, or high) for the environmental indicators at a study corridor scale of resolution. Some mapped data represents small areas, for example freshwater wetlands, that cannot be captured at the study corridor level. This highlights the utility of the corridor risk assessment to provide a snapshot of key challenges, with the need for site-specific field analysis.

Table A.4: Environmental risk assessment criteria at a corridor level

Measurement criteria and source	Description	Risk Rating
• Terrestrial biodiversity impacts • IUCN/IBAT databases • Logging concession maps (Ministry of Forestry and Research) • Published research and studies.	• Highly disturbed or modified environment that has low or limited ecological value.	Low
	• Examples include active coconut plantations, residential or housing areas, agricultural land. • Moderately disturbed environment where forests have been allowed to regenerate without interference. • Examples include former abandoned coconut plantations with heavy secondary growth forest, or former logged areas with secondary growth. • Relatively healthy reef ecosystem with signs of human impacts. • Endangered or threatened species may be present.	Moderate
	• Relatively undisturbed environment, such as primary forest with high ecological values or habitats which require sustainable natural resource management and/or conservation protection. • Healthy and intact ecosystems with limited impact from human activities. • Endangered or threatened species likely to be present.	High

Measurement criteria and source	Description	Risk Rating
• Marine biodiversity impacts • Presence of informal marine management areas, such as Community-Based Managed Areas (CBMA). • To understand the current status of CBMAs, discussions with SIG fisheries officers and local communities • IUCN/IBAT databases.	• Marine areas close to urban centers which have low or limited ecological value and are not likely to incur significant impacts from tourism development. • Ecosystem health compromised through pollution and overfishing. • Shallow reef areas with no adjacent deep water. • Visually stressed marine environment. • Low ecological diversity and health.	Low
	• Marine ecosystems are relatively intact with some evidence of fishing pressures or human impact. • Areas less than 5km from nearest village. • Moderate extent of reef, mangroves or seagrass with visible indicators or stress or impact. • Areas where adjacent land use, such as logging, will likely impact marine ecosystem health.	Moderate
	• Ecosystems with important biodiversity values that will require high mitigation and management controls to ensure that impact is minimal. • Extensive seagrass beds in good health. • Well established and healthy mangrove areas. • Healthy reef ecosystems with wide fish diversity and little impact from fishing. • Extensive reef systems with documented rich biodiversity. • Rare or endangered species likely to be present. • Sea turtle feeding or nesting areas. • Sea bird roosting or nesting areas.	High

For tourism investors, the risk ratings at the corridor level provide insight into ecological values at a high level. Where there are high biodiversity values, these are flagged as moderate or high risks as these values can be impacted by tourism infrastructure and operations. Concurrently these environmental values provide tourism drawcards, and as such present opportunities, but this needs to be managed through appropriate siting, design and operational practices to conserve and potentially enhance environmental attributes.

Social indicators

The social indicators considered for the ESDS at the corridor level are summarized in the following list:

- **Land use:** Settlements, area under cultivation (such as gardens, coconut plantations, forestry plantations, logging areas).
- **Demographic profile:** Population density.
- **Social vulnerabilities:** Subsistence living, education levels, health status of the community (for example, malnutrition and disease profiling), use of sanitation and access to power.
- **Land tenure/land use rights:** Customary land, land under Indigenous administration and registered land (perpetual lease or fixed-term lease).
- **UXO hazards:** Potential for UXO.
- **Social infrastructure:** Medical and health services, emergency response, transport (roads, airports, jetties and ferry docks), potable water supply, markets for food and daily supplies, waste management and water treatment facilities, power and telecommunications.
- **Planned development projects:** Physical infrastructure projects.
- **Tourism facilities and activities:** Existing accommodation and tourism operators.
- **Cultural heritage:** Presence of *Tabu* or cultural sites.

Indicators used to map social risks at a corridor level are shown in Table A.5.

Table A.5: Social risk assessment criteria at a corridor level

Measurement criteria and source	Description	Risk Rating
- Land tenure/access to land use rights - Access to infrastructure, GIS measurements for distance from airport and medical facilities - Exposure to potential UXO areas - Population density.	- Areas that have land titles and are registered land. - Located less than 15km from a medical facility, and less than 30km from an airport. - Good access to urban centers and markets via road. - High population density in the corridor, providing a good source of potential workforce. - Low likelihood of UXO presence. - Tourism development on these sites is rated as a low risk due to the above factors.	Low
	- Areas on land tenure that is registered but contested by local communities or Indigenous groups. - Located 15-30km from a medical facility, and 30-50km from an airport. - Some access to urban centers or markets, but only via a short (under 30 minutes) boat ride. - Moderate population density in the corridor, providing a source of potential workforce. - Moderate likelihood of UXO presence. - Tourism development on these sites is rated as a moderate risk with investors needing to consider the risks related to land tenure, infrastructure access, population and UXO potential.	Moderate
	- Areas on customary land. - Located more than 30km from medical facilities, and more than 50km from an airport. - Limited access to urban centers or markets, and only via a long (more than 30 minutes) boat ride. - Low population density in the corridor, limiting availability of local workforce. - Substantial likelihood of UXO presence. - Tourism development on these sites is flagged as a high risk with investors needing to consider the risks related to land tenure, infrastructure access, population and UXO potential, and whether these risks can be effectively mitigated.	High

Natural hazard indicators

Natural hazard indicators considered in this study include tropical storms and cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, landslides, flooding, and sea level rises. *ThinkHazard!* is a web-based tool created by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) to consider the impacts of disasters on new development projects (Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, 2020). The tool is designed for use at a nationwide or local level depending on country data availability.

The Solomon Islands *ThinkHazard!* report generated in 2020 outlines national level and some limited regional data for the following natural hazards: floods (river, urban, coastal), earthquakes, landslides, tsunami, volcanos, cyclones, water

scarcity, extreme heat, and wildfires (Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, 2020).

The methodology to assess natural hazard risks at the corridor level applies the assessment from *ThinkHazard!* for each hazard type, with the risk description for the corridor providing data on historical events and information on particular risks as they relate to the corridor. Risks in relation to cyclones, tropical storms and earthquakes were able to be mapped from available data sources. In the individual site assessments, *ThinkHazard!* risks were distilled into two categories: coastal vulnerability and sea level rises.

Site risks

Potential E&S and natural hazard risks were identified based on data collected through a review of available information, outcomes of stakeholder consultations and field surveys.

The E&S and natural hazard risks outlined in Table A.6 were considered at a landscape level and further site-specific studies, such as ESIA's, should be conducted to determine specific E&S risks.

Table A.6: Risk definitions

Environmental risks	Definition
Terrestrial biodiversity	Abundance and diversity of life on land, including flora, fauna and vegetation communities, including freshwater ecosystems and species.
Marine biodiversity	Presence, health and diversity of seagrasses, coral reefs, fish, and marine life.
Social risks	Definition
Presence of people	Permanent or temporary population located on-site who, depending on the footprint of development, may require resettlement. This also considers populations located near the site who may not require resettlement, but may have greater exposure to transmission of disease, gender-based violence, exploitation and additional pressures on resources, such as water and electricity. Presence of people is also indicated through dwellings or structures located on-site.
Presence of livelihoods	Livelihoods on-site includes markets, gardens, shell collecting, reefs used for subsistence and artisanal fishing, boat launch areas, copra, coconut plantations, fruit trees, or the presence of other activities as sources of income and livelihoods. This risk also considers the presence of other industries nearby, such as forestry operations.
Presence of cultural heritage	Location and significance of areas of cultural heritage to individual sites and the hub. Includes identification of <i>Tabu</i> sites or areas important to the community and/or protected by relevant authorities, including shipwreck dive sites.
Potential for UXO	Level of risk of potential exposure to UXO.
Community cohesion	Any community conflict observed or described in communities near or on the individual site, including evidence of previous unrest, strength of governance, incidence of crime, and access to the justice system if crime is committed. This was not provided a risk rating for the purpose of this assessment, but any potential risks are flagged within the site assessment dashboard.
Indigenous people	A risk rating was not assigned for Indigenous people as the vast majority of people living on or near individual sites are indigenous to that area. If Indigenous people's presence was accounted for in the risk ratings, it is likely most sites would be considered high risk for development. Therefore, any potential sensitivities around Indigenous or people local to the area – including land claim disputes, community cohesion concerns or cultural heritage management – have been included in qualitative descriptions in the site profiles.
Presence of infrastructure	The distance between each site and the closest medical facility and transport hub (airport and ferry terminals) was individually assessed with data provided in each site profile. These distances were not factored into the quantitative risk assessments as most sites are generally located a long distance from facilities and transport hubs and serviced by limited infrastructure (water, power, sanitation or mobile phone connectivity). Overall presence of infrastructure is captured in the corridor-level assessment.
Natural hazard risks	Definition
Coastal vulnerability	Vulnerability to coastal inundation and erosion through low-lying terrain or exposure to storm surges.
Sea level rise	Site elevation and the capacity for shelter and to retreat in case of storm surges and sea level rises.

As well as defining risks at individual sites, the methodology includes a multi-criteria analysis, which incorporates each score from the quantitative data and applies weightings as shown in Table A.7.

The overall risk rating applied to each site provides an indicative measure, which needs to be supplemented with details provided within each site assessment dashboard to provide more information on where individual risks or 'red flags' apply at each site.

Table A.7: Risk weighting

Risk theme	Overall Importance Weighting (percentage)	Key Risks	Initial Importance Weighting for Risk Attribute (percentage)
Environmental risks	40	Terrestrial biodiversity	50
		Marine biodiversity	50
Social risks	40	Presence of people	30
		Presence of livelihoods	30
		Presence of cultural heritage	20
		Potential for UXO	20
Natural hazards	20	Coastal vulnerability	50
		Sea level rise	50



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Appendix B

Relevant legislation, SIG policies
and strategies

Table B.1: Legislation relevant to tourism development in Solomon Islands

Legislation/ Regulation	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Land and Titles Act 1969</i>	This Act provides the framework for the management of customary and freehold land. The Act includes provisions for preservation and/or conservation of land which is of "historic, architectural, traditional, artistic, archaeological, botanical or religious interest".	Use and/or lease of land for tourism projects and/or establishments.
<i>Land Reform Act 2019</i>	The Land Reform Act (2019) aims to streamline and modernize land-related processes, including establishment of a new land registry system. It seeks to provide more security and clarity in land transactions, while addressing customary land tenure concerns.	Aspects relating to title and land ownership.
<i>Customary Land Records Act 1994</i>	The Act is a legal mechanism for recording tribal land boundaries and customary rights and interests. Under the Act, a group can apply to have its right to control customary land (primary rights) recorded, along with the name of the person authorized to represent the customary land-holding group. Other groups or individuals may also have their use rights, such as to use land for food gardens or access to timber arising from customary practices such as gift, reward and marriage, recorded over the same land (referred to as "secondary rights"). The Act prescribes, therefore, that the recording of customary land include: a) the recognized name of the customary land holding group claiming the primary rights, b) the genealogy of the group, c) method by which membership of the customary land holding group may be granted to others, d) name of person(s) who will represent the land holding group and who is responsible for any dealings affecting such customary land, e) method by which such person(s) are appointed, dismissed and substituted, f) and names of groups of persons claiming secondary rights and the extent of such claims. In cases where the determination of primary rights constitutes a dispute the Act provides for the dispute to be settled by negotiation. Section 13 (2) further provides that in determining a dispute the leaders of the customary groups must consider relevant genealogy and secondary rights. If no agreement is reached the Recording Officer should refer the dispute to the traditional chiefs. Their decision will be final.	Use and/or lease of land for tourism projects and/or establishments. Use of natural resources in customary land or marine areas.
<i>Town and Country Planning Act 1979</i>	The Act is a framework for planning schemes and development control, particularly at the provincial level. However, the Act cannot be applied or utilized in the context of customary land.	Designation of development areas for tourism purposes. Several areas – including Honiara, Gizo Town, Tulagi, Munda and Noro – have been declared as local planning areas. This means they may be the subject of a local planning scheme.

Legislation/ Regulation	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Environment Act 1998</i>	The Act serves as a framework for regulating activities and/or developments which requires an environmental impact assessment (EIA) prior to an approval of the development project. The Act covers activities perceived to generate significant environmental impacts and includes: forestry, mining, tourism resorts, large-scale agriculture, infrastructure developments and waste management systems. Under the Act, the developer is required to produce an EIA report to be evaluated by the Director of Environment and Conservation. When the Director finds the EIA report satisfactory and meets the environmental standards/guidelines, as provided in the Act, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required to be gazetted for 30 days such that persons whose interests or rights may be affected by the development project may issue an objection. The Director may issue or refuse consent for the development project based on the grounds of objections. In cases wherein the developer does not allow the development project to proceed, developers may appeal to an Advisory Committee wherein the appeal will also be gazetted and heard in public.	Tourism resorts. Construction of water and waste infrastructure to support tourism development. Construction and/or rehabilitation of roads, bridges, ports, and other transportation infrastructure.
<i>Forests Act 1999</i>	Replacing the repealed <i>Forest Resources and Timber Utilization Act 1991</i>, this Act provides for the sustainable harvesting and management of forest resources in Solomon Islands. It includes duties of the Commissioner for Forests, and its role in natural resource management, conservation and management of forested land, conservation research, and overseeing the implementation of the National Forest Resource Management Strategy.	The Act does not specifically provide any protections for the tourism sector. The Commissioner may refuse a timber harvesting license if it would be detrimental to proper management and conservation of forest resources. If forest clearance is required for site development, this will need to be in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

Legislation/ Regulation	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Wildlife Protection and Management Act 1998 and (Amendment) Act 2017</i>	The Wildlife Protection and Management Act aims to regulate the export of listed species of wildlife which allows Solomon Islands to comply with the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna. To comply with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Act was amended in 2016. Additional clauses on the trade, captivity, and propagation of CITES specimen were added into the original Act. However, there are exceptions to the provisions, permits, or penalties under the (Amendment) Bill 2016 which are as follows: • Section 3ZD: Personal and household effects, a requirement to hold a permit under subdivision 3 or 4 does not apply in relation to a CITES specimen that is a personal or household effect. • Section 12A: Exemption for specimens used for traditional activities, the Minister may, on the advice of the Director, declare by Gazette notice a class of specimens to be exempt from the requirement of this part if the class of specimens: (a) is used for a traditional activity and (b) is not part of an approved management program in the area within which the traditional activity takes place. The Act only prohibits the trade of listed wildlife species. It is still legal for listed species (for example, turtles) to be consumed for subsistence (food, family events, community events) (The Nature Conservancy, 2019).	The legislation is focused on controlling the trade of wildlife species, particularly the ones listed by CITES. Presently, there are still cases wherein endangered species are still consumed for subsistence or traditional purposes. Further, the control of this consumption is subject to the Ministry of Environment's discretion. Tourism developers may take advantage on the lack of enforcement or control of wildlife consumption and add it as a cultural experience to their tourism packages. Nature-based activities should also not encourage the capture or export of protected species. Further, they should not tag the consumption of Indigenous or endangered wildlife species as a cultural experience in their tourism package or marketing.

Legislation/ Regulation	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Protected Areas Act 2010</i>	The Act provides a framework for the declaration of protected areas and protection of biodiversity. The Act was implemented in 2012, with the creation of the Protected Areas Regulations 2012 (below). Included in the regulations are provisions for classifying declared protected areas. Further, the regulations contain provisions for the preparation and implementation of management plans which should include management of the biodiversity and/or ecosystems in protected areas, as well as procedures for consultations with customary landowners and/or tribes. Prior to declaration of a protected area, the Director of the Environment and Conservation is tasked with the following: • Conduct meetings and consultations with the owners of the area or other persons who may be affected by the proposed declaration. • Undertake consultations with the relevant ministries and provincial government. • Carry out field appraisals, assess and evaluate the biodiversity significance of the area. • Verify the rights and interests in the area. • Identify, assess and evaluate the conservation, protection and management options for the area. • Publish a public notice setting out the area to be declared and its biodiversity significance. The establishment and maintenance of the register of protected areas are the responsibility of the Director. The Advisory Committee (Protected Areas Advisory Committee) is tasked with the appointment of a management committee for each protected area. This should be comprised of persons residing within the vicinity of the area or persons responsible for administration/management under any existing arrangement.	Nature-based tourism activities, which may include visits to protected areas. Protected areas provide protection and generation of further biodiversity and areas of interest to tourists.
<i>Protected Areas Regulations 2012</i>	The following categories are the prescribed classes of protected areas with their primary objectives and/or descriptions: national reserves, national parks, natural monument, resource management area, and closed area. National parks are designated to protect a major natural region of national significance and its biological and environmental features. The regulations include provision for revoking and changing protected areas by the Minister. The SIG, in cooperation with international donors, NGOs, communities and stakeholders developed a Protected Areas Toolkit to guide the process in applying and/or designating a protected area.	The only formally protected area in the corridor is Queen Elizabeth II National Park. However, many areas have been noted as protected areas by community groups and NGOs. These have been detailed in Section 3. Considering the efforts and concern of communities needed to create a protected or managed area, whether formally gazetted or not, this affords weight to these areas as having ecological status that should be considered in any development project.

Legislation/ Regulation	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Safety at Work Act 1982</i>	Under the Act, employers are legally required to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees (full-time, temporary workers, and volunteers). Further, employers should provide relevant information and safety training to employees. In addition, employers should ensure that plants, machineries, and work premises are safe and that hazardous processes are eliminated or adequately controlled.	Prior to construction or development of a tourism project, developers should ensure that a hazard and/or risk assessment was conducted, according to provisions of this Act. Developers should comply with occupational health and safety requirements and systems at all stages of the tourism project. Adequate occupational health and safety training and manuals should be provided for all employees.
<i>Labour Act 1996</i>	The Act includes provisions for protection of workers' rights through the creation of the Office of the Commissioner of Labour. The Act includes sections on casual employees, working hours, payment of wages and remuneration, and termination of wages. Further, the Act includes provisions for employment of foreign workers, women and children. Women are generally prohibited from being employed during the night with exemptions for specific sectors such as nursing or healthcare, cinema or theatres, hotel, guesthouse or bars. In the case of children, work is allowed from the age of 12, but with approval from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry Labour and Immigration. Notably, provisions are more focused on the employment of male youth from the age of 16 years, particularly on ships. However, it should be emphasized that young persons under the age of 18 are required to have work permits from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry Labour and Immigration, but they cannot be employed at night.	Employees or workers in the tourism industry. Employment of women and children in tourism establishment and/or activities.
<i>Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau Act 1996</i>	The Act provides the Visitors Bureau Regulations 1999, which aims to regulate the tourism industry through provision of a license which allows a person to engage in an enterprise or tourist-related service and/or facility (SIG, 1996).	Licensing of tourism establishments, activities, or owners.

Legislation/ Regulation	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Fisheries Act 2015</i>	Under the Fisheries Act, the government has the authority to impose strict controls on the harvesting of species located in customary waters. Provincial governments are primarily responsible for ensuring the management of fishing practices, tools (nets, gear) and vessels in provincial waters, such that the practices are sustainable. Further, provincial governments can establish and manage marine reserves, as well as regulate and protect mangroves. Under the Act, commercial fishing is also subject to customary rights. In case, customary fishing rights are violated due to commercial fishing, customary rights will take precedence and the court may order compensation to be paid to the customary rights holder. In 2009, there was an amendment on the penalty fees/fines for violating the provisions under the Act.	Tourism activities such as game fishing. Developers should be aware of marine protected areas in the vicinity of their operations as it may restrict activities such as fishing.
<i>Gaming and Lotteries Act 1996 and (Amendment) Act 2004</i>	The 2004 Act is an amendment to the 1996 Gaming and Lotteries Act. In both the 1996 and (Amendment) 2004 Act, the following are provisions on commercial gambling related to the tourism industry: • Commercial gaming shall only be permitted in areas of a hotel-casino complex identified in a permit issued by the Gaming/Lotteries board. • No person shall permit or cause commercial gaming to take place in any premises unless such person is a holder of a permit issued by the board. • No person other than foreign or overseas guests or visitors to Solomon Islands or approved persons have a right to enter, remain or participate in commercial gaming. In granting a permit (license) to operate commercial gambling, the following criteria should be evaluated and/or satisfied: • The lay-out, character, condition or location of relevant premises, or any premises to be altered or erected, those premises are suitable or will be suitable, for the purpose of commercial gaming. • The applicant is in all respects a fit and proper person and of appropriate financial standing to be the holder of a permit. • If the permit is granted, the premises concerned, if not to be managed personally by the applicant, would be managed by a person who would be a fit and proper person to be the holder of a permit, and who has given an undertaking to be ordinarily resident in Solomon Islands during such time of managing such a premises.	Casinos and/or commercial gaming establishments which only cater to tourists (nationals of Solomon Islands are not allowed to participate in commercial gaming). Development of a casino in Guadalcanal and Central Provinces has the potential to attract a certain type of tourist and may impair other development opportunities.

Table B.2: Policies and strategies relevant to tourism development

Policy/Strategy	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Solomon Islands National Policy Framework (NPF) along KALSA 2012 (SPC, 2012)</i> Mainstreaming KALSA in nation-building and development	The policy framework from the MCT highlights the importance of protecting, preserving, promotion, and development of Solomon Islands' culture. The framework includes cross-cutting themes and indicates the roles and participation of various stakeholders in protecting and promoting Solomon Islands' culture, heritage and arts. Included in the policy components is cultural tourism where culture is recognized as an asset which can be further developed, marketed and promoted as a key tourism attraction. Policy goals for cultural tourism are: • Cultural tourism to be the flagship of the country's tourism industry. • Community participation in cultural tourism should lead to decentralization and the spread of activities and benefits of the tourism industry throughout provinces and rural areas. • Economic benefits of the tourism industry are to be re-invested in rural areas hosting cultural tourism enterprises and activities. Related to tourism is hospitality industry, another component in the framework. Under this component, establishments are encouraged to provide high-quality cultural goods and services. Further, this component emphasizes the importance of integrating Solomon Islands' Indigenous culture and arts in hospitality industry services. Further, the hospitality industry should recognize the value added by Solomon Islands' culture to the experience and authenticity of products and services provided to visitors or tourists.	Local culture. Culture-based tourist activities or business establishments. Hospitality industry.
<i>Solomon Islands National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (2016–2020)</i>	Recognizing the multiple threats to the country's rich biodiversity, the MECDM has developed a national strategic action plan with 14 biodiversity intervention priority goals under four strategic management areas.	The strategy includes actions that highlight the need to enhance alternative livelihoods such as tourism, to increase incentives for conservation of mangroves, forests, and marine environments. Eco-tourism is emphasized to improve sustainable development and conservation.

Policy/Strategy	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Solomon Islands National Climate Change Policy (2012–2017)</i>	The climate change policy aims to mainstream climate change considerations, as well as integrate adaptation, disaster risk management to various sectors and/or institutions in Solomon Islands. Under the policy, tourism was identified as one of the sectors vulnerable to climate change and disaster risks. As such, the policy provides a strategy framework to integrate climate change adaptation strategies and measures to tourism planning and development. The Climate Change Division in MECDM is currently reviewing the policy. With support from Pacific Adaptation to Climate and Resilience Building (PACRES) and the World Bank, the division completed a national stakeholder consultation phase in 2022 and 2023. This will build the foundation for a new policy looking forward to delivering low carbon pathways by 2050.	Integrate disaster risk management planning into infrastructure, as well as selection of tourist development areas. Emergency plans for tourism activities, projects, and establishments.
<i>Solomon Islands National Ocean Policy (SINOP) 2018</i>	The national ocean policy aims to protect and increase the value of resources of ocean and inherent value of the marine ecosystems and its species. The SINOP is a governance framework to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to governing the ocean. Tourism is one of the sectoral considerations for the SINOP wherein the policy should support sustainable tourism development and the formalization of sustainable management of marine and land-based protected areas (SIG, 2018).	Tourism activities which may impact and/or be affected by the sustainable management and/or conservation of marine resources.
<i>Solomon Islands Financial Strategy 2023</i>	This is a new strategy since the 2021 ESDS in Western Province. The SIG publishes its financial strategy and budget on an annual basis. For 2023, the country presents a recovery budget after the COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest in 2021, and geopolitical tensions. The strategy aims to focus on transformational investments to boost economic recovery and build resilience, and empowerment of people through national unity and prosperity. For tourism, the total appropriated budget allocated for development expenditure is US\$2.6 million (estimated) with a focus on tourism development and marketing (SIG, 2023c).	Fast-track tourism development, including attraction of investors and increasing global tourism market.
<i>National Development Strategy (NDS) 2011–2020</i>	The NDS 2011–2020 serves as the development framework for the implementation of national priorities. The NDS highlights the need to mainstream good governance and public sector reforms in the different industries. Tourism was noted as a small and growing industry, hindered by low level capacity, poor marketing, and limited infrastructure. Under the NDS, the government strategy to increase tourism yields include improved infrastructures and marketing strategies (SIG, 2011).	Transportation infrastructure. High-quality tourism products and/or services. Tourism marketing.

Policy/Strategy	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016–2035</i>	In 2015, the SIG requested that the 2011–2020 NDS be revised and extended to cover a 25-year period to provide a longer-term planning and development framework for the country. The strategy sets out a national vision to improve the socio-economic outlook of Solomon Islanders.	Tourism is noted as one of the productive sectors that needs reinvigorating to increase value and achieve sustained growth. The NDS notes the challenges and interlinkages to infrastructure, skills, marketing and standards. The NDS aims to improve marketing, support the development and conservation of potential sites, improve tourist activities, and support promotion and industry development. Cultural tourism is highlighted as a lucrative sector to support. The NDS includes a target that by 2030 policies promote sustainable tourism, create jobs and promote local culture and products.
<i>Solomon Islands National Infrastructure Investment Plan (NIIP) 2013–2023</i>	The NIIP maps Solomon Islands' infrastructure priorities, considering the economic priorities and/or strategic investments highlighted in the 2011 National Development Strategy (NDS).	In terms of tourism, the NIIP highlights that infrastructure planning should include spatial development plans to ensure that tourism zones and ecologically-areas are protected. Further, the NIIP emphasizes that there is need to upgrade transportation and water infrastructures, as well as WASH-related projects, to promote local participation and investment in the tourism industry (SIG, 2013).
<i>Solomon Islands Tourism Recovery Plan 2021–2030</i>	This is a new strategy since the 2021 ESDS in Western Province. In 2021, this plan was developed by the SIG, Ministry of Culture and Tourism Solomons in response to COVID-19. The plan outlines two main objectives to: • get the industry back to its 2019 position • grow the industry with a target of 100,000 arrivals per annum by 2035. Achievement of the ambitious 100,000 visitor target relies on visitor arrivals reaching 2019 levels by 2023.	Relevant to strategic direction for tourism.

Policy/Strategy	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Tourism Solomons Strategic Plan 2021–2023</i>	This is a new strategy since the 2021 ESDS in Western Province. This is an internal document that provides guidance for stakeholders in the tourism sector to guide the industry's growth and development to a shared vision and objectives. The plan outlines strategies to reinvigorate the tourism industry under COVID-19 as a 'new normal'. Its target of 100,000 visitor arrivals by 2035 is to be achieved through an increased focus on digital marketing, facilitation of domestic tourism, additional revenue streams for Tourism Solomons, and improved health and hygiene standards for tourism operators through the government's COVID-19 'Extra Care' program.	Relevant to strategic direction for tourism.
<i>Ministry of Culture and Tourism Corporate Plan 2021–2024</i>	This is a new strategy since the 2021 ESDS in Western Province. The MCT Corporate Plan 2021–2024 outlines directions to provide effective service delivery of a sustainable tourism agenda that protects the diverse culture and traditions of the people of Solomon Islands. The plan has the following service delivery objectives to: • Ensure an even process in the monitoring and evaluation of its programs and activities. • Enable clear reporting on those programs and activities. • Provide better information on government resources allocated to those programs and activities. • Allow for proper coordination and direction towards achieving its aspired targets and outcomes	Relevant to strategic direction for tourism.

Policy/Strategy	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Solomon Islands National Tourism Development Strategy (SINTDS) 2015–2019</i>	The SINTDS is an outline of Solomon Islands' strategy for the development of its tourism industry. The SINTDS is focused on five interrelated focal areas: marketing and research, transport and infrastructure, cruise shipping and yachting, human resource development, and product development and investment. To drive development in the five areas, SINTDS maps out the strategy by assigning government agencies with key actions, indicative budgets and timelines. Key actions and/or strategies under the SINTDS include: • Provision of tax and/or tourism investment incentives. • Development of minimum standards, grading, and accreditation for tourist activities and business establishments (e.g. hotels, lodgings). • Development of integrated tourism trails in the Western and Guadalcanal/Central Provinces. • Development of a marketing program. • Design and/or adopt stringent anti-corruption policies and practices to improve the business enabling environment. • Upgrade and/or redevelopment of existing airport and port structures. • Provision of capacity building and/or training in hospitality and tourism. • Expansion of cruise shipping and yachting. Recognizing that the National Tourism Strategy expired in 2019 and wanting to respond to rebuilding the industry after COVID-19, the MCT and Tourism Solomons developed the recovery plan with a focus on restoration, extra care, future, reset and measurement.	The five focal areas are investment opportunities and/or entry points, not only for tourist developers, but also other businesses which could contribute to the development of the focal areas.

Policy/Strategy	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Solomon Islands National Environment Management Strategy 2020–2023</i>	This is a new strategy since the 2021 ESDs in Western Province. National policy with a cross-sectoral approach linking development and conservation to sustainable development. The strategy is structured around the seven themes of environment reporting: culture and heritage, atmosphere and climate, land, marine and coastal, freshwater, biodiversity and the built environment.	This policy underpins a broad range of sustainable development measures critical to underpin tourism development and growth. By protecting marine and land resources and biodiversity, and implementing systems for monitoring and information sharing, tourism can have increased security into the future. An important component of the strategy is improving livelihood opportunities for local communities and reducing reliance on poor land and marine resource extraction practices, with tourism providing an important opportunity for alternative local economic development.
<i>Solomon Islands Medium Term Development Plan (MDTP) 2016–2020</i>	The MDTP provides a framework of development programs and/or projects with five-year targets. The targets included under the MDTP are derived from the overarching and/or long-term strategies under the NDS 2016–2035. Under the MDTP, tourism development and institutional strengthening programs were identified to encourage sustainable economic growth. The overarching goal for tourism under the MDTP was to increase tourism's contribution to GDP by 2 percent per year. Expected outcomes are the following: • Improved distribution of visitors and/or tourism activities between destinations across the country. • Increased visitors and/or users of the National Museum and National Archives. • Improved facilitation of visitor dispersal. Improve Solomon Islands' appeal as a cruise ship destination. (SIG, 2016a)	Tourism support infrastructure. Tourism pilot projects. Small-scale ecotourism projects led by local communities. Increased visitor arrivals. Increased employment opportunities for locals. Increased cruise ship and/or yachting activities.

Policy/Strategy	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Solomon Islands Code of Practice for the Tourism Industry (2018)</i>	The Code of Practice was developed based on the lack of quality and professionalism in Solomon Islands' tourism industry. The following are standards or items listed under the document to guide tourist personnel, operators, and developers: • Provide consistent and efficient services to every guest. • Be honest and fair with guests at all times. • Marketing materials should be accurate and truthful about prices and services provided. • Complaints are dealt with courteously and issues are attended to promptly. • Staff are treated fairly and given proper training and instruction in their area of work. • Support free and fair competition and promote cooperation within the tourism sector. • Business and its staff comply with all local laws and regulations. • High standards of cleanliness and hygiene are observed in all aspects of the business. • Maintain facilities, equipment and transport used by guest to the highest standards. • Care is taken in the operation and maintenance of facilities to ensure a safe environment for guests and staff (SIG: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2018). • Staff and management are trained and equipped to deal with potential emergencies. • Appropriate security is provided for customers and their possessions, including secure accommodation and storage. • Tourism activities must not harm the environment or wildlife of Solomon Islands. • Tourism businesses are respectful of local cultural protocol and where necessary tourists are informed about local customs. • Efforts are made to increase the efficiency of resource and utility usage. • Care is taken to reduce waste to a minimum and dispose of it responsibly.	Tourist activities and services. Professionalization of tourism industry. Tourism marketing. Capacity building of personnel. Tourist facilities and/or infrastructures. Efficient and sustainable resource management. Health and safety of tourists, personnel, and local communities. Local culture. Water and sanitation in business establishments.

Policy/Strategy	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Minimum Standards and Classification for Tourism Accommodation (2018)</i>	Solomon Islands has minimum standards criteria to assess accommodation establishments nationally. Each accommodation category has its respective minimum standards criteria which should be met by accommodation establishments. The minimum standards are utilized by governments to ensure accommodation maintains quality standards. Accommodation categories are divided according to key features and based on target clientele: (1) hotel, (2) resort, (3) motel, (4) budget accommodation, (5) tourist bungalow, (6) eco-lodge accommodation, (7) serviced apartment, and (8) homestay accommodation (MCT, 2018).	Tourist accommodation establishments. The location of accommodation often defines its category. Accommodation options such as resorts, tourist bungalows, and eco-lodges would be located in scenic locations and offer nature-based activities. Thus, developers need to ensure accommodation has minimal environmental impacts, while maintaining aesthetic values in respective locations. Accommodation located in scenic locations may be more prone to natural hazards and/or climate change vulnerabilities. As such, infrastructure needs to consider mitigation as part of its design to respond to identified vulnerabilities. In the case of eco-lodges, constructed with natural and/or locally-sourced materials, developers should ensure that materials are sustainably resourced and/or replaced. Budget accommodation, motels, and homestays should ensure there are proper water and waste management facilities on-site. In accommodation which allows for the immersion of tourists in local cultures, developers and/or operators should ensure that local communities have been oriented and/or received proper advice on the arrival and management of tourists. Tourists should also receive adequate information or awareness on Solomon Islands' culture, prior to their visit, so they remain respectful to the culture, practices, and heritage of local communities. Solomon Islands' culture and art should be integrated in the design or architecture of accommodation establishments.
<i>National Waste Management and Pollution Control Strategy 2017–2026</i>	Provides a roadmap for waste management and pollution control with a vision for 'healthy and green happy isles.' The strategy addresses five main waste streams: solid waste, liquid waste, hazardous and chemical waste, healthcare waste, and electronic waste.	Effective waste management is an important enabler for tourism development. Improving waste infrastructure and services is a key challenge for provincial governments and requires improved resourcing.

Policy/Strategy	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>Tourism memorandum of understanding – Guadalcanal Province and Honiara City Council 2022</i>	This is a new strategy since the 2021 ESDS in Western Province. This memorandum of understanding was developed and signed to formalize collaboration between Honiara City Council and Guadalcanal Province on issues such as improving the aesthetic appeal and cleanliness of the environment to enhance the tourism experience. It also covers areas of collaboration for tourism products such as wartime history, identifying ways to work together to promote tourism across all of Guadalcanal Island.	Cooperation between Honiara City Council and Guadalcanal Province will enhance tourism planning and marketing across Guadalcanal Island and will assist with improving the tourism experience. As the gateway into Guadalcanal and Solomon Islands, Honiara is an important area, even though outside the study corridor.
<i>Guadalcanal Province Fisheries Ordinance 2009</i>	Regulation for fisheries in freshwater, foreshore and marine areas of Guadalcanal Province. The ordinance covers fishing licenses, wildlife protection, protection of mangroves, research and development of marine resources. It provides definitions for recording and verification of customary fishing areas and inter-tribal agreements, marine reserves, protected areas and fisheries activities. One of the objectives of the ordinance is to support customary fishermen. Customary fishing areas shall not exceed 5.6km from the low water mark. A declaration of a marine reserve may include protected fish or other marine species.	Protection and conservation of fish resources, mangroves and coral reefs are an important foundation for tourism. Given the high potential for diving, snorkeling and eco-tourism experiences, it is an imperative that these assets are protected.
<i>Guadalcanal Province Wildlife Management Area Ordinance 1990</i>	Refers to the establishment of wildlife areas. This can include terrestrial and marine areas.	This provides a means for conservation activities linked to wildlife conservation, providing a pathway through which a tourism operator can get assurance of protection of natural resources.
Central Province Business License Ordinance 2020	At the provincial level, development of tourism businesses, establishments and/or activities must be approved by the Central Provincial Government. A business license is required prior to construction commencing on-site. This application process includes an engineering review of construction plans, which includes environmental aspects, such as sanitation and water management.	Investors should allocate sufficient time and resources on the required processes and/or permits.
<i>Guadalcanal Business Ordinance 2020</i>	At the provincial level, development of tourism businesses, establishments and/or activities must be approved by the Guadalcanal Provincial Government. A business license is required prior to construction commencing on-site. This application process includes an engineering review of construction plans, which includes environmental aspects, such as sanitation and water management.	Investors should allocate sufficient time and resources on the required processes and/or permits.

Policy/Strategy	Description	Relevance for tourism development
<i>National Disability Inclusiveness Development Policy 2022–2031</i>	This is a new strategy since the 2021 ESDS in Western Province. Provides a vision for equal participation in the development of the country, addressing barriers to inclusion in education, workplaces, and social opportunities through removing stigma.	Consider addressing barriers in terms of physical accessibility and inclusive employment practices.
<i>Rehabilitation Strategic Plan 2022–2031</i>	This is a new strategy since the 2021 ESDS in Western Province. Highlights the role of rehabilitation to improve health and functioning, increase participation and inclusion, and economize longer term health costs.	Relevant for workers facing reduced opportunities due to injury or disease. May provide additional support to keep staff and enterprises engaged in tourism enterprises.
<i>National Policy to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls 2016–2020</i>	Outlines positive measures to: • Address social, political, legal and economic inequalities. • Address risk factors that can trigger violence against women and girls. • Strengthen prevention efforts. • Uphold and raise awareness on women's rights and the responsibility of all citizens to respect these rights.	Measures to improve equal employment opportunities for women and reduce risks, including in tourism workplaces.
<i>National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016–2020</i>	This policy emphasizes that women and men are equal partners in the development of Solomon Islands. Using a rights-based framework, the policy recognizes intersectional issues such as poverty, remote communities, and disability. The policy sets priorities and actions for education access and retention, labor force participation, senior and middle leadership positions in government, sexual and reproductive health, GBVH, and access to justice.	Tourism businesses to consider how to improve opportunities for women in the workplace, including leadership positions, to ensure equality and dignity for all.

Table B.3: International and regional agreements relevant to tourism in Solomon Islands

Convention/ Treaty	Status	Purpose	Relevance
<i>Natural Resources and Environment of South Pacific Region (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme - SPREP Convention)</i>	Ratified 10/9/98	Protection of natural resources and environment of the South Pacific region in terms of management and development of the marine and coastal environment.	Environmental protection and management
<i>Waigani Convention on Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes (1995)</i>	Ratified 7/10/98	Bans the importation of hazardous and radioactive waste into Forum Island countries and controls the trans-boundary movement and management of hazardous waste within the South Pacific region.	Pollution prevention
<i>Pollution Protocol for Emergencies</i>	Ratified 10/9/98	Cooperation in combating pollution emergencies in the South Pacific region.	Pollution prevention
<i>Pollution Protocol for Dumping at Sea</i>	Ratified 10/9/98	Prevention of pollution of the South Pacific region by dumping.	Pollution prevention
<i>CITES</i>	Ratification underway	Regulates and restricts trade in wild animals and plants through a certification system of imports and exports.	Biodiversity protection
<i>UN Convention on Biological Diversity</i>	Acceded 3/10/95	Promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of its benefits.	Biodiversity protection
<i>UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)</i>	Ratified 23/6/97	Establishes the legal framework for the use and management of oceans and their resources.	Marine biodiversity and sustainable use
<i>World Heritage Convention</i>	Ratified 10/6/92	Protection of sites of Outstanding Universal Values. Solomon Islands currently has East Rennell Island as a World Heritage site.	World Heritage Area identification and protection
<i>Climate Change (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change)</i>	Ratified 28/12/94	Sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change.	Climate change mitigation and adaptation
<i>Kyoto Protocol</i>	Ratified 13/3/03	Reduce greenhouse gases especially CO ₂ for the 39 industrial/developed countries by an average of 5.2 percent by 2012.	Climate change mitigation
<i>Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention</i>	Ratified 13/4/12	Protects against discrimination that impairs equal opportunity to employment.	Equity for people with disabilities
<i>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)</i>	Acceded 6/5/02	Aims to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres of life.	Gender equity
<i>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>	Ratified 10/4/95	Outlines the rights of the child. This includes protection from economic exploitation or work that is likely to be hazardous, or harmful to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.	Protection of children

Convention/ Treaty	Status	Purpose	Relevance
<i>ILO Minimum Age Convention</i>	Ratified 22/2/12	Sets the minimum working age of 14 years old (12 for light work) for all types of work where economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed.	Protection of children
<i>ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention</i>	Ratified 143/4/12	Calls for immediate and effective measures to prohibit the worst forms of child labor, which includes protection against slavery, trafficking of children, sex work, illicit activities, and work in unsafe conditions.	Protection of children
<i>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESR)</i>	Succeeded 17/3/82	Recognizes the rights of everyone to enjoy an adequate standard of living, education, health and work.	Social protection
<i>UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>	Ratified 22/6/23	Promotes, protects and ensures the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.	Disability inclusion

Table B.4: IFC Performance Standards and rapid gap review of Solomon Islands legislative framework

IFC Performance Standards	Existing Policies/ Legislation	Gaps	Ways for Tourism Sector to Bridge Gaps
PS 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	<i>Environment Act 1998</i>	While the Acts and regulations require EIAs and Environmental Management Plans to develop projects, there are some MECDM capacity constraints for implementation and monitoring of permit conditions. There are no mechanisms for stakeholder engagement in communicating and/or discussing the benefits and/or risks of development projects. Under the Environment Act the following elements are not covered: • Associated (ancillary) facilities • Cumulative impacts • Grievance mechanisms.	Communicate and cooperate with the MECDM and relevant agencies to ensure project activities are compliant with Solomon Island laws and IFC standards. Ensure project activities and risk mitigation strategies are compliant with IFC standards, specifically: • Stakeholder analysis, planning and engagement • Consideration of cumulative impacts • Management programs and plans, inclusive of a grievance mechanism • Monitoring and review procedures • Government agencies should monitor and report on violations during project implementation.

IFC Performance Standards	Existing Policies/ Legislation	Gaps	Ways for Tourism Sector to Bridge Gaps
PS 2: Labor and Working Conditions	<i>Labour Act 1996</i> <i>Safety at Work Act 1982</i> <i>Anti-Corruption (Amendment) Act 2019</i>	In Solomon Islands, children as young as 12 years old may be allowed to undertake some types of work under the Labour Act, which does not align with the International Labour Organization Convention, which sets the minimum age for admission to employment or work at 14 years old (12 for 'light' work which does not present risk to health or development, or impact school attendance) where the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed. Solomon Islands has ratified these minimum age standards. This gap in the Labour Act may result in child labor practices within the tourism sector. Women in some industries are not permitted to work after 6pm. This does not apply to women employed by hotels, restaurants, bars or clubs, but may impact women in other industries that support a tourism operation.	Working conditions, worker relationships and the project's human resource policies, and occupational health and safety procedures are to align with World Bank Environmental, Health and Safety guidelines and PS 2 requirements. Procedures to protect the persons employed in the project will align with IFC PS 2, specifically conditions relating to child labor, forced labor, women in the workforce and workers organizations.
PS 3: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention	<i>Environment Act 1998</i>	Specific standards on water, air and noise pollution are missing. There is no specific Waste Management Act, with powers for waste services under the Provincial Government Act 1997. There are no directly enforceable obligations under existing legislation to deal with waste that risks human health, such as asbestos. There are also no instruments to encourage resource efficiency or recycling and reuse.	Use and reference international standards on water and air pollution, as needed. Seek ways to develop tourism ventures that have a GIIP framework, promoting green practices as part of the product or experience development.

IFC Performance Standards	Existing Policies/ Legislation	Gaps	Ways for Tourism Sector to Bridge Gaps
PS 4: Community Health, Safety and Security	<i>Town and Country Planning Act 1979</i> <i>Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau Act 1996</i> <i>Gaming and Lotteries Bill 1996 and (Amendment) Bill 2004</i>	Policies and legislation for the mitigation of environmental and social risks which can be directly or indirectly caused by development and industrial work are limited. Presently, there are policies for the protection of public and community health. However, mitigation and management of risks related to failures in infrastructure design, mismanagement of hazardous materials are yet to be included in policy frameworks.	Evaluate the design and safety risks and subsequent mitigation measures to reduce the project's impacts on local communities. In cooperation with provincial government or village leaders, consider the development of a stakeholder consultations and grievance mechanisms to allow local community members to report any environmental and social violations, disturbances or risks.
PS 5: Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement	<i>Land and Titles Act 1969</i> <i>Land Reform Act 2019</i> <i>Customary Land Records Act 1994</i>	There is a reliance on the settlement of land disputes through customary law as provided for in the Customary Land Records Act as opposed to a formal legal process. Difficulties can arise from land negotiations, which can disadvantage the local community or escalate the basis for conflict. More clarity is required on compensation and livelihood restoration, among other factors.	Coordinate with relevant government agencies and affected stakeholders on land issues which may occur during project preparation and implementation. When applicable, develop a Resettlement Action Plan and/ or Livelihood Restoration Plan in line with IFC PS 5. Avoidance of land acquisition and involuntary resettlement is preferred. When avoidance is not possible, the IFC PS mitigation hierarchy is recommended. Compensation to be provided at replacement cost. Compensation and any necessary assistance shall be provided before taking possession of the land and assets required for the project. Livelihoods of those affected to be restored/ improved.
PS 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources	<i>Forests Act 1999</i> <i>Wildlife Protection and Management Act 1998 and (Amendment) Act 2017</i> <i>Protected Areas Act 2010</i> <i>Protected Areas Regulations 2012</i> <i>Fisheries Act 2015</i>	Alignment with PS 6 requires an assessment of the critical habitat, natural habitat and ecosystem services, and documented efforts to avoid, minimize, restore and offset impacts to these values. While developers are required to apply for permits and submit relevant plans or documentation for projects, monitoring and reporting mechanisms for conservation of natural resources during implementation are not referenced in the legislative framework and are under-resourced.	Integrate monitoring and scoping mechanisms in environmental plans for protection and/or conservation of natural resources.

IFC Performance Standards	Existing Policies/ Legislation	Gaps	Ways for Tourism Sector to Bridge Gaps
PS 7: Indigenous Peoples	<i>Land and Titles Act 1969</i>	No specific law that pertains to the rights of Indigenous peoples, except those that govern matters in relation to land tenure and ownership, has been identified. ¹²	Adverse impacts on Indigenous peoples should already have been avoided at the project design and site selection phase. Where impacts are unavoidable, the mitigation hierarchy to be considered is per IFC Performance Standards, as a framework of Good International Industry Practice. The effectiveness of impact avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures is enhanced if the points of views of Indigenous peoples on matters that affect them are taken into consideration and form part of project decision-making processes. In special circumstances described in paragraphs 13–17 of Performance Standard 7, the client's engagement process will ensure the FPIC of affected communities of Indigenous peoples.
PS 8: Cultural Heritage	<i>Land and Titles Act 1969, Amended 2005</i>	Protection of cultural heritage is focused on national cultural properties. There is limited information on the consultation of local communities, management and/or protection of local cultural heritage properties. As such, cultural heritage unreported or not mapped properly is vulnerable to damage involuntarily caused by project work.	Consult with local communities on cultural heritage properties and/or sites in the vicinity of the project. Develop a 'chance find procedure' detailing the required steps to be taken in the event any artefacts of cultural or heritage significance being identified on-site.

12 This is likely to change as recently announced (February 2024) in the media, the Ministry of Rural Development in collaboration with a task force team comprised of Indigenous people from civil organizations are working on a new policy for Indigenous peoples of Solomon Islands, see <https://solomons.gov.sb/new-policy-to-protect-and-promote-the-rights-of-indigenous-solomon-islands-people-in-the-making/>

Table B.5: WBG Environmental Health and Safety Guidelines - rapid gap review of Solomon Islands legislative framework

WBG EHS Guidelines	Existing National Legislation/Policies	Gaps	Ways for Tourism Sector to Bridge Existing Gaps
Environmental			
Air Emissions and Ambient Air Quality	<i>Environment Act 1998</i> <i>Environment Regulations 2008</i>	The Environment Act 1998 requires an EIS to be prepared as part of the development consent process. This is required to consider the environmental impacts of waste discharges. A discharge license may need to be obtained for air emissions. However, there are currently no national standards nor criteria to regulate ambient air quality in Solomon Islands.	Adopt international best practice to limit air pollution. Large-scale tourism activities and hotels to consider monitoring air emissions from combustion units that may be used within its vicinity such as boilers, stoves, and generators. Avoid using ozone depleting refrigerants and select refrigerants with low global warming potential. Select low volatile organic compound-emitting products or alternatives for dry cleaning, refrigeration, and air conditioning services.
Energy Conservation	<i>Solomon Islands Code of Practice for the Tourism Sector</i>	There is no legislation, regulations nor standards governing energy efficiency in Solomon Islands. However, the Code of Practice for the Tourism Sector encourages increased efforts to improve resource and utility usage. The National Climate Change Policy also demonstrates the government's commitment to implementing mitigation actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	In line with national commitments and codes of practice, the tourism sector should consider incorporating energy conservation strategies into infrastructure design, construction, and operations. This may include passive design considerations for buildings, installation of on-site renewables and solar water heating, and use of energy efficient appliances, lighting, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems.
Wastewater and Ambient Water Quality	<i>Environment Act 1998</i> <i>Environment Regulations 2008</i>	The Environment Act 1998 requires an EIS to be prepared as part of the development consent process. This is required to consider the environmental impacts of waste discharges. A license is likely required for management and discharge of wastewater flows from tourism developments. However, there are no specific national wastewater treatment and effluent criteria.	Manage wastewater discharge in accordance with international best practice. Minimize the use of toxic chemicals and opt for more biodegradable alternatives. Developments to incorporate appropriate on-site treatment facilities in the case of no existing sewer networks to connect to. Manage odour from on-site wastewater treatment operations according to industry standards. Implement adequate effluent monitoring. Implement and encourage practices that reduce wastewater generation, such as encouraging guests to reuse towels and bedding.

WBG EHS Guidelines	Existing National Legislation/Policies	Gaps	Ways for Tourism Sector to Bridge Existing Gaps
Environmental			
Water Conservation	<i>Solomon Islands Code of Practice for the Tourism Sector</i>	There is no legislation, regulations nor standards governing water efficiency in Solomon Islands. However, the Code of Practice for the Tourism Sector encourages increased efforts to improve resource and utility usage.	Consider incorporating water strategies into infrastructure design, construction, and operations in line with national code of practice and international standards. This may include installation of rainwater tanks, water-efficient landscaping, and water-saving fittings such as ultra-low flush toilets, faucets, and low-flow pressure heads. Tourism developers to also consider installing water meters to monitor water usage levels.
Hazardous Materials Management	<i>Environment Act 1998</i> <i>Environment Regulations 2008</i> <i>Safety at Work Act 1982</i>	There is no legislation, regulations nor standards governing the use and management of hazardous materials. However, the safety risks of these materials will likely need to be assessed as part of the EIS process. A waste discharge license may also need to be obtained if hazardous waste materials will be generated on-site. In addition, the Safety at Work Act requires staff to be adequately trained to response to a hazard event.	Undertake a hazard assessment commensurate of the development scale to identify all materials that are likely to pose a risk to workers and guests. Avoid use of the hazardous materials where possible. Where it cannot be avoided, ensure adequate controls and management practices are in place.
Waste Management	<i>Environment Act 1998</i> <i>Environment Regulations 2008</i> <i>Solomon Islands Code of Practice for the Tourism Sector</i> <i>National Waste Management and Pollution Control Strategy 2017-2026</i>	There is no specific waste management legislation in Solomon Islands. However, waste management will likely need to be assessed as part of the EIS process, and a waste discharge license may need to be obtained. The Code of Practice for the Tourism Sector also encourages waste minimization and responsible disposal. While there are gaps existing legislation and policies, the key challenge regarding waste management in Solomon Islands is limited infrastructure and waste collection coverage.	As waste collection coverage is limited in Solomon Islands, tourism developments should prioritize waste minimization during construction and operations. Avoid single-use products and opt for biodegradable alternatives where possible. Install appropriate on-site waste storage for waste that cannot be avoided, particularly hazardous waste. Engage a private contractor for waste collection on a regular basis for appropriate disposal.

WBG EHS Guidelines	Existing National Legislation/Policies	Gaps	Ways for Tourism Sector to Bridge Existing Gaps
Environmental			
Biodiversity conservation	<i>Forests Act 1999</i> <i>Wildlife Protection and Management Act 1998 and (Amendment) Act 2017</i> <i>Protected Areas Act 2010</i> <i>Protection Areas Regulation 2012</i>	Aligns with the guidelines undertake timely assessment to identify sensitive habitats to avoid, minimize, restore, and offset impacts to these values.	Integrate monitoring or scoping mechanisms in the environmental plans for the protection and conservation of natural resources.
Noise	<i>Environment Act 1998</i> <i>Environment Regulations 2008</i>	There are no comprehensive national guidelines on noise management in Solomon Islands. A license may be required for noise discharge under the Environment Act. However, it does not specify any criteria/conditions for obtaining a noise emission license.	Buildings to be designed to industry best practice for acoustic standards to minimize noise nuisance for guests and surrounding community. This could include considerations such as the layout and arrangement of the development's facilities, improving acoustic performance of buildings through installation of barriers, utilizing natural topography as buffers, and using sound-proof materials. At the construction stage, a noise management plan should be developed limiting work to weekdays and during the day only. Consider the use of low-noise-emitting equipment and appliances during construction and operational phases.
Contaminated Land	<i>Environment Act 1998</i> <i>Environment Regulations 2008</i>	The Environment Act includes provisions that require the development of an emergency response plan in the event of an accidental contaminant release. The Act also includes penalty provision for illegal discharge of waste. However, there are no national standards that provide guidance on avoiding and managing accidental land contamination events.	Assess the site for potential contamination and undertake appropriate remediation work before commencing construction. The construction management plan should incorporate adequate mitigative actions to prevent land contamination Adopt international best practice to avoid potential land contamination. This can include eliminating, where possible, the use of materials that could lead to contamination, and constructing/ installing appropriate storage facilities for hazardous materials/wastes (oil, hydraulic fluids, construction waste).

WBG EHS Guidelines	Existing National Legislation/Policies	Gaps	Ways for Tourism Sector to Bridge Existing Gaps
Environmental			
Pesticides	<i>Safety at Work (Pesticide Regulation)</i>	The Pesticide Regulation limits pesticides to those that have been approved by the International Organization for Standardization. Any person wishing to import a pesticide is required to apply for its registration. While the regulation controls the types of pesticides that can be imported, there are no provisions for safe use and handling.	Limit pesticide application for landscaping. Where required, select pesticides according to recommendations of World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Reduce dosage where possible. Consider alternatives such as mechanical weed control, providing habitats for natural enemies of pests. Provide adequate training to staff for appropriate application of pesticides.
Occupational Health and Safety			
General Facility Design and Operation	<i>Safety at Work Act 1998</i> <i>Labour Act 1996</i>	Employers have a legal obligation under the Safety at Work Act to provide safe working conditions for their employees. Employers are also obliged to provide adequate training pertaining to health and safety at work under the Act.	Undertake a health and safety risk assessment to identify the risks specific to a given development and implement adequate mitigation controls.
Communication and Training			Consider implementing an Occupational Health and Safety Policy and a supporting manual in accordance with international best practice, such as the WBG EHS guidelines or equivalent.
Physical Hazards		It includes specific provisions for lifting equipment, dangerous machinery, fire precautions, explosions, electrical installations, protective clothing and equipment, dust and fumes, and first-aid kits.	This shall be commensurate of the development scale and activities, aiming to not only meet national legislative requirements, but also bridge gaps between this legislation and industry best practice.
Chemical Hazards			
Biological Hazards		However, the Act does not specifically address risks related to biological and chemical hazards, except for pesticides, although these may be implied through the general duties of the employees. There are also no provisions for monitoring and incident reporting.	
Radiological Hazards			
Personal Protective Equipment			
Special Hazard Environments		The Labour Act limits the number of hours of employment per week to 45 hours, but includes clauses for overtime, subject to specific conditions. It also includes provisions for basic amenities, but is limited to sanitary facilities and water supply only.	
Monitoring			

WBG EHS Guidelines	Existing National Legislation/Policies	Gaps	Ways for Tourism Sector to Bridge Existing Gaps
Community Health and Safety			
Water Quality and Availability	<i>Environment Act 1998</i> <i>Environment Regulations 2008</i>	There are no national standards for water quality control. Solomon Water relies on guidelines published by the World Health Organization (WHO). Adequate water availability and water quality may need to be assessed as part of the EIS process.	Undertake a water demands assessment to ensure adequate water can be sourced and supplied to the facility, without impacting the surrounding communities. Consider alternative water sources, such as rainwater harvesting, where auxiliary water supply will be required. Water supplied at the facility for staff and users should be of acceptable quality for intended use. Water supplied for drinking, cooking washing, and bathing should comply with WHO Drinking Water Guidelines.
Structural Safety of Project Infrastructure Life and Fire Safety	<i>National Building Code 2022 (Draft)</i> <i>Safety at Work Act 1998</i>	The National Building Code includes provisions for structural safety, construction materials, fire safety, drainage, lighting, acoustics, swimming pool safety, plumbing and electrical safety. The Building Code has adopted Australian and New Zealand standards for these requirements. The Safety at Work Act also requires all workplaces to have an adequate fire evacuation in the case of fires.	Buildings and facilities to be designed in accordance with the National Building Code, complemented by international standards compiled by the International Code Council to ensure safety of staff, guests, and surrounding communities.
Traffic Safety	<i>Traffic Act 1968</i>	The Traffic Act includes provisions for licenses, vehicle registration and general road rules. However, there is no legislation nor standards related to traffic management and safety.	Development planning and design should consider safe and efficient traffic management and flows in, out and within the premises, as well as for nearby road networks that may be impacted by development. Design to include adequate pedestrian crossings, signage and traffic lights. A traffic management plan should be developed for the construction phase to allow safe navigation of large trucks and vehicles in and out of the site. This includes appropriate signage.
Transport of Hazardous Material		There is no national legislation nor guidelines related to the transport of hazardous material.	Hazardous materials to be transported to the site in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines and/or industry best practice.

WBG EHS Guidelines	Existing National Legislation/Policies	Gaps	Ways for Tourism Sector to Bridge Existing Gaps
Community Health and Safety			
Disease Prevention	<i>Environmental Health (Public Health) Regulations</i>	Environmental Health Regulations include provisions for prevention of vector-borne diseases, sanitary amenities, and food safety. However, there are no specific provisions related to compliance monitoring.	Tourism operators should implement adequate standards for food and water handling, and facility cleanliness and hygiene to protect the health of all staff and guests and ensure a positive experience.
Emergency Preparedness and Response	<i>Safety At Work Act 1998</i>	The Safety At Work Act includes a clause related to emergency responses. However, this is only related to worker safety.	Develop a comprehensive emergency preparedness and response plan in accordance with international standards and commensurate with the risks of the facility. The plan should consider risks related by not limited to natural disasters, contact with hazardous substances, fires, staff or guest accidents. The plan should incorporate adequate communication and warning systems, emergency response procedures and resources, roles and responsibilities and staff training. Procedures for incident reporting and monitoring should also be included.
Construction and Decommissioning			
Environment	<i>Environment Act 1998</i>	As above.	A construction management plan should be developed and include the following plans: - Noise, vibration, air and dust management - Traffic management - Worker and community safety - Waste management - Emergency preparedness and response - Stormwater and sediment control - Biodiversity and/or tree protection - Communication.
Occupational Health and Safety	<i>Environment Regulations 2008</i>		
	<i>Safety At Work Act 1998</i>		
Community Health and Safety	<i>Labour Act 1996</i>		
	<i>Forests Act 1999</i>		
	<i>Wildlife Protection and Management Act 1998 and (Amendment) Act 2017</i>		
	<i>Protected Areas Act 2010</i>		
	<i>Protection Areas Regulation 2012</i>		



Solomon Islands. Video Still. © Stephan Bachenheimer/World Bank

Appendix C

Summary of protected or locally managed
marine areas in the study corridor

Management Area	Reserve Type	Reserve Details
East Guadalcanal Hub		
Niuhoa	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Niuhoa is a small MMA/<i>Tabu</i> designated in 2005. The 8ha area is governed by the local Indigenous community.
Kere Hira	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Established in 2005, this 50.36ha area is largely focused on mangrove management.
Alite	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Alite covers 136ha of marine area including 75ha of coral reef. Established in 2004, it is voluntarily governed by the local Indigenous community with a drafted management plan (SPREP, 2019).
Nu'u Marere	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Nu'u Marere was designated as an MMA/<i>Tabu</i> area in 2008. Primarily a marine area, it covers 6ha of land and 90ha of marine area. This site includes key habitat of mangroves, coastal terrestrial and coral reef (SPREP, 2019). It is governed by Indigenous peoples and local communities on a voluntary basis.
Simeruka	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Simeruka is a small area (9ha) managed by the local Indigenous communities since 2004. Currently, there is no CBRM in place, but the MFMR is working with the community to provide information and develop capacity. It is also an area where seaweed farming was introduced to improve local economic security.
Marapa-Niu	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Marapa-Niu Islands in Marau Sound are home to six communities reliant on marine resources who take an adaptive approach to the conservation in the area (Govan, 2009). Since action was taken to protect the area in 2004, locals have reported increased fish stocks (SPREP, 2019). The reported area is 252ha and includes marine and some terrestrial coastal areas. MFMR reported a turtle nesting area approximately 4km to the northeast of Marapa MMA.
Wahere	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Wahere is a terrestrial and marine protected/<i>Tabu</i> area established in 2007 covering 76ha (41ha land, 35ha marine) of Wahere Island. This area encompasses 35ha of species-rich mangrove forest. Wahere is governed by the Indigenous peoples and local communities (SPREP, 2020).
Paipai	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Paipai Reef was established as a protected/<i>Tabu</i> area in 2004. It covers 168ha of reef governed by local Indigenous peoples (UNEP-WCMC, 2024).
Hatare (Tariairaro)	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Hatare (Tariairaro) covers 492ha of marine environment (302ha of coral area) governed by the local Indigenous community. Hatare was established in 2004, though official management plans are still in the draft stages (UNEP-WCMC, 2024). This is confirmed by MFMR, with a CBRM at the draft stage. MFMR data also shows a sea cucumber project to the immediate south of the Hatare site.
Waimamaura/Parisuna	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Waimamaura/Parisuna was established in 2006, with a drafted management plan. It covers 15ha of land (8ha of mangroves) and 92ha of marine area (64ha of coral reef) managed by the local Indigenous community (SPREP 2022). However, MFMR data states this site is no longer active.
Birao Ward	LMMA's under CBRM system	- The following sites within the study area have MFMR records for the CBRM system: - Beso CBRM process is active, no management plan to date. - Waimaea has a draft management plan in place but recorded as an inactive community. - Vunivatu CBRM process is inactive, no management plan. - Houa CBRM process is inactive, no management plan.

Management Area	Reserve Type	Reserve Details
Longgu Ward	LMMA's under CBRM system	- The following sites within the study area have MFMR records for the CBRM system: - Totongo CBRM process is active, no management plan to date. - Longgu is an active LMMA, with the Longgu community practicing seasonal management. Draft management plan in place. - Siarana CBRM process is active, but no management plan to date. - Matango has a CBRM process that is active, no management plan to date. - Babusa is managed by the community. There are seasonal management practices in place for resources on and around the reef, with the church organization leading these efforts. The Babasu community has developed a draft CBRM plan. - Paeni is managed by Paeini community with the provincial MFMR. This is an active site although there is no CBRM plan in place. According to the records of the MFMR, the site contains a Olive Ridley Turtle nesting site. - Houa records CBRM process as inactive, no management plan.
West Guadalcanal Hub		
Saghalu Ward	LMMA's under CBRM system	- There is one CBRM record for this ward in West Guadalcanal. - Maravovo is recorded as having an active CBRM system in place, although no management plan to date. This CBRM site is located close to Veranasso.
Savulei Ward	LMMA's under CBRM system	- MFMR records state there are nine areas with CBRM activity, all under traditional management. - Sumate is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan in place. - Kobiloko is recorded as an inactive site with no management plan in place. - Tasiloki is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan in place. - Aloha is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan in place. - Hulavu is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan in place. - Marumbo is an active site, with a management plan in place. This is one of the identified potential sites and was visited by the study team. It is known locally as a turtle nesting area. - Verahue is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan in place. - Mangakiki is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan in place. - Naro is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan in place.

Management Area	Reserve Type	Reserve Details
Tangarare Ward	LMMAs under CBRM system	• MFMR records state that there are 13 areas with CBRM activity, all under traditional management. • Issunavara is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan in place. • Goigoi is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan in place. • Tiaro Bay is an active site, managed by MFMR in collaboration with the local community. There is a management plan in place (see Case Study 1 for more information about this site). • Leleona is an active site, managed by the community with support of MFMR. There is a CBRM management plan in place. • Tanapapara is an active site, managed by the community with the support of MFMR. There is a CBRM management plan in place. • Tabuhu is an active site, managed by the community with the support of MFMR. There is a CBRM management plan in place. • Matapuru is an active site, managed by the community with the support of MFMR. There is a CBRM management plan in place. • Kokomaruka is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan. • Suva is recorded by MFMR as an inactive site. There is no management plan. • Tamami is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan. • Takoqa is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is a CBRM management plan in place. • Kongeva is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan. • Manga is an active site, managed by the traditional community. There is no management plan.
Russell Islands Hub		
Russell Islands	LMMAs under CBRM system	• MFMR records state that there are 10 areas with CBRM activity, all established between 2012–2014. • Losiolene CBRM established January 2013, with a draft CBRM plan in place. This LMMA covers a marine area of 258ha, including 64ha of coral reef. • Mane CBRM established July 2014, with a draft CBRM plan in place. • Leru CBRM established July 2013, with a draft CBRM plan in place. • Karamamon CBRM established June 2013, with a draft CBRM plan in place. • Maralon CBRM established June 2012, with a draft CBRM plan in place. • Baesene CBRM established January 2013, with a draft CBRM plan in place. • Folaun CBRM established July 2014, no CBRM plan in place. Folaun includes coastal land, with the total area covering 20ha. • Hanavisimane CBRM established August 2014, no CBRM plan in place. • Tan CBRM established August 2014, no CBRM plan in place. • Lagolone CBRM established August 2014, no CBRM plan in place. Proposed LMMA covers 258ha, including 64ha of coral reef.

Management Area	Reserve Type	Reserve Details
Buena Vista Hub		
Maravaghi	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Maravaghi is a protected/<i>Tabu</i> area of 15.4ha, primarily consisting of coral reef. Established in 2004, it is located around the northern islands of the Nggela hub in the study corridor. Maravaghi is governed by local Indigenous communities and includes a no-take area of 15ha (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, 2019).
Taburu	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Taburu is a nationally designated <i>Tabu</i> area spanning 70ha, with a 7ha no-take zone. It was established in 2003 and is governed by local communities and Indigenous peoples of the area (UNEP-WCMC, 2024). A 2004 study on the invertebrate species present in the <i>Taburu</i> MMA found a lower abundance than in other parts of Solomon Islands. Locals also noticed a reduction in fish numbers prior to management of the area (Ramohia, Lasi, Tafea, & Mesia, 2004).
Salavo	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Salavo was established in 2003, covering 37ha on a small island. Its governance is under the local Indigenous community.
Sisili	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Sisili is a protected/<i>Tabu</i> area established in 2003 and governed by the local Indigenous community on a voluntary basis. Sisili covers a no-take area of 7ha (UNEP-WCMC, 2024). According to the records of MFMR, the local management is no longer active.
Tulagi Island	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Tulagi Island is managed by the local community. The island is a nationally designated protected/<i>Tabu</i> area of 107ha, established in 2005 (UNEP-WCMC, 2024). The MMA includes 11ha no-take zone.
Buena Vista	LMMA's under CBRM system	- MFMR records state that there are four areas with CBRM activity. - Kobuana CBRM established in 2015, recorded as active but with no management plan in place. - Tarhi CBRM established 2013 but recorded as inactive now. - Soso CBRM established in 2016 but recorded as currently inactive. - Nagotano/Dansavo CBRM established in 2020 with support from project related to Fish Aggregating Devices, funded by the World Bank. A draft CBRM management plan has been written. - Nuiuvu CBRM established in 2020 with support from project related to Fish Aggregating Devices, funded by the World Bank. A draft CBRM management plan has been written.
Sandfly (included in Buena Vista Hub)	LMMA's under CBRM system	- MFMR records show four historical CBRM sites, with one newly established. The first four sites are the oldest CBRM sites within Central Province. - Maravagi CBRM established in 2005. Recorded as partially active, with site revival activities underway. - Tabariki CBRM established in 2005 and remains active. - Laurapa CBRM established in 2023 in work initiated by the community. Currently active.

Management Area	Reserve Type	Reserve Details
Nggela Hub		
Roderick Bay (located in Nggela)	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	Roderick Bay is reported at 200ha comprising of terrestrial and inland waters. It was established in 2004 and is managed by Indigenous people (UNEP-WCMC, 2024). The MFMR records state that there is a management plan in place and the site is actively managed.
Nggela Pile	LMMA's under CBRM system	- MFMR records show six CBRM sites, with varying status. Only one of the sites falls within the study corridor (Koilovala). - Koilovala established CBRM in 2012 initiated by MFMR from Central Province. Currently not active.
Nggela Sule	LMMA's under CBRM system	- There are five CBRM sites recorded by MFMR for Nggela Sule, with varying status. Roderick Bay has been included separately (below) as it is listed within the protected area database (UNEP-WCMC, 2024). - Vatupura established CBRM in 2014, however it is currently recorded as inactive. - Koda/Polomuhu established CBRM in 2013. This site does not have a management plan in place but is active. - Borihinamba established CBRM in 2014. After a period of activity, it is now recorded as inactive. - Tabunagai established CBRM in 2002 and remains an actively managed area. - Haleta is a new site proposed by MFMR in 2022. CBRM consultations are ongoing. Site not active to date.
Close sites outside of study corridor		
Between Russell and Nggela Islands	MMA/ <i>Tabu</i>	- Leva Point, Penjapenja Reef, Tobo and Opele are identified in IBAT (2023) reports as being within 50km of sites in Central Province. These areas are located between Russell and Nggela Islands. Leva Point and Penjapenja Reef are designated marine areas under the protection of the Indigenous local community. The areas were established in 2008 and cover 15ha no-take zones (SPREP, 2020). - Tobo and Opele are designated marine managed areas, both covering 150ha of no-take zone. Tobo and Opele are governed by local communities since becoming established in 2006 (SPREP, 2020).



Solomon Islands. ©Tourism Solomons

Appendix D

Site Profiles

Key to Identified Site Profiles

Site Identifier # used for referencing and data management. Site Profiles are numbered 1-31. Please see indicator map on each profile for site locations within Central and Guadalcanal provinces.

Parcel Identifier is provided by the Commissioner of Lands, Solomon Islands Government as indicated on the Site title.

Site name and location in province

Indicative location of the site

Rating determined by combining all site ratings (see the methodology on next page for more details)

Rankings:

- Low risk (Green) = Limited environmental or social impacts anticipated.
- Moderate risk (Orange) = Some management of social and environmental impacts required.
- High risk (Red) = Significant management of social and environmental impacts required.

Environmental, Social, and Natural Hazard Risks:

These are rated from 1 - Low (Green) to 10 - High (Red)

Site ratings are based on several assessment methodologies. Please refer to the next page for details of the ratings.

Potential for UXO:

Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) is present throughout various parts of Solomon Islands due to it being a battleground in WWII. Mapping of UXO areas is limited, however details of battle areas and military encampments are well documented. This includes data from the police documenting and responding to UXO discoveries.

Cultural Heritage/Tapu sites:

This is generated from interviews with site occupiers/owners, and desktop studies.

Site maps are color coded to show areas that may be higher risk for development due to environmental or social reasons.

Lower risk areas = green

Moderate risk areas = orange

Higher risk areas = red

Note: All information will have to be updated during further site-specific studies, such as Environmental and Social Impact Assessments, to determine comprehensive environmental and social risks.

SITE IDENTIFIER #: 14
PARCEL IDENTIFIER: 222-002-0038

Paruru Point (East)
East Guadalcanal

LOW
OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE LOCATION



SITE DESCRIPTION

The soil is fertile, with several gardens on-site (mostly potatoes), particularly along the internal road running parallel to the western boundary. The neighboring community has been established for many years, but community governance is weak. The community expressed concerns about the potential for conflict between indigenous people and settlers, particularly in the area of the logging industry and associated non-resident workers had led to increased social risks. The included children already engaged in labor practices at logging sites as well as young women and girls being sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SBAH) from logging workers.

Bees along the coast are shallow and provide good coastal protection, with the site 12 meters above sea level. The community reported climate-related impacts, such as increased coastal flooding. This has led to some people relocating further inland. There is a creek that runs through the site and into the sea along the middle of the southern coastal boundary. The terrestrial ecology is highly disturbed, but with some secondary forest and healthy coastal vegetation. Over the prevalence of logging activities along the area of the coast, coral reef systems have been impacted by sedimentation.



ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

Marine biodiversity

Social Risks

Presence of people

Presence of livelihoods

Potential for UXO

Presence of cultural heritage

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

Sea level rise



LAND CLEARANCE FOR POTATO FARMING



NEIGHBORING SETTLEMENT



GREEN FLOWING INTO SEA



COASTAL AREA

CO-ORDINATES

-9.85341114, 160.8309513

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Three houses on-site and beach shelter.

CURRENT LAND USE

Multiple gardens, particularly potatoes. Approximately three houses and shelters.

SITE AREA (ha)

3.9

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Maunu Area Health Center (5 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (110 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Maunu Airport (5 kilometers), but closer due to a land dispute at the time of research. Direct road access available.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile coverage is available. Solar in use by the neighboring community, but grid connections are planned. Groundwater available, but no sanitation.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

SITE ACCESS

Good accessibility by plane from Honiara to Maunu Airport, by boat (2.5 hours from Honiara) and road (two minutes from Maunu Airport).

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Two protected areas within 1 kilometer, one within 10 kilometers, and three within 50 kilometers. One key bordering area within a 10-kilometer radius.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Long-term and ongoing conflict between indigenous people and settler communities in the area, to address the issue, community building and strengthening efforts are underway.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

Marine biodiversity

Social Risks

Presence of people

Presence of livelihoods

Potential for UXO

Presence of cultural heritage

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

Sea level rise

Cultural Heritage/Tapu sites:

This is generated from interviews with site occupiers/owners, and desktop studies.

Cultural Heritage/Tapu sites:

This is generated from interviews with site occupiers/owners, and desktop studies.

Site maps are color coded to show areas that may be higher risk for development due to environmental or social reasons.

Lower risk areas = green

Moderate risk areas = orange

Higher risk areas = red

Note: All information will have to be updated during further site-specific studies, such as Environmental and Social Impact Assessments, to determine comprehensive environmental and social risks.

Site photos: These photos were taken during site visits. To respect the privacy of site occupiers, we have not included photos of people or houses without their consent. Credit: GHD.

Co-ordinates: Geographic co-ordinates system expressed in Latitude and Longitude decimal degrees.

Current Land use and Current Occupation of site:

Based on site observations, aerial photos and interviews with occupiers. Where possible, buildings used for purposes other than residential have been excluded and noted separately.

Distance to nearest Hospital or Clinic:

Measured from public hospitals, rural health clinics and well-established private facilities. Nurses' stations have not been included (due to their limited available services).

Services Available: Any services noted on-site are listed including:

telecommunication reception, grid power, on-site water sources or public transport to the site (ferry dock nearby or known bus routes).

Site Access: Provides details of any access options to the site, either by land or sea. If no direct access is provided, it is currently only available by boat to shore, either a beach or area dear of coastal vegetation (mangroves).

Road/track access is established using aerial photographs and limited mapped roads and tracks provided by Solomon Islands Government.

Weighting and Measurement of Environmental, Social, and Natural Hazard Risks

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS	WEIGHTING	MEASUREMENT TECHNIQUE	RATING	MEDIUM (SCORE OF 4 – 6)	HIGH (SCORE OF 7 – 10)
	40%		LOW (SCORE OF 1 – 3)		
Terrestrial biodiversity	50	- Site observations - IUCN/IBAT databases where relevant - Where available, information based on discussions with species experts, local biodiversity specialists, or communities.	- Highly disturbed/modified environment - Represents low ecological value - Examples include active coconut plantations, residential/or housing areas, agricultural land.	- Moderately disturbed environment - Examples include former or abandoned coconut plantations with heavy secondary growth forest or former logged areas with strong secondary growth present - Threatened species may be present - Within 10km of Key Biodiversity Area (KBA).	- Relatively undisturbed environment, such as primary forest with relatively limited impact from human activities - Threatened species likely to be present.
Marine biodiversity	50	- Site observations of reef directly adjacent to site - Presence of informal marine management areas, such as Community-based Management Areas (CBMA) - Information based on discussions with communities and fisheries officers - IUCN/IBAT databases where relevant.	- Marine areas close to urban centers - Ecosystem health compromised through pollution and/or over-fishing - Shallow reef areas with no adjacent deep water - Visibly stressed marine environment - Low ecological diversity and health.	- Marine ecosystems relatively intact - Some evidence of human impact - Areas less than 5km from nearest village - Moderate extent of reef, mangroves or seagrass with visible indicators of stress or impact - Areas where adjacent land use (for example, logging) will likely impact marine ecosystem health.	- Extensive seagrass beds in good health - Well established and healthy mangrove areas - Healthy reef ecosystems with wide fish diversity (little impact from fishing) - Extensive reef systems with documented rich biodiversity - Threatened species are likely to be present - Feeding areas for significant numbers of sea turtles - Sea turtle nesting areas - Sea bird roosting or nesting areas.
SOCIAL RISKS	WEIGHTING	MEASUREMENT TECHNIQUE	RATING	MEDIUM (SCORE OF 4 – 6)	HIGH (SCORE OF 7 – 10)
	40%		LOW (SCORE OF 1 – 3)		
Presence of people	30	- Presence of people provides information on the presence of housing and structures, and potential for resettlement - Site observations - Discussions with communities - Aerial photos.	- No known communities, families or individuals occupying or using the site for living purposes (excluding caretakers) - Nearest community is over 10km from the site.	- Up to 10 houses, buildings or shelters in one discrete area of the site - Moderate size permanent population (less than 50 people) - Nearest community is over 5km from the site.	- More than 10 houses or buildings or shelters scattered throughout the site - Large permanent population (more than 50 people) - Nearest community is within 5km of the site.
Presence of livelihoods	30	- Presence of gardens or crops on site - Presence of fishing or livelihood activities based on marine or terrestrial resources - Site observations and review of aerial photos for used or unused gardens/crops - Estimate area based on aerial and Land Use PacGeo layer.	- No presence of resources or activities used as a source of income of livelihoods on site or on nearby reefs - No formal boat landing or storage located on site.	- Abandoned cropping, plantation or gardening land, or less than 30 percent of site occupied by crops or gardens - Small reef located nearby used for subsistence or artisanal fishing - Area used for collection of one resource (eg. firewood or shells) - Boat landing may be present but not regularly utilized.	- Crops/gardens occupying 30 percent of site or more - Large or multiple reefs located adjacent to site used for commercial, subsistence and artisanal fishing - Area used extensively for collection of multiple resources - Large or frequently used boat landing
Presence of cultural heritage	20	- Data from site visits documenting areas of site that are used for family graves, WWII relic or battle sites, cultural sites - Tabir or Kastam sites or animist sites that are considered important by local community - Includes traditional resource collection areas.	No historical or cultural sites confirmed.	One site identified of unknown, low or moderate significance to community.	More than one site identified of unknown, low or moderate significance to community or one site of high significance to community.
Presence of UXO	20	- UXO likelihood of presence based on WWII battle histories, and studies undertaken to assess UXO risk - Data from police unit documenting and responding to UXO discoveries.	- No records of UXO located in the area - No recorded conflict within the immediate vicinity of the site.	No records of UXO identified, but the site is within 10km of known battlefields, occupied sites, training areas, or sunken warships; where there is a moderate possibility that UXO may be encountered.	- Confirmed UXO discoveries in vicinity of the site - Historical documentation of battles in WWII includes multiple bombings and heavy fighting - An area is also considered high risk if it was an occupied site which was subject to intense conflict and multiple air raids or is recorded as an area with ammunition dumps.
NATURAL HAZARDS	WEIGHTING	MEASUREMENT TECHNIQUE	RATING	MEDIUM (SCORE OF 4 – 6)	HIGH (SCORE OF 7 – 10)
	20%		LOW (SCORE OF 1 – 3)		
Coastal vulnerability	50	- Site observations - Evidence at site observations of erosion - Percentage of site within 50m of shallow to medium depth reef - IUCN/IBAT Reef Mapping - Aerial photos.	- Sheltered locations, within lagoon or island group. Unlikely to be affected by storm surges - No evidence of erosion 60 percent or more of site perimeter surrounded by shallow or medium depth reef.	- Somewhat sheltered from storm surge. Exposed location within lagoon environment - No evidence of erosion 30-60 percent of site perimeter surrounded by shallow or medium depth reef.	- Reef fringe islands, exposed to weather events, low elevation above sea level - Evidence of erosion - Less than 30 percent of site perimeter surrounded by shallow or medium depth reef.
Sea level rise	50	Semi-quantitative: Percentage of site over 1m above sea level based upon site observations and aerial photos.	70 percent or more of site area more than 1m above sea level.	30-70 percent of site area over 1m more than sea level.	30-70 percent of site area less than 1m above sea level.

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

1

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

1 90-002-0002

Tambea

West Guadalcanal

MODERATE

OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is relatively low-lying, approximately 1.5-2 meters above sea level. It features a sandy beach with a fringing reef offering storm surge protection. Local residents expressed concerns about rising sea levels, with minor damage evident on the concrete base of the Japanese War Memorial located on the northwestern coast. The site was previously a popular tourism resort with around 24 bungalows. Remnants of a swimming pool, building foundations, and jetty are visible. The original resort was burnt down during ongoing tensions between the indigenous and settler communities during 1998–2003. However, it is unclear if this was a reprisal or a casualty of the broader civil conflict. More recently, the burning down of a leaseholder's building within the last decade may point to ongoing disputes. Some interviewed residents perceived the site to be on customary land, despite it being registered as a Fixed-Term Estate title.

Indigenous communities live on and adjacent to the site, with four clusters of houses (total of 15) on the land, with coconut trees, subsistence and market gardens. There is a cemetery further inland, with five graves of members of a customary landowner family. With WWII battle history and ordnance discovery in the area, there is a high risk of UXO. This site has a high-risk rating for social criteria given potential for conflict and risks related to the presence of cultural heritage and UXO, indicating efforts may be required to mitigate these risks.

There is a small river running through the site. With a moderate to high level of disturbance, the landscape is dominated by secondary forest and coconut plantations. Birds present include the Coconut Lilykit, Solomon Kokoiu, and Rednot Imperial pigeon. Population growth has contributed to ecological degradation, with the river showing signs of pollution from settlement and upstream logging. Coastal species are present, along with invasive species and weeds. The marine environment is a sandy bottom coastal area with offshore reefs utilized for fishing and diving. Tambea is located close to the West Guadalcanal Marine Area (Special Unique Marine Area). Halophila decipiens is the rarest species of seagrass in Solomon Islands and only recorded in Tambea, making it a priority for protection during any site development.



CO-ORDINATES

-9,253922294, 159,6872357

SITE AREA (ha)

12.95

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

15 occupied dwellings in four clusters. This presents resettlement risks.

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Vsale Rural Health Clinic (2 kilometers). The nearest hospital is located in Honiara (60 kilometers).

CURRENT LAND USE

Villages with dwellings, gardens and a cemetery. A small market next to the river sells local garden produce and fuel.

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (50 kilometers) via road.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Good mobile phone coverage.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Communities located on higher ground, 50-100 meters from boundaries in each direction. A primary school located near the site.

SITE ACCESS

Road access, approximately 1.5 hours from Honiara. Boat access approximately 1 hour from Honiara.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Five protected areas within a 50-kilometer radius. One key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers, and two within 50 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Some history of conflict between Indigenous groups, settler groups and foreign workers. Different perceptions of land tenure are evident.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

3

Marine biodiversity

8

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

7

Presence of livelihoods

6

Potential for UXO

8

Presence of cultural heritage

8

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

5

Sea level rise

4

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

2

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

190-005-0002

Lavuro South West Guadalcanal

MODERATE
OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

A large land parcel intersected by one road towards the coastal boundary of the site and elevated 2-3 meters above sea level. The site is protected by an inshore reef system with no visible signs of coastal erosion. The long sandy beach is attractive and suitable for diving and snorkeling, with the reef accessible 200-300 meters from shore. An established beachside picnic area towards the northern boundary is used for recreation and ceremonies, with evidence of a recent wedding party visible during the site visit.

The marine environment hosts healthy and abundant seagrass. Green turtles are known to lay eggs in the sand, while local residents reported good fish stocks and diversity. The site contains coconut plantations and regrowth secondary forest, providing a habitat corridor for birds such as the Whistler, Coconut lorikeet, Solomon's cockatoo, and Red-knobbed pigeon observed during the site visit. There is a healthy mangrove forest, approximately 0.5 hectares in size, along with coastal species. Plantation remnants include hundreds of coconut trees. Also present are mango trees and a protected Butterfly tree, contributing to the area's ecological richness. Invasive species and weeds are present. A limited proportion of the site has trees or gardens connected to livelihoods.

Small populations, Indigenous families rather than migrants, currently reside on site with around 15 dwellings along the road in four locations. This presents resettlement risks, although the land parcel is large. Settlement on and near the site is low density. There are differing perceptions of land tenure. Consultations indicated ongoing cultural conflicts and a diminished cultural governance structure. The local school was reportedly closed due to tensions between family groups. Interviewed local residents viewed tourism positively, but were opposed to the arrival and settlement of non-local workers. With documented UXO discoveries and removals by Solomon Islands Police, there is a high risk of UXO.

SITE LOCATION



MANGROVE FOREST



PICNIC INFRASTRUCTURE



HEALTHY SEAGRASS



COASTAL AREA



CO-ORDINATES

-9.319526497, 159.6016897

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Approximately 15 households, but more reportedly moving onto the site.

CURRENT LAND USE

Residential areas, gardens, coconut plantations and copra production. An area is used for recreation and ceremonies to the north of the site.

SITE AREA (ha)

300

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Veranaaso Nurse Aid Post (2 kilometers). The closest hospital is in Honiara (75 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (65 kilometers) via road.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile phone coverage. Limited utilities, with no power or sanitation services. Freshwater access from a well, up to 2 kilometers' walk away.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

The village of Mangakiki is located near the southern boundary, with approximately 400 residents. Primary and secondary schools are located in Lambi Village.

SITE ACCESS

Accessible by road 2.5 hours from Honiara, although some sections are rough. There is good boat access with four passages through the reef system.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Five protected areas within a 50-kilometer radius. One Key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers, and one within 50 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Limited cooperation between tribal groups, which has led to tensions in the past. Some lack of agreement over land tenure.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

4

Marine biodiversity

8

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

6

Presence of livelihoods

4

Potential for UXO

8

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

4

Sea level rise

3

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

3

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

202-002-0011

Tangarare

West Guadalcanal

MODERATE

OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

Tangarare is a largely flat site with no evidence of coastal erosion or runoff into the ocean. The site is elevated 2-3 meters above sea level. The land title is held by the Catholic church, and those associated with the church make up a large proportion of the site's residents. Residents reported past historical conflict between customary land ownership and the church, which was resolved. No current conflicts were reported.

The settlement area of approximately 500 people is growing at the encouragement of the church and is well-established with schools, clinics, and services on-site. The current tenants and senior leaders of the church expressed an interest in tourism development, having establishing bungalow-style accommodation in 2020 towards the northern boundary in the center of the site, and identifying surfing and diving as potential attractions. The church is historically significant as the original ministry in Guadalcanal. Livelihoods in the village are primarily focused on copra, fishing, farming, nursing, and teaching. Residents could provide a potential labor pool and tourism training would be valued, particularly for secondary school graduates. However, unless development is in partnership with the community, tourism presents resettlement and livelihood risks. Communities consulted during site visits indicated that neighboring logging activities and non-resident workers have allegedly led to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of women in the area. There were also reports of children engaged in labor practices at logging sites for low wages to support families.

A shallow-moderate depth reef system provides coastal protection to approximately 60 percent of the site. Logging activities have created some sedimentation and runoff. Outside the settlement area, the site is dominated by moderately disturbed secondary growth forest, healthy coastal vegetation, coconut plantations, and isolated mangroves along the river. Rain and banyan trees provide habitat for hornbills. The black sand beach is a known nesting site for leatherback turtles. A Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM) plan is overseen by Tangarare and a neighboring community with support from the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources. Community rangers, who undertake marine management and monitoring, reported healthy reef systems, seagrass, and diverse fish stocks. Any development must be in consultation and alignment with CBRM aspirations. No UXO discoveries have been documented within the site or surrounding vicinity. But, with multiple bombings and heavy fighting during WWII, there remains a substantial risk of UXO in the area.

COASTAL RECREATION AREA



HEALTHY SEAGRASS AND CORAL



VILLAGE INFRASTRUCTURE



ESTABLISHED GARDENS



CO-ORDINATES

-9.58367758, 159.6493005

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Large village, with approximately 500 people.

CURRENT LAND USE

Two small settlements and one large village. Three schools (two primary and one high school), church, gardens, sports field.

SITE AREA (ha)

77.47

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Clinic on-site. Closest hospital in Honiara (110 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (100 kilometers) via boat only.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Good water resources. Reliance on solar power. No mobile phone tower.

OTHER SITE RISKS

Crocodile hazard with two fatalities in the past two years.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Farming, forestry with logging activities.

SITE ACCESS

Only accessible by boat, around 1.5 hours from Honiara. The road to this area is not passable.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Two Key Biodiversity Areas within 10 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Historical land disputes, but no current conflicts. Reported issues with alleged sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of women and children in the area.

SITE LOCATION



ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

3

Marine biodiversity

7

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

8

Presence of livelihoods

5

Potential for UXO

6

Presence of cultural heritage

6

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

4

Sea level rise

4

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

4

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

202-001-0001

Kokomuruka Islands West Guadalcanal

MODERATE
OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

The site has unique tourism value due to its natural beauty, with the land parcel comprised of two small islands (Kokomuruka Islands) at approximately 3 and 8 hectares and a larger mainland section of approximately 37 hectares. The two islands are close to the mainland, and have a sheltered passage. Although parts of the land title are low-lying, the site is largely protected by reef, with minor erosion evident on the coastal side. A fringing reef provides some coastal protection from the east. However, the islands have some inherent vulnerability as they are only 1-2 meters above sea level.

While the land is registered as a Fixed-Term Estate, people interviewed reported a lack of clarity around the land tenure arrangement for those living on-site. Despite this, interviewed stakeholders viewed tourism training and work opportunities positively and stated that no conflict around land tenure was expected. However, it will be important to undertake detailed consultations and seek clear agreement as a prerequisite for development.

The islands contain intact primary forests with trees, including viex and rosewood. The islands host unique terrestrial habitats in good condition providing a bird habitat. The mainland presents lower development risk, having been previously cleared for plantations.

The unique marine environment is located at the end of the West Guadalcanal Marine Area (Special Unique Marine Area), with a healthy reef system, diverse fish and seagrasses, providing an important marine habitat. Past unsustainable fishing practices led to a depletion of stocks, prompting a community-imposed fishing closure for four years, with stocks recovering since reopening in 2021. The mainland river, carrying a high sediment load, has some impact on the coastal reef system.

The two islands have limited capacity for development given their size, and the impact development would have on the unique environmental attributes. Overall, a strategic approach favoring mainland development and low-impact island activities is recommended for sustainable management.

SITE LOCATION



BOAT LANDING AREA



TWO SMALL ISLANDS ON TITLE



CLEAN WATER/GOOD MARINE HEALTH



APPROACH TO ISLAND



CO-ORDINATES

-9.557168852, 159.627737

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Two people, two houses, and one storage area on-site. A small settlement is present on the eastern side of the mainland site.

CURRENT LAND USE

The islands are used for recreation and fishing. Banana trees and a small garden tended to by three households from one family (one on the islands and two from the mainland).

SITE AREA (ha)

48.02

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Tangarare Area Health Center (15 kilometers), while the nearest hospital is in Honiara (105 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (95 kilometers) via boat only.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

No services. No phone connectivity. Solar power is utilized, but inadequate. Fresh water is available at a mainland site (groundwater).

OTHER SITE RISKS

Crocodiles present in the river that runs to the east of the title boundary on the mainland.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Logging. Closest community is Tangarare.

SITE ACCESS

Accessible by a 20-minute boat ride from nearest road access point (Lambi Village). Some technical navigation through the reef is required.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Five protected areas within 50 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Lack of clarity on land tenure, but no conflicts described. People local to the area currently occupy and care for the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

7

Marine biodiversity

5

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

3

Presence of livelihoods

1

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

4

Sea level rise

5

SITE IDENTIFIER #: 5
PARCEL IDENTIFIER: 190-006-0001

Variana (Holilava)
West Guadalcanal

LOW
OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is characterized by low-lying terrain along the beach, contrasting with a hilly inland topography. There is no evidence of coastal erosion, with reefs to the north providing protection. The site includes a camp with seven structures (houses and sheds) situated close to the coast, with clusters of around 20 houses towards the southern end accompanied by gardens and old coconut plantations covering less than 20 percent of the site. There is a burial area at the northern segment of the site. During logging on the site in 2020, there was a nightclub and liquor shop to service logging company employees, both of which are now closed. Waste from the liquor shop remains on-site. A community cooperative holds the land title, with locals reporting a good governance structure. However, communities consulted during site visits also noted ongoing tensions with the logging industry and concerns raised about alleged sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) in the area. Specific issues identified include young women and girls allegedly facing SEAH from the labor force, and children working at logging sites for low wages to support their families. Tourism was viewed by the community as a positive opportunity for women to engage in the workforce.

The site is heavily impacted by extensive logging, with a substantial portion of the site now transformed into grassland and regrowth. Impending logging of the title area inland from the site raises concerns about potential future deforestation. A log pond remains on-site for ongoing logging activities, contributing to significant runoff and sedimentation from the steep terrain. Approximately 1 hectare of primary forest remains on steeper slopes, although it is vulnerable to future logging. Coastal vegetation is largely disturbed and varies in quality.

Human activities have affected marine biodiversity, leading to poor reef diversity and diminished fish stocks. Despite the area being part of the West Guadalcanal Marine Area (Special Unique Marine Area), an important biodiversity zone, at a localized level there is a lower risk of impacts from tourism due to the pre-existing damage. There may be an opportunity for any tourism development to collaborate with reef conservation and restoration efforts.



SITE LOCATION

COASTAL AREA



LIQUOR SHOP FROM LOGGING PERIOD



OLD PLANTATION AND REGROWTH



REGROWTH AND INVASIVE PLANTS



CO-ORDINATES

-9,456799744, 159,611485

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Around 100 people living across the site, with seven structures at the northern end and 20 at southern end of the site.

CURRENT LAND USE

Night club and liquor shop now closed after logging in the area. Gardens used by numerous families in north of the site.

SITE AREA (ha)

668

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Tangarare Area Health Center (5 kilometers), with the nearest hospital in Honiara (90 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (80 kilometers) via road to Lambi Village followed by boat access.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

No phone coverage. Solar and generator power is available, while water is gravity fed from the creek.

OTHER SITE RISKS

Crocodiles known to be present in the estuarine river.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Primary school on the southern boundary.

SITE ACCESS

Accessible with a 20-minute boat ride from nearest road access point (Lambi Village).

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Two Key Biodiversity Areas within 10 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Community represented by a cooperative that holds deed to the land title. Some historic conflict over logging, with concerns about alleged SEAH of women and children in the area.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

1

Marine biodiversity

2

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

7

Presence of livelihoods

6

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

4

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

4

Sea level rise

3

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

6

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

190-004-0003

Marumbo Bay West Guadalcanal

MODERATE
OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

Marumbo Bay has a distinctive tourism feature with its surf break near the shore, offering a unique attraction for visitors and local board rider clubs. The coastal area is low-lying, approximately 1.5 meters above sea level, gradually rising inland into a generally flat terrain. There is no visible coastal erosion, although some sand erosion occurs during river flooding adjacent to the title.

The reef is situated approximately 1 kilometer offshore. The Marumbo community, approximately 1 kilometer from the site, comprises around 400 residents, with a high proportion of young people and children. Customary land is situated to the south of the river and freehold land to the north. Small housing clusters are spread along the coast, with a maximum of 10 houses with small and more extensive gardens further inland.

The site exhibits relatively low terrestrial biodiversity values due to a coconut plantation still in use after around 50 years. Each family is allocated an area within the plantation to harvest coconuts. Scattered coastal species are present in moderate condition, including *Calophyllum inophyllum*, *Barringtonia asiatica*, *Scaevola taccada* as shrubs and *Ipomoea pes-caprae*, such as beach vines. Notably, there are no mangroves. There is a high presence of Mission grass (*Pennisetum polystachion*) within the plantation and along the coast.

Marumbo Bay is a nesting area for leatherback turtles, although locals are known to harvest eggs for food. There is potential to strengthen conservation through tourism, especially focused on the protection of turtles.

SITE LOCATION



RIVER MOUTH ADJACENT TO SITE (EROSION
THROUGH RIVER FLOODING)



SECONDARY GROWTH FOREST



COCONUT PLANTATION



BLACK SANDY BEACH



CO-ORDINATES

-9.369609378, 159.6003372

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Around 30 people live in family groups on-site in 10 dwellings.

CURRENT LAND USE

Some existing tourism, focused on surfing. Plantations also in use.

SITE AREA (ha)

203.1

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Lambi Rural Health Clinic (5 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (80 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (75 kilometers) via road.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

No power, telecommunications or sanitation services. Groundwater wells available.

OTHER SITE RISKS

High waves. Good for surfing, but a potential hazard for inexperienced surfers and swimmers.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Marumbo community, located 1 kilometer south of the site, is home to 200 people. A school and church are present, with customary land south of the river.

SITE ACCESS

Accessible by road, around two hours from Honiara. No boat access due to waves.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Two Key Biodiversity Areas within 10 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

No conflicts reported.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

2

Marine biodiversity

7

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

4

Presence of livelihoods

6

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

4

Sea level rise

3

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

7

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

190-004-0002

Nuhu Point

West Guadalcanal

MODERATE

OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

Nuhu Point is overseen by provincial authorities and maintained by a caretaker living on the point. The site is an aesthetically appealing coastal enclave. Two distinct beaches feature on either side of the point: one characterized by black sand serving as a prime location for surfing and a nesting site for turtles, while the other features white sand and a healthy reef system, making it a potential destination for snorkeling. The juxtaposition of white and black sandy beaches is valued as a unique natural feature by the local community. The site is potentially susceptible to rising sea levels, particularly on the point itself, where inundations occur at high tides at the lowest lying part of the site. The surrounding reef system provides some protection, and there is limited coastal erosion.

The majority of the land parcel is dominated by an old coconut plantation and secondary forest. The ecosystem at the point itself is in good condition and includes potential primary forest. Any development would be advised to avoid impacting this small pocket of remnant forest. The presence of butterflies and small bird species was noted. The nearby Nuhu community significantly enhances the area's potential for cultural tourism.

Despite encountering a degree of pollution from maritime activities, the site maintains a coral reef in reasonable condition. The site is 2-3 meters above sea level and the reef provides some protection from storm surges. The area is frequently used as a stopover point for boats traveling up from Tangarare to the capital Honiara. This presents additional economic opportunities for tourism operations, including informal trade and the selling of arts and crafts.



SITE LOCATION

WHITE SANDY BEACH



CARETAKER'S HUT AND LANDSCAPING



FOREST AT THE POINT



MANGROVES AND COASTAL ECOLOGY



CO-ORDINATES

-9.363719334, 159.5931831

SITE AREA (ha)

83.4

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

One family (two adults and one child) live on the point.

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Lamibi Rural Health Clinic (6 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (80 kilometers).

CURRENT LAND USE

The point and northern beach area are popular rest sites for boat travelers, while the inland area is used for gardening.

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (72 kilometers) via road.

ADJACENT LAND USE

The Nuhu community is located inland near the road, with five houses and 20-25 residents.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Groundwater and freshwater available near the river. Patchy mobile phone coverage. No power or sanitation services.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

SITE ACCESS

Accessible from Honiara by road (two hours) and boat (1.5 hours).

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Two Key Biodiversity Areas within a 10-kilometer radius.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Described as a close community with no known issues.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

4

Marine biodiversity

7

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

2

Presence of livelihoods

2

Potential for UXO

5

Presence of cultural heritage

4

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

5

Sea level rise

6

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

8

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

190-005-0001

Lavuro North West Guadalcanal

LOW

OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

This site has minimal incursions due to challenging topography characterized by steep hills and dense forests. The terrain rises sharply from the coastline and is fringed by a shallow to medium-depth reef providing protection from storm surges. No coastal erosion was evident. The steep terrain and dense secondary forest make development of the site challenging. Despite potential difficulty accessing the area, there is tourism potential given its sweeping coastal views. There is a growing population on-site, with small clusters of housing appearing along the road. These dwellings were recently established and are primarily families relocating from Honiara.

The site experienced logging activity in 2022, but it was limited due to the inaccessibility of some parts of the site. There is a healthy presence of native trees, and coastal species such as Calophyllum inophyllum, Barringtonia asiatica, Scaevola taccada as shrubs, and Ipomoea pes-caprae as beach vines. There are pockets of mangroves present. The site provides good habitat for wildlife, with pigeons sighted during the field assessment.

The coastal area is sandy with seagrass and in relatively healthy condition. The reef system is part of the West Guadalcanal Marine Area (Special Unique Marine Area), known for its biodiversity and habitat qualities.

Although there are no records of UXO present, it remains close to historical WWII battle areas and, as such, is viewed as having moderate risks of UXO.

SITE LOCATION



COASTAL AREA



COASTAL PLANTS



SEAGRASS



SECONDARY FOREST



CO-ORDINATES

-9.307072486, 159.6032678

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Eight dwellings and two additional structures, accommodating 40-50 people.

CURRENT LAND USE

Limited use due to topography, very steep hills and dense forest.

SITE AREA (ha)

158

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Veranaso Nurse Aid Post (5 kilometers). The closest hospital is in Honiara (72 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (64 kilometers) is accessed by road.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile phone coverage. No power, sanitation services nor groundwater wells.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Previous forestry activity.

SITE ACCESS

Around two hours' drive from Honiara.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Five protected areas within 50 kilometers. One Key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers, and one within 50 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Residents, largely settler groups, have recently moved into this area.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

4

Marine biodiversity

6

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

4

Presence of livelihoods

2

Potential for UXO

5

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

1

Sea level rise

2



International
Finance Corporation
WORLD BANK GROUP

SITE IDENTIFIER #: 9

PARCEL IDENTIFIER: 190-011-0001

Hautabu Point

West Guadalcanal

MODERATE

OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

This site is owned by the Church of Melanesia, settled in the early 1900s, and features a secondary school (Selwyn College) located on the eastern border, a monastery along the hills adjacent to Konjuku stream and another monastery above the point. Approximately 70 percent of the site is positioned 1 meter above sea level, but it suffers from poor drainage during heavy rain. Periodic flooding is experienced, particularly on the school grounds and the river area near the nuns' community, closing the school up to twice a year. As the site is already exposed to a degree of vulnerability, the risk rating is placed in the moderate rather than low range. The majority of terrain is hilly, and there are no signs of coastal erosion. The coastline benefits from protection provided by a reef located approximately 30-50 meters from the site, with around 60 percent of the coastal border within this protective range. While climate change impacts (notably river-related flooding) were discussed with school staff, sea level rises were not perceived as an immediate threat. The site draws visitors from the capital Honiara for recreational activities, including picnics, diving, snorkeling, and fishing. There are bins and signage in place, and regular beachfront and roadside clean-ups are undertaken. The church community on-site has a majority of members aged 20-30 years. Elderly residents are moved to church aged-care facilities in Honiara as the site contains stairs and steep walking paths. Selwyn College is a well-respected school, with ex-students having expressed an interest in tourism development to generate an income stream. The school board is supportive, but also mindful of its priority as an educational institution. It is interested in hospitality training opportunities.

The landscape is characterized by hills and well-established landscaping. There are mature trees such as teak (Tectona grandis), Acacia auriculiformis and Gmelina arborea planted by the church community many years ago. Due to the highly modified environment, wildlife habitat and corridors are limited. Coastal vegetation is well-established. Recognized as a turtle egg-laying site, older community members reported a noticeable decline in turtles and discussed concerns about eggs being taken as a food source. The marine area faces challenges from dynamite fishing outside the reef, impacting fish stocks and coral health. Despite the well-managed picnic area, marine litter is likely due to the site's popularity. Reported discoveries and disposal of UXO by Solomon Islands Police indicate high UXO risks in this area.

PICNIC FACILITIES



COASTAL AREA



LANDSCAPING AND SPORTS FIELD



COLLEGE GROUNDS



CO-ORDINATES

-9.289520018, 159.6213247

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Around 50 brothers and 50 nuns in separate community areas, with 950 students (40 percent female) and 70 staff at the college.

CURRENT LAND USE

A Church of Melanesia site, with a college and residential facilities for nuns and brothers. Also a popular coastal picnic area.

SITE AREA (ha)

89.88

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Veranaso Nurse Aid Post (1 kilometer). The closest hospital is in Honiara (67 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (59 kilometers) via road.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Rainwater and groundwater are sourced for freshwater. Power and sanitation, along with mobile phone connectivity available.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Residential and subsistence farming. Previous logging adjacent to the site.

SITE ACCESS

Around two hours' drive from Honiara.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Five protected areas within 50 kilometers. One Key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers and one within 50 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Strong cohesion and governance demonstrated. Previous incursions by informal settlers resolved through dialogue.

SITE LOCATION



ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

3

Marine biodiversity

5

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

9

Presence of livelihoods

2

Potential for UXO

8

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

5

Sea level rise

4

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

10

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

207-001-0003

Komukomtou Island (Symons) East Guadalcanal

LOW

OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

Komukomtou Island (also known as “Symons Island”) is an uninhabited small island with no infrastructure. It is low-lying with an elevation from 0.5-2.5 meters above mean sea level. The island has sandy beaches and a fringing reef system that provides some level of protection from storm surges. There is little coastal erosion present, which may indicate that the island is subject to storm surges. There are no gardens and approximately 10 coconut trees, some of which have died due to age. The island is used as a transit point for boats, with people temporarily stopping to fish and camp overnight.

The site contains secondary forest in healthy condition with good diversity and coastal vegetation, including Calophyllum inophyllum, Barringtonia asiatica, Scaevola taccada, and Ipomoea pes-caprae. Bird species identified on the site include willie wagtails, kingfishers, and red-knobbed imperial pigeons. Mangroves are present on the island and would benefit from conservation and expansion.

Six marine managed areas, or *Tabu* sites, are located within 10 kilometers of Komukomtou Island (Alitie Kere hira/Niuhoa, Niuhoa, Nu’u Marere, Simeruka and Wahere). Reefs surrounding the island are suitable for in-shore snorkeling and in moderately good health. There are signs of over-fishing with limited fish diversity and abundance. Seagrasses present are in good health and provide habitat.

Research suggests that no fighting occurred in East Guadalcanal during WWII. This is supported by the absence of any known or documented UXO discoveries in the region.

APPROACH TO LOW-LYING ISLAND



COASTAL PROTECTION



CORAL



HEALTHY COASTAL FOREST



SITE LOCATION



ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

2

Marine biodiversity

4

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

1

Presence of livelihoods

1

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

6

Sea level rise

6

CO-ORDINATES

-9.737202498, 160.7952323

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

One shelter on-site. No occupation.

CURRENT LAND USE

Temporary use for overnight camping and fishing.

SITE AREA (ha)

10

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Totogo Rural Health Clinic (10 kilometers). Nearest hospital in Honiara (100 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Marau Airport (21 kilometers), but was closed due to a land dispute at the time of research. Reached via the road to Manikaraku jetty followed by boat access (17 kilometers).

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile phone connectivity. No other services are available.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Forestry and settlements along mainland coast either side of the land parcel location.

SITE ACCESS

Accessible by boat, two hours from Honiara.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Six protected areas within 10 kilometers, four within 50 kilometers and one Key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Unknown.

SITE IDENTIFIER #: 1 1

PARCEL IDENTIFIER: 207-001-0002

Arona Island

East Guadalcanal

LOW

OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is surrounded by a reef system similar to that of neighboring Komukomtobu (Symons) Island, but more exposed to weather systems. It shows clear signs of storm damage and coral bleaching, as well as low diversity and abundance of fish species. There is some seagrass present. At 1-2 meters above sea level, the island is relatively exposed.

There is no infrastructure on the island aside from two small shelters. The site is used as a stopover for boat travelers.

The terrestrial landscape is healthy secondary and coastal forest, with approximately 20 coconut trees. Common bird species on the island include kingfishers and willie wagtails. There was limited evidence of coastal erosion, with the fringing reef system providing good protection of the island. However, the site is low-lying and vulnerable to sea level rises. Parts of the island feature sandy beaches, particularly on the southwest where boats approach the island. One Marine Managed Area and *Tabu* site was identified within 1 kilometer (Alite), with a further five located within 10 kilometers (Kere Hira/Nihua, Nihua, Nu'u Marere, Simeruka and Mahere).

Research suggests that no fighting occurred in East Guadalcanal during WWII. This is supported by the absence of any known or documented UXO discoveries in the region.

APPROACH TO LOW-LYING ISLAND



COASTAL PROTECTION



CORAL



HEALTHY COASTAL FOREST



CO-ORDINATES

-9.74031594, 160.8068607

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Two shelters on-site. No occupation.

CURRENT LAND USE

Site is used for recreation, fishing and a rest spot for boat travelers.

SITE AREA (ha)

12

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Totogo Rural Health Clinic (10 kilometers). Nearest hospital in Honiara (100 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Marau Airport (21 kilometers), but was closed due to a land dispute at the time of research. Reached via the road to Manikaraku Jetty followed by boat access (15 kilometers).

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile phone connectivity. No other services are available.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Forestry on the mainland. The closest settlement is Marau, located approximately 13 kilometers southeast of the island.

SITE ACCESS

In good weather, a two-hour boat journey from Honiara or 45 minutes from Marau Settlement.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

One protected area within 1 kilometer, five within 10 kilometers, and four within 50 kilometers. One Key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Unknown.

SITE LOCATION



ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

4

Marine biodiversity

2

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

1

Presence of livelihoods

1

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

7

Sea level rise

6

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

12

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

222-001-0004

Tavanipupu Island East Guadalcanal

MODERATE
OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

The island was originally cleared for a coconut plantation in the late 19th century. A portion of it was developed by foreign nationals in the 1970s as a high-end dive resort and eco-lodge, before it was sold to a new owner from Hawaii, who managed the resort from 2008, with ownership of the property transferred to Solomon Islands National Provident Fund (SINPF) in 2017. SINPF remain the current owners of the property and business assets. The business suffered after the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of Marau Airport, with the financing bank taking it over. The resort is currently leased to a foreign national with other businesses in Honiara, but not operational at the time of site visit and its reopening is dependent on the resumption of flights to Marau Airport. During site interviews it was reported that when operational, the resort directly employed up to 50 local people, with an equal gender split, with benefits flowing more broadly into the community via cultural tourism and purchases of local produce and handicrafts. Recycling systems, conservation programs, and medical care benefits flowed to local communities. The site was protected from reprisals during conflicts due to the positive perception of the facility. Interviewed community members were in favor of tourism development benefits flowing back into the communities, including jobs for local people and sourcing of goods and services. The 10 guest bungalows are structurally sound, but in disrepair. The site needs significant re-investment to refurbish the resort assets across the island prior to the planned re-opening. There is a low UXO risk.

The terrestrial ecology is highly altered with established timber species, mature coconut trees, and landscaped gardens making the site appealing. Coastal vegetation is healthy and includes established mangroves. The site is sheltered and has fared well in previous cyclones. There is no evidence of erosion. The coral reefs around the island are in healthy condition, demonstrating the conservation benefits of utilizing reefs to be a tourism drawcard. Coral, seagrass, and fish are abundant and diverse. At 1-4 meters above sea level, the island is relatively sheltered from storm surges.

The resort has a strong history of harnessing social and environmental opportunities to create a unique tourism experience.

SITE LOCATION



EXISTING BUNGALOWS



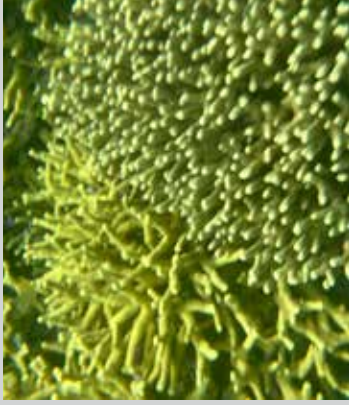
MANGROVES



DIVERSE AND HEALTHY CORAL REEFS



HEALTHY CORAL AND SEAGRASSES



CO-ORDINATES

-9.826580452, 160.8502235

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

10 guest bungalows, kitchen/laundry, meeting area, bar/restaurant and additional huts. Currently buildings not in use – only caretaker living on site.

CURRENT LAND USE

Resort.

SITE AREA (ha)

14.979

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Marau Area Health Center (5 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (110 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Marau Airport (4 kilometers by boat), but airport was closed due to a land dispute at the time of research. Reached via the road to Manikaraku jetty followed by boat access (3.5 kilometers).

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Good mobile coverage. Water and sanitation systems available for guest facilities. Previously solar with generator backup for electricity. Now generator only.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

The closest community is Marau Station, with 200 residents (mainly settlers) and surrounding Indigenous communities.

SITE ACCESS

Five kilometers from Marau Station (approximately 10 minutes by boat) with two jetties and one helipad on the island.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

One protected area within 1 kilometer, eight within 10 kilometers, and one within 50 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

The cohesion is directly related to social license, with communities understanding what good practice is from previous managers. To date, the resort is viewed as safe.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

5

Marine biodiversity

8

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

1

Presence of livelihoods

2

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

3

Sea level rise

4

SITE IDENTIFIER #:
13

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:
222-005-0001

Maraubina Island
East Guadalcanal

LOW
OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

Maraubina Island is close to Paruru Point and frequently accessed for picnics, fishing, and recreation by local communities. Near the boat landing beach, the understory has been cleared within the secondary forest to utilize the site for picnics. The site appears frequently used, with some rubbish evident. In addition to picnics, there is evidence of the site's use for firewood collection, with stockpiles stored along the coast. The island is sheltered with surrounding flat rocky reefs. There is no evidence of coastal erosion, despite the site being relatively low-lying, with approximately 35 percent at less than 1 meter above sea level.

A long-term and ongoing conflict between Indigenous people and settler communities in the local area was reported, although Maraubina Island is uninhabited. However, this potential background of local conflict needs to be considered as a part of the consultation and development process. There is a low risk of UXO.

The site is dominated by secondary forest, with healthy coastal plant communities, including *Calophyllum inophyllum*, *Barringtonia asiatica* and some mangroves on the northern tip which offers good coastal protection. Bird species located on-site include kingfishers, willie wagtails, starlings, and coconut lorikeets.

The reef is in a relatively healthy condition, with moderate fish diversity and abundance. Given the proximity to reef systems in Marine Managed Areas, the risks of further impacts to reefs from tourism development and operations have been reflected in a moderately high-risk score.



SITE LOCATION

CLEARED UNDERSTOREY



COASTAL PANDANUS TREES



BOAT LANDING AREA



INSHORE CORAL REEF



CO-ORDINATES

-9.850581052, 160.8379728

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

No occupancy of the island.

CURRENT LAND USE

The island is used for recreation, firewood collection and reef fishing.

SITE AREA (ha)

2.1

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Marau Area Health Center (5 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiata (120 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Marau Airport (2 kilometers), but was closed due to a land dispute at the time of research. Reached via the road to Manihakaku jetty followed by boat access (1 kilometer).

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Adequate mobile phone coverage, but no other infrastructure or services available.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Close to Marau Station, home to approximately 500 people, featuring primary and secondary schools, churches, police, government services and a health clinic.

SITE ACCESS

Three-minute boat trip from Marau Station.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Two protected areas within 1 kilometer, five within 10 kilometers and three within 50 kilometers. One Key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Reported long-term and ongoing conflict between Indigenous people and settler communities in the local area.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

3

Marine biodiversity

6

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

1

Presence of livelihoods

4

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

4

Sea level rise

7

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

14

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

222-002-0038

Paruru Point (East) East Guadalcanal

LOW

OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

Paruru Point (East) has limited settlement within the boundary, and a small settlement to the southwest of the site with approximately 50 families living on customary land. Consultations indicated that those remaining on the Paruru Point (East) title were slowly transitioning to the nearby settlement. Long-term and ongoing conflicts between Indigenous people and settler communities were reported in this area, which had been ongoing for more than 20 years and at times led to violent conflict in the area. Currently, there is physical separation between Indigenous people and settler communities living in Marau Sound, with a large police presence in Marau to manage potential conflict should it arise. Communities consulted during site visits also indicated that the presence of the logging industry and associated non-resident workers had led to increased social risks. This included children allegedly engaged in labor practices at logging sites as well as young women and girls facing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) from logging workers.

The soil is fertile, with several gardens on-site (mostly potatoes), particularly along the internal road running parallel to the western boundary. The neighboring community reported social cohesion as evidenced by current work with World Vision drafting by-laws for community governance. The community expressed optimism regarding tourism as it had experienced benefits in the past and wished to diversify from fishing, copra and create more employment opportunities for women. Snorkeling, bushwalking, and cultural tourism were viewed as high-potential opportunities.

Reefs along the coast are shallow and provide good coastal protection, with the site +2 meters above sea level. The community reported climate-related impacts, such as increased coastal flooding. This has led to some people relocating further inland. There is a creek that runs through the site and into the sea along the middle of the southern coastal boundary. The terrestrial ecology is highly disturbed, but with some secondary forest and healthy coastal vegetation. Given the prevalence of logging activities along this area of the coast, coral reef systems have been impacted by sedimentation.

SITE LOCATION



LAND CLEARANCE FOR POTATO FARMING



NEIGHBORING SETTLEMENT



CREEK FLOWING INTO SEA



COASTAL AREA



CO-ORDINATES

-9.85341114, 160.8309513

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Three houses on-site and beach shelters.

CURRENT LAND USE

Multiple gardens, particularly potatoes. Approximately three houses and shelters.

SITE AREA (ha)

3.9

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Marau Area Health Center (5 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (110 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Marau Airport (1 kilometer), but closed due to a land dispute at the time of research. Direct road access available.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile coverage is available. Solar in use by the neighboring community, but grid connections are planned. Groundwater available, but no sanitation.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Settlement southwest of the boundary, home to approximately 50 families.

SITE ACCESS

Good accessibility by plane from Honiara to Marau Airport, by boat (2.5 hours from Honiara) and road (two minutes from Marau Airport).

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Two protected areas within 1 kilometer, five within 10 kilometers, and three within 50 kilometers. One Key Biodiversity Area within a 10-kilometer radius.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Long-term and ongoing conflict between Indigenous people and settler communities in the area. To address the issue, community building and strengthening efforts are underway.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

4

Marine biodiversity

2

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

4

Presence of livelihoods

5

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

6

Sea level rise

5



International
Finance Corporation
WORLD BANK GROUP

SITE IDENTIFIER #: 15
PARCEL IDENTIFIER: 222-002-0039

Paruru Point (West)
East Guadalcanal

LOW
OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

Paruru West, adjoined to Paruru East, has limited structures. Three houses appear recently constructed, however, they were unoccupied at the time of the site visit. The site also has four shelters, two sheds, and some aged infrastructure from a previous coral harvesting business. Marau Station borders the site and is home to approximately 200 families, with the parcel actively used for gardening and storage of boats. Marau police station is located adjacent to the site, with a police boat also in storage.

There is long-term and ongoing conflict between Indigenous people and settler communities in the area. Consultations indicated that such tensions had been ongoing for more than 20 years and have led to violence. Currently, both parties live at separate sites in Marau Sound, with a large police presence to manage potential conflict should it arise. Communities consulted during site visits indicated that the logging industry active in the surrounding area and presence of non-resident workers had allegedly led to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH), with young women and girls living at home with families in the area reportedly vulnerable.

The site is environmentally degraded, with refuse found in proximity to the community. The beachfront is low-lying and coastal erosion is evident, particularly at the northern and southeastern coastal boundaries where the elevation is less than 2 meters above sea level. Sediment run-off into the coastal area from logging activities has impacted reefs. The coastal side, particularly further south, has more intact ecology with healthy coastal plant communities. In contrast, inland and the northern side are more degraded due to the incursion of human activities. Inshore and fringing reefs have been impacted by a previous coral harvesting business. However, the beach has good amenities and potential for tourism with the community in proximity to provide a workforce.



SITE LOCATION

NEW COASTAL DWELLING



RUBBISH DUMPED AT THE NORTH END



COASTAL AREA



COASTAL EROSION



CO-ORDINATES

-9,851858977, 160,8329093

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Four shelters, two sheds and three houses are present.

SITE AREA (ha)

10.15

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Marau Area Health Center (5 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (110 kilometers).

CURRENT LAND USE

Gardens, access tracks along the coast, residential.

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Marau Airport (1.5 kilometers), but closed due to a land dispute at the time of research. Direct road access available.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile coverage is available. No water or sanitation on-site. Grid potential after Paruru East is connected.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Adjoins Marau Station on the northern boundary, home to around 500 people. It also features primary and secondary schools, churches, police, government offices and a health clinic.

SITE ACCESS

Easy access: if Marau Airport re-opens (closed at the time of research due to a land dispute). An internal road (three minutes from Marau Airport) and by boat (2.5 hours from Honiara) also provide access.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Two protected areas within 1 kilometer, five within 10 kilometers, and three within 50 kilometers. One Key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Historical conflicts between Indigenous and settler communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

2

Marine biodiversity

1

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

3

Presence of livelihoods

5

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

5

Sea level rise

4

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

16

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

193-002-0002

Vulelua Island East Guadalcanal

LOW

OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

Vulelua Island is uninhabited, with no infrastructure or gardens. There are some remnants of small buildings, including two concrete slabs and two pits or old septic tank structures. As a popular boat stop site, some rubbish was evident. The island is low-lying, but benefits from some coastal protection from an in-shore reef system around its entire perimeter.

There is evidence of storm damage on the northeast and east of the island, with felled trees and erosion visible. Approximately 70 percent of the site is 1 meter above sea level. Vulelua Island is a high-risk site for natural hazards, flagging that adaptation measures may be advisable in the siting and design process to reduce this risk.

The site features secondary forest and intact coastal vegetation in good condition, with species such as *Calophyllum inophyllum*, *Barringtonia asiatica*, *Scaevola taccada*, and *Pometia pes-caprae* present. The understorey has been cleared for a picnic area and firewood collection.

The inshore reef is rocky and exposed, although there is some potential for snorkeling. Logging activity on the mainland has contributed to sedimentation in the area.

While there is a low risk of UXO given the absence of any documented UXO discoveries in the region, it is important to note that like all sites in the corridor, this does not mean there is no risk at all.

SITE LOCATION



INSHORE/PROTECTIVE REEF SYSTEMS



EROSION ON NORTHEAST SHORE



BOAT LANDING AREA AND MAINLAND



SEPTIC TANK



CO-ORDINATES

-9.49766446, 160.4771825

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

No dwellings or inhabitants. Ruins of an old building present.

CURRENT LAND USE

Recreation, primarily as a rest site to break up boat travel.

SITE AREA (ha)

1.52

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Seve Nurse Aid Post (10 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (50 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (55 kilometers). Access is via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile phone connectivity. No other services available. There is a decommissioned septic system on-site, but no evidence of freshwater sources.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Logging, with Aola the closest community.

SITE ACCESS

Boat access, approximately two hours from Honiara.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Five protected areas within 50 kilometers and one Key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

No known community cohesion concerns.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

4

Marine biodiversity

3

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

1

Presence of livelihoods

2

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

7

Sea level rise

7

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

17

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

205-002-0001

Mbara Island

East Guadalcanal

LOW

OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site was previously owned by a foreign national who built a house and jetty and had plans to construct a bridge connecting to the mainland. Ruins of this house are still visible on the island. Reportedly, the previous owner is buried near the house, although no marked grave was identified during the site visit. No gardens or fruit trees were visible on-site. People use the site for picnics and overnight accommodation, often arriving the night before to access the market in Aola Village.

Surrounded by narrow reef flats, with low amenity value and limited biodiversity, the island is primarily composed of coral sand and is elevated 1-2 meters above sea level. Erosion was observed on the northern shores. The vegetation consists of mature secondary growth lowland coastal forest, with pandanus and cycad plants common in the understory. During the site visit, a pair of megapodes was sighted and it appeared that local communities had been harvesting megapode eggs, as there was evidence of nest excavation.

Research suggests that no fighting occurred in East Guadalcanal during WWII, which is supported by the absence of documented UXO discoveries in the region.



SITE LOCATION

TEMPORARY SHELTER



COASTAL EROSION



SECONDARY GROWTH FOREST



SECONDARY GROWTH FOREST



CO-ORDINATES

-9.529545021, 160.5012359

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

No occupants. Three shelters and remnants of previous buildings are on-site.

CURRENT LAND USE

People often stay on the island while waiting for markets to open. Also a popular site for picnics.

SITE AREA (ha)

2.63

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Save Nurse Aid Post (4 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (50 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (57 kilometers). Access is via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile phone connectivity available. No other services. Previous house had sanitation and water systems.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Aola Village sits close to the island. Adjacent land is primarily used for logging, along with cultivation of market gardens.

SITE ACCESS

The site can be accessed by boat within 2 hours from Honiara or Marau Station.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Nine protected areas within 50 kilometers. One Key Biodiversity Area within 1 kilometer, and one within 50 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

No known community cohesion concerns.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

6

Marine biodiversity

3

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

1

Presence of livelihoods

1

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

6

Sea level rise

5

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

18

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

206-002-0001

Taluto'o East Guadalcanal

MODERATE
OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

The island is characterized by low-lying coral sand composition, sitting approximately 1 meter above sea level, with surrounding shallow tidal reef flats. The reef has been impacted by fishing and other human activities, including evidence of giant clam consumption and water quality degradation. Patchy seagrass is present in some areas. While no permanent occupants were found on the site, shelter structures and old fire pits suggest temporary accommodation, likely used by fishermen. Additionally, the engraving of names on several trees suggest the island is frequented by young people from nearby villages.

The island's exposed location makes it susceptible to inundation during storm surges, as indicated by coastal erosion observed on the northern shore. Taluto'o Island is rated a high-risk site for natural hazards, flagging that adaptation measures may be advisable in the siting and design process to reduce this risk.

The environment is moderately disturbed, with evidence of vegetation clearance and the presence of invasive plant species, leading to low species diversity. One Key Biodiversity Area lies within 1 kilometer of the site, known as the Guadalcanal Watersheds.

Research indicates that no fighting occurred in East Guadalcanal during WWII. This is supported by the absence of any known and documented discoveries of UXO in the region.

SITE LOCATION



SHELTER STRUCTURE



COASTAL EROSION



EXAMPLE OF DEGRADED HABITAT



OLD JETTY STRUCTURE



CO-ORDINATES

-9.599134012, 160.6393627

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

No occupants. Some evidence of temporary stays and fire pits.

CURRENT LAND USE

Recreation and a temporary transit stop during boat journeys.

SITE AREA (ha)

0.2

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Totogo Rural Health Clinic (10 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (70 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Marau Airport (40 kilometers), but was closed due to a land dispute at the time of research. Access is via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile phone connectivity, but no other services available.

OTHER SITE RISKS

Site exposed to storm surges.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Coconut plantation adjacent on the mainland.

SITE ACCESS

The island is accessible by boat from Honiara (1.75 hours).

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Nine protected areas within 50 kilometers and one Key Biodiversity Area within 1 kilometer.

COMMUNITY COHESION

No known community cohesion concerns.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

4

Marine biodiversity

4

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

3

Presence of livelihoods

2

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

8

Sea level rise

7



International
Finance Corporation
WORLD BANK GROUP

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

19

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

206-004-0001

Sulava

East Guadalcanal

LOW

OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

This former coconut plantation, established during the colonial era, is still utilized by the local community. Some replanting is evident, with the site dominated by secondary growth forest. A stream runs through the southern portion of the site, and may be subject to flooding as it appears to be low-lying and swampy in some areas. The northern shore is impacted by coastal erosion.

Indigenous communities are known to live in Koral settlement, approximately 2 kilometers from the site, while migrant settlement communities working in the logging industry also live in proximity to the site. Residents utilize the site as a key access track throughout the day to access the local market and schools. Those consulted on-site were not positive about potential tourism development and workers moving into the area. Respondents were concerned that tourism could have similar impacts on the community as had logging, the primary employer in the area. Logging operations and a load-out dock are located near the site, which limits the aesthetic appeal for the tourism sector. Communities consulted during site visits indicated that the logging industry and presence of non-resident workers had led to alleged incidences of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH). Young women and girls living at home with families in the area were reportedly more vulnerable to SEAH from the logging workers. There were also reports of children engaged in labor practices at logging sites for low wages to support families.

Shallow reef flats, with occasional patches of seagrass, are located near the site. Fringing reefs, however, are of limited biodiversity value due to impacts from fishing and other human activity. Three Marine Managed Areas are located within 10 kilometers (Alile, Kere hira/Niuhoa, Niuhoo), while one Key Biodiversity Area lies within 10 kilometers of the site (Guadalcanal Watersheds). The site is generally 1-2 meters above sea level.

Research suggests that no fighting occurred in East Guadalcanal during WWII. This is supported by the absence of known and documented discoveries of UXO in the region.

SECONDARY GROWTH IN COCONUT PLANTATION



EROSION ON THE NORTHERN COASTLINE



ACCESS TRACK



BEACHFRONT



CO-ORDINATES

-9.729397799, 160.7440197

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

No occupation of site.

SITE AREA (ha)

188.074

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Totogo Rural Health Clinic (15 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (90 kilometers).

CURRENT LAND USE

Former colonial era coconut plantation. Now primarily used as an access track between communities, connecting nearby villages to markets and critical social infrastructure.

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Marau Airport (25 kilometers), but was closed due to a land dispute at the time of research. Access is via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

No services available. Stream on the southern portion is a potential freshwater source.

OTHER SITE RISKS

Large shallow reef makes boat landing challenging. Some parts of the site may be prone to flooding as the area is low-lying and a stream passes through the site.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Logging activity nearby the site.

SITE ACCESS

The site is accessible by boat around 1.75 hours from Honiara.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Three protected areas within 10 kilometers, and seven within 50 kilometers. One Key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

There are issues related to logging activity nearby, including risks of SEAH.

SITE LOCATION



ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

3

Marine biodiversity

2

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

2

Presence of livelihoods

4

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

6

Sea level rise

6

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

20

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

181-006-0001

Mbungana Island Nggela

MODERATE
OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

Owned by the United Church of Solomon Islands, this site boasts significant aesthetic appeal. Positioned on the southwest side of the island, there is a valuable forest area comprised of primary forest, sago palm wetlands and a salt marsh, all in healthy condition. While this part of the site requires conservation efforts, other areas could potentially be developed without impacting this biodiversity. Although the terrestrial biodiversity risk rating remains high, it is acknowledged that tourism development is still possible with appropriate siting and mitigation measures. The island is approximately 30 meters above sea level at its highest point. While no UXO discoveries have been documented within the site and surrounding vicinity, the UXO risk remains moderate due to proximity to active sites during WWII. The coral reef surrounding the island is in reasonable condition, characterized by good coral health and diversity. However, evidence of overfishing is apparent, leading to the limited presence of fish and diversity. The risk to the marine environment varies from low to moderate, depending on the location of any development on the island. One Key Biodiversity Area (Gela) is located within 1 kilometer of the site.

Current residents interviewed were generally supportive of potential tourism ventures if aligned with their theological teachings and community purpose. An education facility on the island is currently exclusive to male students. The site comprises approximately 15 structures, including kitchens, dormitories, houses, a church, an administration building, and classrooms, some of which are more than 40 years old. About 70 people associated with the church reside on the island, though they are not indigenous to the area. In a separate part of the site, 10 residents from a family occupy land with three additional dwellings and operate a dolphin breeding operation in the bay, currently housing two dolphins in captivity. A previous dispute with Solomon Islands Government in relation to the dolphins in captivity has made the residents guarded, expressing reluctance to allow visitors onto the site. This poses a potential risk to tourism, considering the unfavorable view toward dolphin breeding in captivity among a significant portion of the tourism market. Thus, careful consideration is needed regarding the compatibility of the dolphin breeding operation with potential tourism endeavors.

SITE LOCATION



SALT MARSH/PANDANUS SWAMP



DWELLING STRUCTURES



HEALTHY SECONDARY GROWTH FOREST ON
SOUTHERN PORTION OF THE SITE



GARDENS



CO-ORDINATES

-9.183976438, 160.2044556

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Some 15 structures on one section of the island, with a further three in a second cluster.

CURRENT LAND USE

Church mission, tertiary theological education, and dolphin breeding.

SITE AREA (ha)

40

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Tulagi Hospital (10 kilometers). health clinic (8 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (32 kilometers). Access via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile connectivity, solar and water systems in place to service the church and school.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Small villages are located close to the island where a primary school is located.

SITE ACCESS

Accessible by boat from Honiara within 1.5 hours.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Nine protected areas within 50 kilometers. One Key Biodiversity Area within 1 kilometer, and one within 50 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

There has been tension between church community residents and the family running the dolphin breeding.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

8

Marine biodiversity

5

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

6

Presence of livelihoods

3

Potential for UXO

5

Presence of cultural heritage

5

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

4

Sea level rise

4

SITE IDENTIFIER #: 21
PARCEL IDENTIFIER: 181-001-0005

Tanambogho Island
Nggela

MODERATE
OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

This island was significantly negatively impacted by WWII, and several war relics remain scattered across the island. The land title is held by an indigenous family through a well-governed trust. The trust reportedly holds positive views regarding tourism, seeing it as an opportunity for the local community to develop. Currently, the island is frequented by local communities for picnics and features temporary accommodation. Additionally, several people from the capital Honiara travel to the island each month for prayer under an informal arrangement with the titleholders, who indicated this would cease if development occurred on the island, flagging the need for dialogue on this issue.

Part of a three-island cluster, Tanambogho and its neighbors boast high aesthetic value. Although the neighboring islands were previously utilized for dolphin breeding and trade, this operation closed years ago. The terrestrial biodiversity of the site is limited, with the exception of an intact mangrove salt marsh lagoon in the northwest corner that could be conserved with appropriate siting of tourism infrastructure.

Shallow fringing reef flats dominate the western and southern sides of the island. The reef is not considered to have high biodiversity value, displaying limited diversity and signs of human impacts.

Tanambogho Island served as a seaplane base for the Japanese during WWII, where heavy fighting with the United States Marine Corps took place. Discoveries of war relics have been documented on the island by the Solomon Islands Police EOD Unit, rendering it a high-risk area for UXO.



SITE LOCATION

FORMER WWII BUNKER



RIDGE VIEW



REGENERATING FOREST



MANGROVES ON-SITE



CO-ORDINATES

-9.111258, 160.184650

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Two temporary shelters on-site.

CURRENT LAND USE

Used for prayer visits and temporary accommodation.

SITE AREA (ha)

5.22

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Tulagi Hospital (5 kilometers). Taroaniana Health Clinic (10 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (38 kilometers). Access via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile connectivity, but no other services available.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Small villages present on nearby islands.

SITE ACCESS

Accessible by boat from Honiara, around 1.5 hours away.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Nine protected areas within 50 kilometers, with a Key Biodiversity Area each within a 1- and 50-kilometer radius.

COMMUNITY COHESION

No community cohesion issues reported.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

5

Marine biodiversity

4

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

3

Presence of livelihoods

4

Potential for UXO

8

Presence of cultural heritage

6

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

5

Sea level rise

6

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

22

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

181-001-0001

Soghonangola Island (Double Island) Nggela

LOW

OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

The site represents a highly modified environment, boasting good elevation and thus presenting low risk in terms of climate change impacts. Currently, it is owned by a local company in the process of constructing a small-scale casino on-site.

Accommodation facilities to support the casino have been completed with two guesthouses. However, consultations indicated that the land title was perceived by some community members to have been acquired without consent, leading to a lack of acceptance within the community regarding the casino development. While the titleholders occasionally visit the site with guests, there is no permanent population on the island – only temporary construction workers from other provinces. On the southern tip of the island, a WWII gun has been preserved.

According to community members interviewed on-site, miscommunication between the owner and site stewards resulted in the clearance of a significant proportion of remnant vegetation. Bird species observed on-site included the Orole Whistler, Willie wagtail, and Beach kingfisher. Additionally, a Pacific black skink was sighted during the field visit.

The reef on the northern side of the island displays good biodiversity and health, extending about halfway down the east coast of the island. It showcases high biodiversity, with well-developed and healthy corals such as *Acropora* spp, *Oulophyllia crispa*, and *Podillopora verrucosa*, among others. A diverse array of fish was observed, including large schools, apex predators and reef fish. The location is relatively sheltered and approximately 20 meters above sea level at its highest point. While no UXO discoveries have been documented within the site and its surrounding vicinity, the UXO risk remains moderate due to its proximity to Tulagi, Tanambhogo, Ghaome, and Gawutu Islands, all of which were highly active sites during WWII.

SITE LOCATION



WWII RELIC



ACCOMMODATION



REEF



REGROWTH OF FOREST AFTER CLEARING



CO-ORDINATES

-9.123892274, 160.1562432

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

No permanent occupants. Three accommodation facilities, two guesthouses, one caretaker house and picnic shelters on-site.

CURRENT LAND USE

Currently used for weddings and group bookings. There is a casino currently under construction.

SITE AREA (ha)

8.094

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Tulagi Hospital (5 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (36 kilometers). Access is via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile connectivity, power, water and sanitation services available.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Tulagi, the administrative capital of Central Province, is located nearby.

SITE ACCESS

Accessible by boat from Honiara (around 1.5 hours).

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Nine protected areas within a 50-kilometer radius. One Key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers and two within 50 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Differing perceptions over the legitimacy of the land title has created potential for conflict within the community.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

2

Marine biodiversity

6

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

2

Presence of livelihoods

2

Potential for UXO

6

Presence of cultural heritage

4

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

3

Sea level rise

3



International Finance Corporation
WORLD BANK GROUP

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

23

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

181-001-0002

Kokomtambu Island (Double Island)

Nggela

LOW

OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

This island is connected through low-lying sand banks to Soghonangola Island, home to an under-construction casino and tourism facility. Kokomtambu Island serves as a venue for celebrations, ceremonies and gatherings, featuring picnic tables and some gardens at a low-lying area. However, since the new owners took over the land title and began construction on the casino, local communities have ceased utilizing the area for picnics and recreation, leading to tension regarding the land title. Some local community stakeholders interviewed perceived the land as acquired by a party previous to the casino developer without the consent of the local people, resulting in a negative view of the development among some locals.

The island hosts mangroves, including the large-leaved orange mangrove (Bruguiera gymnorhiza) and the tall-stilted mangrove (Rhizophora apiculata), essential for habitat preservation and coastal protection. Preservation of these mangroves is crucial, and any infrastructure should avoid impacting them. The reef surrounding the island is generally contiguous with Soghonangola, sharing comparable coral and fish biodiversity, which adds recreational value for tourism. The site is approximately 20 meters above sea level at its highest point.

The key Biodiversity Area of Gela is within 10 kilometers of the site. Despite a limited bird population on the island, species spotted include Finsch's Pygmy Parrots and Red-knobbed Imperial pigeons.

Although no UXO discoveries have been documented within the site and its vicinity, a risk still exists due to its proximity to Tulagi, Tanambhogo, Ghaome, and Gawtu Islands, which were active sites during WWII.



SITE LOCATION

CEREMONY AREA



REEF ON NORTHERN SIDE OF ISLAND



DRYING OF SHELLS COLLECTED BY LOCALS



SUBSISTENCE GARDENS



CO-ORDINATES

-9.121018891, 160.1548617

SITE AREA (ha)

1.21

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Toilet block and outdoor kitchen.

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Tulagi Hospital (5 kilometers).

CURRENT LAND USE

Site used for social gatherings, weddings and livelihoods (shell collecting).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (35 kilometers). Access is via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Mobile phone connectivity. Toilet block provides sanitation.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Tulagi, the administrative capital of Central Province, is located nearby.

SITE ACCESS

Accessible by boat from Honiara (around 1.5 hours).

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Nine protected areas within a 50-kilometer radius. One key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers, and two within 50 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Differing perceptions over the legitimacy of the land title has created potential for conflict within the community.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

3

Marine biodiversity

6

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

1

Presence of livelihoods

4

Potential for UXO

6

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

3

Sea level rise

3

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

24

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

169-005-0001

Anuha Island Nggela

LOW

OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

Anuha Island has high aesthetic appeal. The Anuha Island Resort was established in 1984 and operated as a successful tourism venture. It previously featured a small airstrip used by the resort's private plane operating transfer flights from Honiara. The resort was viewed positively by most of the nearby community in Rara, as those consulted for the study recalled the economic benefits of having a tourism operation nearby. However, a land ownership dispute in 1988 resulted in the venture being burnt down in an alleged act of reprisal. Community members are hopeful that tourism could be reestablished in the future. The community currently uses the island for picnics, recreation, temporary accommodation, along with fishing, firewood collection, and gardening. A former airstrip was located at the southeastern corner of the island.

The island has mixed biodiversity values, including mature secondary growth, a lowland coastal forest, a sago palm wetland, and an extensively cleared central area. The southern portion of the site, south of the wetland, would be more suitable for development as it has a habitat with lower biodiversity value. The fringing coral reef is in poor condition and heavily impacted by human activities, including overfishing and dynamite fishing, as confirmed by the local community. The corals are visibly damaged in many places. Coral appears in poor health, with low fish abundance and diversity. Significant conservation and preservation activities would need to be undertaken to restore the health of the reef, and this is likely to take many years. One Key Biodiversity Area was identified within 1 kilometer (Gela). The fringing reef provides protection from storm surges and has an elevation across much of the islands, approximately 60 meters at its highest point.

Research suggests that no fighting occurred north of Nggela Sule during WWII, and this is supported by the absence of any known and documented discoveries of UXO in this area.

SITE LOCATION



SAGO PALM SWAMP /WETLAND



FISHERMAN'S SHELTER



CLEARED GRASSLAND LOOKING TOWARDS
SECONDARY GROWTH



SUBSISTENCE GARDENS



CO-ORDINATES

-8.997333374, 160.2230239

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Two temporary shelters on the island.

CURRENT LAND USE

People use the island for overnight fishing camps, picnics, fishing, gardening and collection of materials (such as firewood).

SITE AREA (ha)

290

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

There is a local health clinic at Kaliiala Village on Nggela Sule (10 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Tulagi (30 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (90 kilometers). Access is via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

No services currently. However, previously had power (mainly generators), water sources and sanitation.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Small villages located close to the island.

SITE ACCESS

Is three hours by boat from Honiara, but was once accessible from Honiara by plane using the airstrip on the island.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Seven protected areas within a 50-kilometer radius. One Key Biodiversity Area within 1 kilometer.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Tourism operations ceased after infrastructure was destroyed in an alleged act of reprisal as a result of a land dispute.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

6

Marine biodiversity

4

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

1

Presence of livelihoods

4

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

3

Sea level rise

3

SITE IDENTIFIER #: 25
PARCEL IDENTIFIER: 168-001-0001

Vulula Beach
Buena Vista

LOW
OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

The area has good elevation and no evidence of coastal erosion. The aesthetic value for marine tourism is low, with shallow reef flats and seagrass beds, while the reef has limited biodiversity value. The beach has appeal, but rubbish was visible. There is an indigenous community located adjacent to the site, comprised of one family group. There is a significant cultural (*Toba*) site near the river within the site boundary, only accessible by men and this would need to be protected. Women would not be able to venture anywhere close to the site for fear of reprisal, placing a high cultural risk on the site.

Nearby communities use the site for walking, camping, and gardening. There are remnant plantations and a betel nut crop. Consultations indicated differing perceptions over the land title. The area was utilized during the coconut plantation era, with the expectation the land would be returned to indigenous people once it was no longer required for plantation operations.

Stakeholders reported that instead, the land was sold to two nationals. This perception has the potential to cause conflict for tourism development. Despite this, the community members interviewed living in the nearby village were positive about potential tourism, if the cultural heritage site was respectfully managed.

The site has strong secondary growth forest near the coastline, extending to cleared grassland on the hills away from the shore. The highest point of the site is approximately 30 meters above sea level, as the hills rise sharply from the beach.



SITE LOCATION

SEAGRASS BEDS



SECONDARY GROWTH FOREST



COASTAL AREA



FIREWOOD COLLECTION



CO-ORDINATES

-8.912651987, 159.9920624

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

One large hut for gardening and camping.

CURRENT LAND USE

People use the site for walking, camping, gardening, collecting firewood, and accessing other villages.

SITE AREA (ha)

6.7

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Olewaga Rural Health Clinic (15 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Tulagi (30 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (55 kilometers). Access via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

No services or fresh water sources available.

OTHER SITE RISKS

Crocodile hazard was reported with sightings in the coastal area.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Small villages and plantations.

SITE ACCESS

Accessible by boat (around 1.5 hours from Honiara).

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Two protected areas within 10 kilometers, and nine within 50 kilometers. One Key Biodiversity Area within 1 kilometer.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Differing perceptions of land title could create potential for conflict.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

5

Marine biodiversity

3

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

3

Presence of livelihoods

4

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

8

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

3

Sea level rise

3

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

26

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

169-004-0001

Logunavuaghi Point Buena Vista

MODERATE
OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is low-lying, 1-2 meters above sea level, with some evidence of coastal erosion. The community utilizes a large proportion of the site for gardens, but does not occupy it. Instead, it uses the site for access from the village to gardens scattered throughout the area. The nearby local community comprises about 600 people, with a variety of ages and mostly Indigenous to the area. Consultations indicated there were some differing perceptions over the legitimacy of the land title. The area was utilized during the coconut plantation era, with the expectation the land would be returned to Indigenous people once no longer required. Stakeholders reported that instead, the land was sold to three nationals, who remain as the current title holders. Local people interviewed felt that the land should be returned to them. The community includes a school and church, with tourism viewed as a positive employment opportunity that could potentially link in with the school for training opportunities.

The site is moderately modified with sizeable areas of healthy secondary forest. These include Calophyllum inophyllum, Barringtonia asiatica, Scaevola taccada as shrubs, and Ipomea pes-caprae as beach vines.

In the marine environment, there are some seagrass beds along with shallow reef flats not of high value for tourism, but important habitat. Small branching and brain corals are heavily affected by coral bleaching, with algae growth covering much of the dead coral. Sand and reef flats extend out to the drop-off. The site has two Marine Managed Areas (Maravaghi, Salavo) within 10 kilometers. One Key Biodiversity Area was identified within 1 kilometer of the area (Gela).

No UXO discoveries or recorded WWII conflict within the immediate vicinity of Buena Vista.

SITE LOCATION



FORMER COCONUT PLANTATION WITH
SECONDARY GROWTH



GARDENS



SHELTER



STREAM LOCATED ON SITE



CO-ORDINATES

-8.913010084, 160.0324204

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

One large hut used for gardening, with foundations of an old plantation building.

CURRENT LAND USE

People use the site as an access route and for gardening.

SITE AREA (ha)

32.7

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Olewaga Rural Health Clinic (15 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Tulagi (30 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (60 kilometers). Access via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

No services available. On-site stream offers potential freshwater resource.

OTHER SITE RISKS

Crocodile hazard was reported with sightings in the coastal area.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Coconut plantations and gardens, one large village with a school and church.

SITE ACCESS

The site is accessible by boat (1.5 hours from Honiara).

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Three protected areas within a 10-kilometer radius and eight within a 50-kilometer radius. One Key Biodiversity Area within 1 kilometer.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Different perceptions on the legitimacy of the land title have the potential to create conflict. Nearby community is cohesive and has good governance.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

6

Marine biodiversity

4

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

2

Presence of livelihoods

4

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

5

Sea level rise

6



International
Finance Corporation
WORLD BANK GROUP

SITE IDENTIFIER #: 27
PARCEL IDENTIFIER: 169-007-0001

Kasika Island
Buena Vista

MODERATE
OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

The area is relatively low-lying, mostly 1-2 meters above sea level with the southern end rising to 15-20 meters. Several people live on the island in seven households, potentially presenting resettlement issues. The site is occupied by an indigenous community, with interviewed members stating they were open to tourism, "but only if the cohesive community environment was not disrupted, such as by nightclubs or casinos. An appropriate form of tourism was seen by local community members consulted during the site visit as a good opportunity to share and celebrate culture, as well as provide employment opportunities for women. With no church or school located on the island, residents travel to nearby islands to attend these services. There is a small graveyard on-site which would need to be protected, and extensive cropping across the site.

Kasika Island is a modified environment due to human activities. There are some areas of secondary growth forest on the southern sides of the islands, and weeds were identified on-site. The site has two Marine Managed Areas (Maraghi, Salao) within 10 kilometers. One Key Biodiversity Area was identified within 1 kilometer of the area (Gela). The reef is highly impacted from overfishing, with only small reef fish species present. There is low coral diversity adjacent to sandy shoals.

No known UXO discovery nor WWII conflict reports have been made within the immediate vicinity of Buena Vista.



SITE LOCATION

DWELLINGS



BOAT LANDING



WELL USED TO SUPPLY VILLAGE AND GARDENS



GARDENS



CO-ORDINATES

-8.912522, 160.009747

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Seven households present on-site.

CURRENT LAND USE

People live on-site (approximately 25 people).

SITE AREA (ha)

12.6

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Olewaga Rural Health Clinic (15 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Tulagi (30 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (58 kilometers). Access via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Solar and generator for power, rainwater collection and groundwater well for freshwater.

OTHER SITE RISKS

Crocodile hazard was reported with sightings in the coastal area.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Small villages on nearby islands.

SITE ACCESS

Accessible by boat, approximately 1.5 hours from Honiara.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Three protected areas within a 10-kilometer radius and eight within a 50-kilometer radius. One Key Biodiversity Area within 1 kilometer.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Island occupied by one cohesive family group.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

3

Marine biodiversity

3

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

6

Presence of livelihoods

5

Potential for UXO

2

Presence of cultural heritage

5

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

6

Sea level rise

5

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

28

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

177-006-0004

Karumolun Island Russell Islands

MODERATE
OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

The island is moderately low-lying, 2-3 meters above sea level, with evidence of coastal erosion on the western flank. The Indigenous community, who reside in Yandina, utilize the island for camping, picnics and firewood collection, particularly from a large die-back area. In the early 2000s, there were tensions between settler communities and plantation operators over wages and working conditions. This culminated in a strike in 2003-2004 that resulted in reprisals and violent conflict, with plantation operators withdrawing workers from the area. Today, there remains ongoing tensions between former plantation workers (who have become settlers on company-owned lands) and plantation company management (although the company is no longer operational).

The island is highly modified as a former coconut plantation with *Allocasuarina verticillata* (drooping she-oak) widely distributed throughout the site. Secondary growth forest includes *Calophyllum inophyllum*, *Barringtonia asiatica*, *Scaevola taccada* as shrubs, and *Pometia pectinifera* as beach vines.

The reef system on the western side of the island appeared to be heavily overfished. In contrast, the reef on the eastern side was in good health with high fish diversity and abundance, dominated by reef species such as Pomacentridae (Damselfish family), Labridae (wrasses) and Mullidae (goatfish family). It is unclear why there was a visible difference between the two reef areas. There are some seagrass beds on the western side of the island, with juvenile fish present. One Key Biodiversity Area (West Pavuvu) is located within 10 kilometers of the site. This area is recognized as a Special Unique Marine Environment and contains green and hawksbill turtle nesting areas and has a rich biodiversity.

During WWII, Russell Islands were occupied by Japanese and Allied forces and subject to Japanese air raids. Mapping of Solomon Islands Police Force EOD Unit points to numerous reported UXO discoveries or call-outs documented throughout the entire island group.

WWII RELIC



BEACH AND SHE-OAK TREES



PANDANUS DIE BACK, POSSIBLY INUNDATION



PANDANUS DOMINATING FORMER COCONUT PLANTATION



SITE LOCATION



CO-ORDINATES

-9.04497941, 159.2433306

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

No occupation or no visible structures.

CURRENT LAND USE

Camping and picnicking, firewood collection from trees, particularly from an area with die-back.

SITE AREA (ha)

50

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Clinic in Yandina (12 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (100 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (100 kilometers). Access via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

No services or water sources.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Yandina, the main settlement in Russell Islands, is in close proximity to the island and 20 minutes by boat.

SITE ACCESS

Boats from Honiara take 1.5 hours and 20 minutes from Yandina, although the voyage from the capital can be exposed to rough seas.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Four protected areas within 50 kilometers and one Key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Historic and ongoing tensions between the settler community and former plantation operators.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

5

Marine biodiversity

7

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

1

Presence of livelihoods

4

Potential for UXO

8

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

7

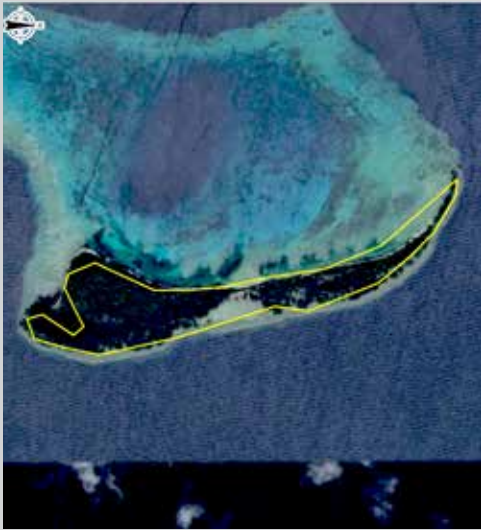
Sea level rise

5

SITE IDENTIFIER #: 29
PARCEL IDENTIFIER: 166-001-0001

Koemurun Island
Russell Islands

MODERATE
OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

This island has high aesthetic appeal, long golden sandy beaches offer high tourism potential. The local Indigenous community in Yandina settlement utilizes the island for camping, fishing, and collecting firewood. There are at least three structures on the island used for temporary accommodation.

It was noted that a large part of the island, 1-2 meters above sea level, is exposed to the elements and storm surges. Koemurun Island is rated a high-risk site for natural hazards, with adaptation measures in the siting and design process an important consideration for risk reduction.

There are ongoing tensions between settler communities and plantation companies in the area that have triggered conflict and reprisals. Conflict remains unresolved, despite the plantation companies ceasing operations. This may have an impact on tourism operations in the area, especially the attitudes and availability of workers.

The shallow reef flat on the southern side is in reasonable condition, but not likely to host high biodiversity or recreational value. A potentially invasive, unidentified brown filamentous algae was observed on the western shores in patches. On the western side, there is an attractive sheltered sandy bay. Extensive seagrass beds are present and would need some level of protection as they likely contain foraging habitat for dugongs and turtles. To avoid impacting this area, a tourism venture may consider using appropriate siting and design measures to avoid and mitigate impacts. The eastern side is an exposed shore with reef flats. Extensive mangroves and saltmarsh are found at the southern end, providing high habitat and biodiversity value. One Key Biodiversity Area (West Pavuvu) is located within 10 kilometers of the site. This has been identified as habitat for a range of species and includes at least 11 nesting beaches for hawksbill and green turtles.

WWII history and Solomon Islands Police Force EOD Unit reported discoveries or call-outs highlight the significant UXO risk for the entire Russell Islands group.



SITE LOCATION

COASTLINE



CAMPGROUND



POSSIBLE INVASIVE FILAMENTOUS ALGAE



MANGROVE WETLAND ON SOUTH OF SITE



CO-ORDINATES

-9.013446978, 159.2698735

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

No permanent occupants. Four partial structures present.

CURRENT LAND USE

Camping, fishing, and primarily firewood collection.

SITE AREA (ha)

43

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Yandina Area Health Care Center (10 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (100 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (100 kilometers). Access via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

No services or fresh water sources available.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Yandina, in close proximity to island, is the main settlement in Russell Islands about 20 mins by boat.

SITE ACCESS

Boat access from Honiara (around 1.5 hours). Potential for rough seas.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

Four protected areas within 50 kilometers and one Key Biodiversity Area within 10 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Historical and ongoing tensions between settler communities and plantation companies may present some risk.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

5

Marine biodiversity

7

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

1

Presence of livelihoods

4

Potential for UXO

8

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

7

Sea level rise

8

SITE IDENTIFIER #:

30

PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

165-003-0001

Butata Russell Islands

MODERATE
OVERALL RISK RATING

SITE



SITE DESCRIPTION

The island was cleared to develop a coconut plantation, which is still utilized for copra today. There is a copra drying facility on-site, and areas where vegetation has been cleared to fuel the dryer. There are two partial shelters located at the northern part of the island, used by local fishermen during the week. The nearby Indigenous community members interviewed during the site visit were positive about potential tourism development. It was noted there are attractive dive sites in the nearby area, currently only accessible to tourists on live-aboard dive boats, which offer limited benefits to local communities. Accommodation on the site would mean positive economic benefits for communities and promote local culture.

The island has strong secondary forest growth, including Calophyllum inophyllum and Barringtonia asiatica. However, it is apparent that the local community selectively harvests timbers from the island. Red-knobbed imperial pigeons are common on-site. The eastern shore is more exposed, with sandy beaches on the western shore. Shallow reef flats are present with some coral, but not of high biodiversity value. The site has one Key Biodiversity Area in its proximity, West Pavuvu within a 1-kilometer radius.

This has been identified as habitat for a range of species and includes at least 11 nesting beaches for hawksbill and green turtles. Given the proximity to this important area for biodiversity, the risk of tourism impacts on the marine environment is rated moderate to high. The island is 1-2 meters above sea level, but relatively sheltered from storm surges.

With numerous reported discoveries or call-outs for UXO documented throughout the Russell Islands, the UXO risk is high.

SITE LOCATION



COPRA DRYING SHEDS



HAMMOCKS



BEACH WITH SEAGRASS BEDS



SECONDARY GROWTH FOREST AND TIMBER HARVESTING



CO-ORDINATES

-8.995845, 159.119299

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

No occupants. Copra drying shed and two shelters.

CURRENT LAND USE

Livelihoods, such as copra, shell collecting, timber milling, camping and fishing.

SITE AREA (ha)

6.07

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Pepasala Rural Health Clinic (2 kilometers) or Yandina Area Health Care Center (33 kilometers). The nearest hospital is in Honiara (120 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (115 kilometers). Access is via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

No services or water sources available.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Nearby communities have dwellings, school, clinic, and accommodation facilities.

SITE ACCESS

Boat access from Honiara (around 1.5 hours), potential for rough seas.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

One Key Biodiversity Area within 1 kilometer, and one within 50 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

No known community cohesion issues.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

4

Marine biodiversity

8

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

2

Presence of livelihoods

6

Potential for UXO

8

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

6

Sea level rise

5

SITE IDENTIFIER #: 31

PARCEL IDENTIFIER: 165-002-0010

West Bay

Russell Islands

MODERATE

OVERALL RISK RATING



SITE

SITE DESCRIPTION

West Bay was part of a coconut plantation. Despite the plantation company discontinuing operations, it still holds the land title and has permitted people to live there. The occupants are from outside the local area, who traveled to Russell Islands to work in the coconut plantation prior to its closure. From site interviews, this has reportedly caused tension with local indigenous communities, who feel the land should have been returned to them. There are currently three households and about 15 people living on-site. Occupants travel to other nearby villages by boat to access schools, markets, and health clinics. Tourism was viewed positively, and current occupants of the site hold diving certification and recognize opportunities in the diving industry.

As a former coconut plantation, there is some secondary growth but limited terrestrial biodiversity value, with the exception of a salt marsh located on the northwestern side of the peninsula. Bird species observed include Red-knobbed Imperial pigeons, Coconut Ioukeets, Brahmany Kites, Herons, and Ospreys. The peninsula is sheltered from storm surges and was generally 2-3 meters above sea level.

The reef shows signs of overfishing. The site has one Key Biodiversity Area (West Pavuvu) in its proximity, within a 1-kilometer radius. This puts the area very close to important marine biodiversity habitat, particularly turtles and cetaceans. As such, the marine risk rating is high.

During WWII, the Russell Islands were occupied by both Japanese and Allied forces and subject to Japanese air raids. Mapping of Solomon Islands Police Force EOD Unit indicates there have been numerous reported UXO discoveries or call-outs documented throughout the entire island group.



SITE LOCATION

BEACH LANDING POINT FOR PLANTATION WORKERS



BEACH



COCONUT PLANTATION REGENERATION



MANGROVE SALT MARSH (HIGH BIODIVERSITY VALUE)



CO-ORDINATES

-9.028945, 159.092084

CURRENT OCCUPATION OF SITE

Three dwellings are present.

CURRENT LAND USE

Some 15 people live on the site with subsistence gardens.

SITE AREA (ha)

867.1

DISTANCE TO NEAREST HOSPITAL / CLINIC

Clinic across the bay (Pepesala Rural Health Clinic (3 kilometers), or in Vandina. The nearest hospital is in Honiara (120 kilometers).

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT / PORT

Honiara Airport (115 kilometers). Access is via boat.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

No services or fresh water sources available.

OTHER SITE RISKS

No other site hazards noted.

ADJACENT LAND USE

Small community with a market and school.

SITE ACCESS

Boat access only from Honiara (three hours), but rough seas are possible.

PROTECTED / MANAGED AREAS

One Key Biodiversity Area within 1 kilometer, and one within 50 kilometers.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Since the establishment of the plantation, the site has been occupied by settlers. Although operations have ceased, the plantation company allowed settler families to remain on site, causing tensions with local indigenous people.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Terrestrial biodiversity

4

Marine biodiversity

8

SOCIAL RISKS

Presence of people

4

Presence of livelihoods

4

Potential for UXO

8

Presence of cultural heritage

3

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Coastal vulnerability

5

Sea level rise

4

Contact

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