

Gizo Environment Livelihood Conservation Association (GELCA) Resource Management Plan



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for a living planet®

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For the:

People having traditional rights of ownership and usage of Gizo Islands terrestrial and marine environment and its bountiful resources

Through:

WWF - Solomon Islands Program

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**CORAL TRIANGLE
INITIATIVE**
ON CORAL REEFS, FISHERIES AND FOOD SECURITY

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A. GIZO ENVIRONMENT LIVELIHOOD CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION (GELCA).

1. Background : The setting and site history

Gizo Environment Livelihood Conservation Association (GELCA) formerly known as Gizo Marine Conservation Area (GMCA) was established by Ghizo Islands' marine stakeholders with World Wide Fund for Nature – Solomon Islands Program (WWF SI) in 1998. This program reactivates traditional marine environment and resource management practices within the Ghizo marine area and combines this traditional knowledge and practices with current conservation methodologies such as the establishment of community-based Marine Protected Areas to promote the conservation of marine biodiversity and the maintenance of the subsistence resource base on which local communities of the region depend.

GELCA Management Committee utilizes two kinds of management tools: Permanent Marine Protected Areas (no-take) and Multiple-use MPAs (including seasonal/rotational closures, gear restrictions and selective use). Permanent MPAs aim to safeguard areas of high biodiversity including those with high coral cover, high fish abundance and/or spawning aggregation sites. Multiple uses MPAs allow more flexible management options, including controlled harvesting practices, aquaculture developments and allow subsistence harvesting for food and income generation. The GELCA Conservation Protected Area aims to become part of the Western Province law in 2006 and currently the GELCA Management Committee, WWF Solomon Islands and the Western Province are working towards this goal. Gazettal of the GELCA Management Sites will provide legal support to these community-based conservation and resource management zones, and set out management regulations and prohibited activities through the management area.

A total of 48 islands from Njingono Island in the west to Naru Island to the east, including Ghizo Island as the main central island, make up the "Ghizo Islands". A wide range of habitats are found in the Ghizo Islands marine environment, including brackish swamp and mangrove forests, lagoons, long stretches of shallow sheltered reef flats, verdant islands, sand banks, sheltered bays and deep oceanic basins that provide favorable conditions for macro-algal beds, seagrass meadows and coral reefs. These habitats support critical fish spawning aggregation sites, invertebrate spawning areas, hatchery and nursery sites, turtle feeding and nesting sites, dugong grazing sites and dolphin social and migratory routes. The area is also one of the most biologically rich ecosystems in the Solomon Islands, with Njari Island in particular being of globally outstanding ecoregion significance with some of the highest fish and

coral biodiversity in the world. There are also a host of important cultural sites located throughout the GELCA Conservation Protected Area.

While Ghizo Islands are high in biodiversity, the human influences on the marine environment and its resources are diverse in terms of the resource use patterns, and the cultural and social practices that guide such resource use. This has placed key marine resources that support the majority of Ghizo Islands people at risk of overharvesting. The socioeconomic status of both urban and rural populations in Gizo is such that the majority of people living within the GELCA are dependant on its marine natural resources for daily subsistence. This management plan is designed to help to protect these globally outstanding marine ecosystems and the marine resources that sustain the livelihood of the people of Ghizo Islands. This document outlines strategic objectives, management goals and strategies and also provides information on existing natural and cultural resources of the island for resource managers. This plan will be reviewed every three years to assess the effectiveness of the management plan, to add new information as it becomes available and to make necessary changes to the management of the GELCA.

Direct management authority and responsibility for the marine resources of the GELCA Conservation Protected Area lies with the GELCA Management Committee, which is comprised of representatives of key communities, relevant government departments such as fisheries and tourism, WWF and the private sector. Technical advice and funding assistance are currently provided by WWF Solomon Islands through grants from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, John. D. and Catherine T. Macarthur Foundation and the European Union under the Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion programme. Monitoring of the status of marine resources is conducted by community members and WWF SI.

2. Description of Gizo Environment Livelihood and Conservation Association.

Ghizo Islands in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands is an area of extraordinary beauty where marine and terrestrial ecosystems of biological complexity have produced a patchwork of true Pacific island paradise. This special and unique land and reefscape is a product of mother natures' natural processes governed by "once practiced" traditional management systems. These marine ecosystems are an important component of Ghizo Islands' natural heritage: as a complex matrix of habitats that support rich biodiversity and for their economic value in supporting the traditional subsistence economy and commercial harvesting. The Ghizo Islands marine environment is also one of the most biologically rich ecosystems in the Solomon Islands and is of

globally significance. Its wide range of habitats include brackish swamp and mangrove forests, lagoons, long stretches of shallow sheltered reef flats, verdant islands, sand banks, sheltered bays and deep oceanic basins that provide favorable conditions for macro-algal beds, seagrass meadows and coral reefs.

The coral reefs and deep water marine environment of Solomon Islands, and in particular the Ghizo Islands area is part of the Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion, one of the most important marine ecoregions in the world. A Rapid Ecological Assessment of Solomon Islands conducted in 2004 by TNC, WWF and the SI national government determined that Solomon Islands has one of the highest diversities of corals anywhere in the world, second only to Raja Ampat in Indonesia. This same survey also identified Njari Island of Ghizo Islands as globally outstanding in terms of fish biodiversity.

Ghizo Islands have a rich and strong maritime culture and people living here have a high dependency on marine resources for both subsistence and cash. Burgeoning populations, migration, cultural & ethnic diversity and mushrooming global markets are posing considerable threats to the health of these habitats and abundance of their associated resources, thus accelerating pressures for improved management of this biological treasure. This is a considerable challenge for local communities, for WWF Solomon Islands and for the Western Province and national governments.

GMCA was initiated in 1998 by WWF and the Western Province government with the aim of protecting four islands and their surrounding reef ecosystems: Kennedy Island, Nusatupe Island, Njari Island and the submerged reef system, Hot Spot. As these islands were perceived to be government-owned, it seemed viable to begin management work here. After a series of community consultation programs, it was determined that a better, more lasting outcome could be achieved with significant engagement from local communities which were interested in also establishing community-based marine protected areas. It was also recognized that communities needed to be fully engaged and empowered to determine rules and regulations for their customary-owned areas and to take responsibility for the operation of the initiative and that the establishment of a marine protected area could potentially demonstrate not just ecological, but economic and social benefit for communities. In so doing, the former GMCA was changed to **Gizo Environment Livelihood Conservation Association**, abbreviated as **GELCA**.

It is the aim of GELCA to cater for the needs of all relevant stakeholders within Ghizo Islands from local communities to local businesses, local government and existing NGOs and to regional and global conservation

and resource management initiatives such as the Locally Managed Marine Area network and the Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion programme.

GELCA is an integrated network of locally-managed MPAs that uses a variety of management tools. GELCA includes 8 permanent MPAs and 15 multiple use MPAs, including seasonal and rotational closures, spread across 10 management units (see table 1.0). Each of these MPAs is managed by an adjacent community, under the supervision of the umbrella GELCA management committee. Only Njari Island MPA and Hot Spot MPA are directly managed by the **GELCA Management Committee**, while Nusatupe MPA is managed by World Fish Centre. The total GELCA area is approximately 42.5 km² of marine area and includes the entire Njari Island land area. Naru, Njari and Hotspot MPAs are also completely or partially spawning aggregation sites and have specific management guidelines that apply.

All the MPAs within the GELCA Conservation Protected Area are managed by an umbrella body (formed in 2000, the former GMCA Management Committee), now change to **GELCA Management Committee**. This advisory body is comprised of stakeholders who are directly and indirectly involved in the use of the marine resources, such as community leaders, provincial fisheries officers and tourism operators. The committee oversees the implementation of the management plan and aims to develop alternative sustainable livelihood options for communities that use the GELCA conservation protected area and its marine resources. With the assistance of WWF SI, the GELCA committee has begun the development of a Western Province Ordinance that will act as a legal framework to ensure enforcement of the regulations set forward in the management plan.

This management plan details the unique natural and cultural resources of GELCA. It also outlines the major pressures and threats to the integrity of the ecosystems within GELCA Conservation Protected Areas and outlines the actions already taken or proposed to address these threats. The plan also outlines rules and regulations and penalties for the GELCA Conservation Protected Area that were determined through widespread consultation with communities during on-going GELCA management committee meetings.

This management plan will be reviewed every three years by the committee to update information contained within and to provide for regular evaluation of the status of the GELCA conservation protected area and management effectiveness.

2.1 : Climate

The climate of the area is tropical, with December to March season bringing northwest monsoon winds resulting in low tropical depressions. Isolated thunderstorms bring heavy rains until July. Dryer periods occur during the months of August through November, with November being usually calm and dry. In 1998, Ghizo Islands experienced the influence of the El Nino southern oscillation event. From April to October, Ghizo experiences the southeast trade winds, which can reach up to 30 knots or more. November to March is the wet season, the northwesterly monsoon winds bring typically warmer and wetter weather from November to March. Residents of Ghizo Islands suggest that wind patterns seem to have changed in recent years with sudden shifts in wind directions and heavier rains extending into what were traditionally drier seasons.

Average ambient temperature is 28 °C, with average maximum temperatures of 32°C occurring during October through March and average minimum temperatures of 25 °C occurring from April through September. Temperature increases as high as 33.5 °C have occurred. Night temperatures are generally 3-5°C cooler than daytime temperatures.

3. GELCA Land and Marine Tenure System

Gizo Island and its surrounding islands are both customary and alienated land registered under the Solomon Islands Government.

4. Resource Use Patterns

Socioeconomic status varies considerably among rural and semi rural/urban settlements on Ghizo Islands. This variation can be attributed to a number of factors including the landholding system, cultural tradition and lifestyle and location of settlements. Ownership of settlement areas is through perpetual estate entitlement, fixed term, and temporary occupancy licenses (TOL) and Native Customary Land ownership. In general, those communities that has land ownership systems other than TOL have greater variety of and access to resources. They also have a stronger incentive to manage their resources and environment. Settlers who are under TOL system have very little access to land-based resources and are forced to make their livelihoods from the marine environment in marine areas which are generally owned by other customary landowners.

Communities living and around the GELCA Conservation Protected Area are highly dependent on the marine environment and its resources for both subsistence, and cash generation to meet basic needs. Almost all are engaged in gardening and derive a significant portion of their

subsistence resources from the land, such as from copra production. Resource-use pattern also varies for each community with some communities highly dependant on fishing for subsistence and cash generation (such as Fishing Village, Nusabaruku and Babanga) and others more reliant on gardening and marketing of produce.

For example, Fishing Village and Nusabaruku communities are TOL settlers and are the major inshore fisher-communities. They generate income on a daily basis, receiving cash income on average of \$128 per day for 6 days (~\$3072 per month) from fishing. Expenditures include food, fishing equipment and fuel and take almost all income earned so there is very little savings. These resources are used both for subsistence and cash generation. Only 10% of the people of these communities work in Gizo town, while another 20% work in other parts of the Solomon Islands or in neighboring countries. For settlers living in Titiana Village, almost 60% generate income in wage work or by selling home-made products, such as baked goods in the market.

Other communities within the Gizo Environment Livelihood Conservation Association (GELCA) generate income on a twice weekly or three-times weekly basis and receive less income (\$1800 per month) as compared to Fishing Village and Nusabaruku communities, but also have less ongoing expenditures. In this way they are able to put aside some small amounts for expenditures on school fees, building materials, household assets and furniture, although savings are not common.

5. Status of GELCA Sites and the participating communities' management roles.

a) Habitats

There is a range of coral reef and shoreline habitats in the GELCA marine environment. The Ghizo islands are either surrounded by turquoise colored waters fringed with white sand beaches with lowland forest, or limestone islets. Some non-vegetated islets such as sand cays are also formed along side deep channels and these provide refuge and for frigate birds, terns and eagles. The reef systems surrounding the Ghizo islands are acknowledged to be the second most biological diverse reef system in the world after Raja Ampat in Indonesia.

Offshore environment remains as the vast oceanic basin including the pelagic habitats and their associated fauna. This is where larger marine organisms are encountered such as cetaceans, tuna, leatherback turtles, dugongs, pilot whales and humpbacks. The Blackett Strait is a key migratory corridor pathway for leatherback turtles and cetaceans.

Coral reefs within the GELCA Conservation Protected Area are comprised of narrow fringing, barrier and patch reefs, intermixed with scattered and sporadic sand patches. There is an extremely high diversity of coral species, including hard and soft corals.

Coastal habitats include exposed rocky shores, sheltered bays harboring extensive mangrove, seaweed and seagrass meadows and shallow to deep lagoons with associated reef systems. These areas have become nursery and feeding grounds for invertebrates and reef fishes, feeding and nesting sites for marine turtles, and social areas for spinner dolphins.

Islands of Ghizo reef system and its passages mostly occur on the leeward side (north) of Ghizo Island, where most of the spawning aggregation sites are located, as these are associated with passages.

b) Physical Features

Coastal Landforms

Unlike all other volcanic islands having mountain peaks within the region, Gizo Island's topography is relatively low. Flat land at 50 cm above sea level only covers a narrow strip averaging at 25 meters from the low water mark to the edge of the foothills. The rises elevate no higher than 200 meters inland. Elevated areas on Gizo Island differ with regards to location and dominant wind directions. The inland ridges are irregular with intruding valleys and foothills but are gentle and more rounded.

The windward shores (south eastern side) facing the dominant south easterlies are dominated with isolated ridges, which are much steeper and rugged, with some rising at virtually 90° slope at the coast. On the northern leeward side, the ridges gently rise inland. Mangrove communities are dominant along this vicinity and are associated with bays and sheltered by offshore barrier islands and reef systems. Runoffs and catchments among the foothills form a number of streams discharging at various sites along the leeward and windward coastline. Swamps and watersheds are also associated with the northern sheltered river mouths.

Bathymetry

Greater Gizo Reef Complex is approximately 24 km long and 7.5 km across at its widest point. It is bordered by a thin fringing reef on the windward edge and isolated submerged reefs and a series of barrier islands and lagoon on the leeward side oriented in a northwest-southeast position. The northeastern leeward barrier island reef immediately drops

down to depths of 300 to 350 m towards the Blackett and Gizo Straits where depths rarely exceed 500 m due to their enclosure between Kolombangara and Vella La Vella Islands. The windward southern side is exposed to high wave surges from the Coral Sea whose fringing reefs drop to 100 m in depth within 20 m of the reef edge. A double barrier reef system located 1-3 kilometers from the weather coast with isolated uplifted reefs at depths of 6 to 17 m form the final border which sinks directly into depths of 1000m.

The inshore areas reach maximum depths of 54 m. The northeastern lagoon, as enclosed by the barriers island and reefs, has various depths ranging from 0.5 m to 30 m with patch reefs and coral and rubble islets that slope steeply (20°- 30°) to the lagoon floor. The inner coastline contains deep harbors and fringing reefs between 5-10 m wide. The windward lagoon is much deeper with depths reaching 50-54 m, with the weather coast fringing reefs between 20-50 m wide.

There are a number of passages that link the lagoons and coastlines with the Coral Sea, Wilson Strait, Gizo Strait and the Blackett Strait. The passages that bring in high energy waves from the Coral Sea are much deeper (32-82 meters) and wider (100 m to 1 km). These passages include the South Naru Passage, Epanga Passages and Vorivori Passage. Passages that connect the northeastern lagoon with the Blackett Strait are much narrower that includes North Naru Passage, Kennedy Island Passage, Pusinau Passage and Undulata Passage. Only Mburumburu Passage links the northwestern coastal system with the Gizo Strait.

Geology

The volcanic islands in the Solomon Islands are associated with the Solomon Sea Plate, which is in turn subducted beneath the Pacific Plate. There is currently active volcanism at Kavachi (south of the Marovo lagoon), while nearby volcanic island of Kolombangara is dormant. Ghizo islands have micro-plate movements especially along the northwest to the eastern barrier islands and reefs, where a network of suspected fault lines run along the edge of the barrier system and where fault lines occur along the west coast of Ghizo Island. As a result soil composition of Ghizo Island is a mixture of volcanic rocks such as olivine basalt breccia with lava in parts, polymictic breccia with clasts of hornblend andesite and sedimentary rocks such as limestone, siltstone and sandstones, and is calcareous in parts.

c) Terrestrial Flora & Fauna

The flora of the Ghizo Islands is varied. On Ghizo Island there is very little old-growth forest remaining as a result of logging operations in the 1960s. Fragmented patches of old-growth forest totaling less than 1 km²

in size remain. On the smaller surrounding areas there is even more limited forest as many islands are small and geography is ever-changing making forest establishment difficult. Species include those typical of disturbed areas of tropical lowland rainforest in Solomon Islands. Strangler figs (*Ficus* sp.), ngali nut (*Canarium* sp.), and buni (*Calophyllum inophyllum*) are common. There are many gardens areas, coconuts and introduced plantation species. Grassland communities occur on the eastern side of Gizo Township. Freshwater swamp areas contain taro, while saltwater swamp forest habitats host mangrove communities and their associated epiphytes.

There are very few land mammals in the Ghizo Islands due to relatively dense human populations and lack of primary forests. There are some species of bats and rats primarily. Very limited research has been conducted here.

Solomon Islands have one of the highest levels of bird endemism in the world. Within the GELCA conservation protected area, Ghizo Island supports the critically endangered endemic Gizo white-eye. The population of Gizo white-eye birds is estimated to be in the range of 2300 to 4700 birds (Read and Moseby, 2001). Additional birds found in the secondary re-growth forest of Ghizo Island include the Superb Fruit Dove and Finch's Pigmy Parrot. The GELCA conservation protected area also provides refuge for several species of waders and sea birds, including the vulnerable Sanford's Fish-eagle and the near threatened Beach Thick-knee.

Reptiles include skinks, geckos, snakes and frogs. Of key interest is the rare skink *Lipinia noctua* which has been found of Kennedy Island (Read and Moseby, 2001).

There are relatively few mammals in the terrestrial areas in and around the GELCA Conservation Protected Area. Cuscus is known to frequent strangler fig trees on the main island of Ghizo. Fruit bats are also often seen.

d) Marine Fauna & Flora

Seagrasses

Seagrass surveys of key sites, including Fishing Village, Logha, Babanga, Pusinau and Nusatupe have identified 9 species of seagrasses within the CPA. These include *Cymodocea serrulata*, *Cymodocea rotundata*, *Enhalus acoroides*, *Thalassia hemprichii*, *Halophila ovalis*, *Halohyle pinifolia*, *Halodule uninervis*, *Halophila minor* and *Syringodium isoetifolium*.

The largest seagrass area within the GELCA Conservation Protected Area occurs on the Babanga northern reef flat covering an area of 35,000 m². *Thalassia hemprichii* is the dominant species here, although it also occurs in each of the survey sites. At Nusatupe, *Cymodocea rotundata* is the dominant species. In total seagrass coverage within the GELCA Conservation Protected Area is estimated at 8 ha. Seagrass areas provide foraging areas for dugong and hawksbill turtles which are known to frequent these areas. Sea urchins are also found in these seagrass beds, and some species are edible and used by the communities as a food source.

Corals

Gizo coral reefs are found mostly on coral atoll and fringing and barrier reefs. Due to the high occurrence of flushing of the reef systems through daily incoming and outgoing tides, Gizo reefs have the right conditions for maximum coral growth. Coral cover within the GELCA CPA, at the 4 survey stations regularly monitored by WWF ranges from 37.7% to 53.9 %. This means that in general Gizo reefs are in good condition. Some estimates suggest that some of the healthiest reefs in the world have never had more than 30% coral cover (Hodgson and Liebel, 2002). *Acropora* sp. are more dominant in the shallows and are particularly abundant around Paelonge and Titiana reef areas located on the windward side of Gizo. In general life forms occurring here are soft corals, sponges and macro algae but these amount to less than 10% cover (Hughes, 2005). Benthic cover includes a wide range of spectacular soft corals, sponges, gorgonian fans and other coral reef associates.

Fish

Baseline data for Underwater Visual Census of key commercial fish species was conducted in 2004 and 2005. Survey sites included Titiana, Babanga, Paelonge, Saeraghi and Nusa Agana. Other survey work has also been conducted in Naru, Njari, Kennedy and Nusa Agana. Fish abundance differs widely across these 5 sites, with Njari showing the highest abundance and diversity of fish. In general there is an overall low abundance of commercially important fish species in the GELCA Conservation Protected Area. In particular there is deficiency of larger species such as high level predators (i.e. groupers) or functionally important herbivores (i.e. wrasses and parrotfish) (Hughes, 2005). A high number of *Acanthurids* (surgeon fish), and low numbers *Carangids* (jacks and trevally), *Haemulidae* (sweetlips) and groupers (Serranidae) are also found throughout the GMCA.

Invertebrates

Commercial invertebrates are also found within the GMCA, including trochus and beche de mer (sea cucumbers). Preliminary surveys by WWF SI indicate that sea cucumbers such as white teat fish, prickly redfish, lemonfish, tigerfish, surf red fish, amberfish and pinkfish are present. However many of the commercially important species are believed to be in decline and a recent ban on the export of sea cucumbers is in place. Crustaceans include crayfish, lobsters and coconut crabs.

Reptiles

Crocodiles are known to be present in the mangrove areas of Sepo, Kongulavata and Lebu. There are limited reports of marine turtles although greens and hawksbills are seen frequenting GELCA waters for foraging. In recent years there have been one or two nests reported but such events are relatively unusual. Nusatupe had a successful hawksbill nest in 2002, and the north coast of Babanga also had one nest hatch in 2003. There have also been reports of the odd successful hatching at Naru.

As of recent GELCA has been divided into five (5) management zones involving 36 communities participating in the management roles on the Conservation Protected Areas around Ghizo Islands and its reef systems.

See Annexe 4 on the lists of zonation of Ghizo Communities.

5. The Planning Process

The planning for management of the former GMCA were derived from widespread community discussions and during Management Committee Meetings held in June and July 2002. These were informed by Participatory Rural Appraisals conducted in all communities in 2003, and also on-going discussions between communities and WWF since 1998.

During the planning process and discussions, the following issues have been considered as important reasons as to why it is vital to identify some areas of environmental significant:

- a) Protect, conserve and manage the species and habitats in GELCA Conservation Protected Area to help ensure food security for future generations.
- b) Promote the conservation of Ghizo Islands, including coral reef systems, seagrass and mangrove communities and fish spawning aggregation sites in a healthy and productive state.

c) Encourage and regulate appropriate use, appreciation and enjoyment of the GELCA.

d) Involve stakeholders in planning, establishment and monitoring processes for GELCA.

B. OBJECTIVES OF MANAGEMENT SITES

The establishment of the management area is to achieve the following management objectives:

(1) To encourage proper use of marine resources in accordance to the most appropriate method of harvesting, supporting traditional and scientific method of resource management practices of the community;

(2) To provide for the effective management to support sustainable use of other marine resources, for both subsistence and small economic benefits;

(3) Improve capacity on resource management and the development of appropriate livelihood options through collaborative partnerships, shared learning, linkages and better communication for resource owners, resource users, and resource managers – including government, NGO, Community and commercial sectors;

(4) To monitor and evaluate the status of the resource base and the effects of the management plans;

(5) To identify and provide the appropriate training in the appropriate technology applicable to management of resources;

(6) To involve community participation in the planning process, establishment, management and monitoring process for the management areas.

The objectives established by the former GMCA MPA Committee, now GELCA Management Committee are consistent with principles of biodiversity conservation and that is the key goal of the relevant ministry of the Government and the CTSP Coral Initiatives programme, and as a signatory to the 1992 UN Convention of Biodiversity.

C. MANAGEMENT SITE OPERATION

1. Administration

This management plan is to be submitted to the Western Provincial Government Executive as required under section 24(4) of the Western Province Fisheries Ordinance 2011. The GELCA has been established under the GELCA Constitution and by virtue of the constitution has been

given the responsibility to manage the GELCA sites through its Management Committee.

The GELCA Management Committee (GELCA –MC) basic job is to manage the approved sites, ensure the implementation of the management rules and guidelines of the management area, and to ensure the management regulations of the Provincial Fisheries Ordinance and the management rules stipulated in this management Plan is enforced.

The GELCA Management Committee will work in close consultation with other neighboring communities, stakeholders and Non Government Organization. The term of reference of the GELCA Management Committee is annexe 1 to this management plan.

2. Location and Description of GELCA Management sites.

2.1: Location

GELCA Conservation Protected Area is a marine ecosystem complex of 10 management areas from the eastern-most island of Naru to the reef systems of Njari in the west. The complex is located within the Ghizo Islands of the Western Province, Solomon Islands. Ghizo Islands is a collective term referring to Ghizo Island and its surrounding islands and islets located on the southwest rim of Solomon Islands' national border, between latitudes 8°.0' & 8°.10' south, and longitudes 156°.46' & 156°.58' east.

The Ghizo Islands group is located 12 km southwest of the dormant volcanic island of Kolombangara, separated by the Blackett Strait, oriented in an arc formation (with reference to Kolombangara Island) from southeast to northwest for approximately 23 kilometers. A total of 48 islands from Njignono Island in the west to Naru Island to the east, including Ghizo Island as the main central island, make up the "Ghizo Islands", the marine complex ecosystems of the area. The surrounding islands of Ghizo Island are barrier islands thus forming a lagoon with depths ranging from 0.5 meters to more than 30 meters. Deep channels on the windward side bring in strong nutrient-rich currents from the Coral Sea, while flush-out points are located on the leeward side into the Blackett Strait. Generally, the Ghizo Islands are oriented in a northwest to southeast direction.

GELCA Conservation Protected Area covers an approximate area of 42.5 km² and covers a wide range of habitats including fringing reefs, seamounts, sand cays, shallow and deep lagoons, bays, mangrove communities, seagrass beds, rocky shores, channels and coral rubble islands. The management areas, both permanent and multiple-use MPAs

are outlined in Table 1.0. See Annexe 3 for the map of GELCA Management sites.

2.2: Management Units

The GELCA Sites is comprised 10 management units (geographically identified), which include both permanent and multiple use community-managed marine protected areas. These are listed and described in Table 1.0.

Table 1.0 GMCA Management Units

2006 CONSERVATION PROTECTED AREAS – GELCA						
Ref No	Location	Size (km²)	Management Regime	Habitats	Species of Special Concern	Ecological Attributes/
1	Njari Island	4.2	Permanent	Island Reef System	Coral Trout Hump Head Wrasse	SPAG sites; second richest biodiversity in the world
2	Varu Islands	0.9	Permanent	Exposed Reef System	-	Coral Cover
			Multi-Use	Sheltered Reef System	-	Scad Refugia
3	West Coast (Saeraghi, Vorivori & Bibolo)	25.1	Multi-Use (other)	Seagrass beds Seaweed beds Mangroves Lagoon Reef System	Dolphins Dugongs	Extensive Reef & Mangrove System Dolphin, Migratory path, dugong feeding ground
			Multiple Use (trochus)	Lagoon Reef System	-	Trochus Habitats
			Multiple Use (coral garden)	Lagoon Reef System	Corals	Corals & Associated Fauna
			Multiple Use (mangrove)	Mangrove outcrop	Mangrove	Mangrove & associated fauna
			Multiple Use (seagrass)	Seagrass Beds	Dugong	Seagrass & associated fauna
4	Weather-coast (Leoko, Hakaroa, Paelonge)	1.2	Permanent	Submerged Reef		Reef Associated Flora & Fauna
			Multiple Use	Rocky Shores	Trochus	Trochus Habitat

	& Suvania)		(trochus)			
			Multiple Use (seagrass)	Seagrass Beds	Dugong	Seagrass & associated fauna
5	Kogulavata Bay	1.1	Permanent	Table Reef	Turtles	Turtle Feeding Area
			Multiple Use - rotational closures	Bay Reef system	-	Seaweed beds
6	North Coast (Sepo, Pusinau & Lebu)	2.8	Multi Use (other)	Forest, mangrove, seagrass, reef system, passage/channel	-	Sea cucumber nursery, dolphin social area Crayfish hatchery
			Multiple Use (trochus)	Lagoon Reef System	-	Trochus Habitat
			Multiple Use (seagrass)	Seagrass Beds	Dugong	Seagrass & associated fauna
			Permanent	Table Reef	Dolphin	Reef, Sea cucumber nursery, dolphin social area
7	Hot spot	0.4	Permanent	Submerged Reef	Coral Trout Pelagics	SPAG site Coral Cover
8	Nusatupe	1.5	Permanent	Fringing Reefs Shoreline	Turtles	Aquaculture site
9	Babanga	1.8	Multi Use (other)	Island Reef System	-	Reef
			Multiple Use (seagrass)	Seagrass beds (Leeward & windward)	Dugongs Turtles Sea cucumber	Sea cucumber nursery area
10	Naru	3.5	Multi Use (other)	Fringing Reef	Dugongs	Reef, fish, manta ray cleaning station, Sea Birds
			Permanent	Nauru Passage	Groupers	SPAG sites

3. Management Rules for GELCA Management sites

Management areas within GELCA can be classified into two categories 1) permanent no-take zones and 2) multiple use CPAs, where selective activities are permitted. Individual communities establish CPAs in their own reef areas and develop individual management plans for these areas.

3.1 General Rules

Across all permanent CPA sites and multiple-use CPA sites, communities have agreed to the following rules to be used. These include:

- 1) No dynamite fishing
- 2) No use of natural poisons
- 3) No use of hooka gear
- 4) No turtles and/or turtle eggs are to be taken at any time
- 6) No dugongs are to be taken at any time
- 7) No green snail to be taken at any time
- 8) Respect of national fisheries regulations, including legal sizes for trochus, sea urchin, crayfish and coconut crabs
- 6) Live coral destruction is not permitted inside the GELCA-CPA
- 7) Removal of sand, gravel or dead coral from GELCA-CPA is not permitted
- 8) No rubbish to be disposed of in sea (includes plastics and non-biodegradable materials, such as batteries, petrol, oil, and fertilizers)
- 9) No killing of wildlife, such as birds or possum, for sport or export
- 10) Introduction of exotic species (i.e. Santa Cruz Chicken) is discouraged
- 11) Boats must be closely monitored to prevent disposal of wastes into inshore and Conservation Protected Areas

In addition to these above rules, additional rules and management practices are to be adhered to in each of the two types of CPA.

3.2 Permanent CPAs (no take zones)

Permanent CPA areas include the spawning aggregation sites of Njari Island, Hotspot and Naru, in addition to permanent no-take areas of Varu, Kongulavata, Pusinau and Paelonge. Nusatupe is also a permanent CPA site administered by the World Fish Centre. The following rules apply:

- a) Permanent CPAs (no-take) are established over critical inshore areas such as coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds, and spawning aggregation areas
- b) No resource extraction activities of any kind are permitted in these permanent CPA sites for either subsistence or cash generation purposes

- c) Recreation, such as picnicking, can occur provided users abide by rules established by the responsible resource management committee

3.3 Multiple-Use CPAs (selective use)

Multiple use CPAs include those of Njari, Varu, Sepo, Pusinau, Kongulavata, Babanga, Naru, Suvania/Paelonge, Hakaroa, Leoko and Saeraghi. The following rules apply in these areas:

- a) Critical habitats within a multiple use CPA are managed according to community guidelines (i.e. reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves)
- b) Netting and night spear diving for cash purposes is not permitted
- c) Hand collection of invertebrates and edible seaweed is allowed based on quotas set aside by responsible community resource management committee
- d) Seasonal closures shall be established where appropriate with rules and guideline designed by responsible community resource management committee (i.e. trochus rotational closures in Saeraghi and Paelonge)
- e) Rotational Closures shall be established where appropriate with rules and guidelines designed by responsible community resource management committees (i.e. seagrass rotational closures in Kongulavata)
- f) Aquaculture development shall be established where appropriate with rules and guidelines designed by responsible community resource management committees
- g) Hand-line fishing is permitted.

4. ACCESS TO THE GELCA MANAGEMENT SITES

4.1 Threats and Challenges

The GELCA-CPA is a unique conservation area as there are approximately 6000 people living in and around its boundaries. In a small sized island environment this places increasing pressure on marine and terrestrial resources especially in the view of a growing population.

There is increasing concern that marine resources within the GELCA-CPA are under heavy fishing pressure and from the harvest of other marine invertebrates, especially for commercial resources such as trochus and beche de mer. Collateral damage during artisanal fishing

such as damage caused by anchors, nets, dynamite fishing and *muro ami* (driving fish into nets by striking coral with rocks and or sticks) are also key threats. Plant poisons used to stun fish is not in much use around the GELCA -CPA, and therefore not believed to be a key threat at present.

There is also anecdotal evidence from dive shop operators that suggests that crown-of-thorns starfish (*Acanthaster planci*) is on the increase. This may be related to natural changes within the reef and exacerbated by the influence of increased human users, which can lead to stressed marine ecosystems. At Babanga sandy substrate becomes suspended and covers coral communities during rough weather sometimes smothering colonies that may already be stressed from increased water temperatures and/or crown of thorns outbreaks (Hughes, 2005). Pusinau also exhibits evidence of coral bleaching and crown of thorns.

Njari Island is a key spawning aggregation site within the GELCA Conservation Protected Area and as such has been targeted by fishers during spawning times. Baseline survey work indicates that Njari is deficient in a wide range of commercially important fish genera, however there are high densities of *Lethrinids*, *Pomacanthrids* and *Pomacentrids*. Some preliminary spawning aggregations g monitoring work has been conducted at Kennedy and Agana (although these are not currently within the GELCA) which shows that these sites also exhibit poor abundance across a range of genera.

There are currently 4 know spawning aggregation areas (including Njari, Hotspot, Naru and Kennedy) within or in near proximity to the GELCA-CPA. These areas receive the most targeted fishing pressure.

4.2 GELCA Management Authority

The management of the GELCA-CPA is overseen by the Environment Livelihood Conservation Association Management Committee (GELCA-MC). This umbrella body is comprised of representatives from each of the community-based CPA sites, both permanent and selective sites, as well as reps from the Western Province Fisheries Department, Western Province Culture, Tourism and Environment Division, WWF Solomon Islands, and one representative from each of the following communities: Saeraghi, Babanga, Gizo Fishing Village, New Manda, Kololuka, Titiana, Vorivori, Bibolo, Paelonge, Varu, Naru, Harakoa, Leoko, Suvania, Nusabaruku, Kogulavata, Pusinau and Sepo. In addition, four other representatives from the local, business and/or scientific communities can also sit on the committee as members at large. This has been designed to allow for additional flexibility as the umbrella group is already very large due to the need to have many communities representation.

Each member of the GELCA management committee is elected at the community level and is responsible for providing information about the GELCA-CPA to their respective communities. Each community representative can serve a 3 year term and may serve consecutive terms, depending on their community's wishes.

The GELCA management committee may also have the authority to issue permits for study and research within the GELCA-CPA, although this still requires discussion with the Western Province executive committee. A levy system, likely on an honesty basis with local dive shop operators, may also be imposed to ensure revenue generation of the GELCA to cover its basic operational costs.

5. STAFF.

Staff and Community Conservation Officers (CCOs) to work for the GELCA management sites would be recruited locally within the member communities of GELCA.

Rangers shall be appointed to monitor and police the CPA areas to ensure total awareness and total respect paid towards these management regimes in the light of reaching expected outcomes of these initiatives. Responsibilities of the Rangers include the following actions:

- a) Raise awareness to first time fishers found within the CPA areas;
- b) Regular policing work over the CPA sites, especially during night time or during periods of expected fishing activities;
- c) Stop, board, search any local or foreign vessel, canoe or vehicle which he believes has been used in the commission of that offence or in relation to which he believes such offence has been committed;
- d) Search the packages belonging to any persons, whether in their personal possession or found within any premises, vehicle, vessel or canoe;
- e) Report any person whom he believes has committed such an offence, and if the warden making such arrest is not a Police Officer, he shall without unnecessary delay, hand over the name of such person to GELCA management committee;
- f) Seize any equipment, gear, explosive, poison or other noxious substance which he believes has been used, carried, possessed or controlled in the commission of such offence;

- g) Seize any species of terrestrial, wildlife or marine resource, or product thereof, which he believes to have been taken in contravention of this or any regulations made hereunder.

6. STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT.

Relevant and proper training program for facilitators, conservation officers and staff should be put in place. There is a need to train at least two local divers for conducting site surveys. There is also a need to train appointed officers the methods to enforce the management rules and bylaws.

Other trainings should also be made available on short term attachment to relevant institutions or making available an expert on site for a period of time giving on the job training to local counterparts.

GELCA-MC to consult the partner organisation to actively pursue training programs for Management site staff under its four development components. At least, one training opportunity should be offered for management skills and financial management skills in higher education institution each year.

Community Conservation Officers to be given training on negotiations and conflict resolution techniques for dealing with visitors and perpetrators with undesired activities to GELCA management sites. Community awareness programs/activities and engagement should encourage community members to have a sense of ownership.

7. SITE MANAGEMENT.

(a) Garbage, Oil and Sewage Disposal

The GELCA sites should be kept free of garbage, oil and sewage disposal, waste, tins, plastics, bottles and other harmful materials to the marine resource base.

The appointed managers are to identify a properly dug pit to contain the rubbish. Since the islands of the barrier reef are low, a proper method of rubbish disposal should arrange. Other rubbish should be burnt. Community Conservation Officers should maintain a healthy environment to avoid insects and pests. A proper guideline should be drawn to direct disposal of rubbish. A proper toilet facility must be provided for the visitors. It is prohibited to use the beach as toilets.

(b) Control of coastal erosion.

There is to be no cutting of mangroves, coastal trees and beachside vegetation around GECLA Management site and the coastal trees and vegetation on the GELCA management site. It encouraged to do

replanting of beach vegetation and local trees such as *naginagi* (kerosene wood), on coast line.

(c) Tabu sites.

Tabu sites within the GELCA management sites need to be identified by the community. The visit to sites within GELCA management area is restricted and its visit is to be facilitated only by GELCA-MC.

8. FINES AND PENALTIES

Breaking of any rules and regulations contained in this management plan will be subject to a fine of an amount decided on by the management committee in collaboration with the legal system.

The following are the penalty procedures and guidelines:

- a) Any person who contravened the provisions of this Resource Management Plan made hereunder shall be guilty of an offence and liable to penalties as follows:
 - i) When the offence is committed for the first time, a general warning shall be given;
 - ii) When the offence is committed the second time, fishing gear, cane and all harvested products shall be confiscated;
 - iii) When the offence is committed the third time by the same person, then cash or customary money shall be paid;
 - iv) Where the offence was not committed for commercial gain the person committing the offence shall be liable to a fine not exceeding \$500.00 or (amount of custom money value);

All payments shall be forwarded to the management committee to help in the overall operating cost of the CPA management and administration.

The CCOs are authorized to issue citations to anyone in violation of these management rules, in accordance with Western Province Fisheries ordinances 2011 and GELCA member communities' rules.

Copies of GELCA Resource Management Plans and rules, with its appropriate map will be displayed on the sites, and at other interested communities.

9. RESEARCH AND MONITORING

It is encouraged that a proper monitoring and research program should be established to improve our understanding of our flora and fauna, fish, corals water quality, sea grass and other marine resources. The research

and monitoring program of the Management Area shall be done in collaboration with GELCA MC. Monitoring of marine invertebrates and other resources can be done at intervals with the appropriate technology to carry out technical data of the available resources.

However, subject to section 44 (1)- (4) of the Western Province Fisheries Ordinance 2011, researchers not associated with Gizo Environment Livelihood Conservation Association, or MFEC are expected to obtain the permission of the management committee to conduct research in the management areas. The procedure of application and screening of research activities, and to obtain permission to conduct research, is as follows:

- (1) An application needs to be filed with the GELCA Management Committee (GELCA-MC). This application should be on the official letterhead of the sponsoring organization,
- (2) Include the purpose of the proposed research, reasons why it is important, how it will benefit the GELCA Sites and surrounding community, a work plan, and schedules of activities. the
- (3) Upon its receipt, the application will be considered at the next meeting of the GELCA-MC, and if approved must be submitted to the appropriate government and provincial authorities for their approval.
- (4) If the researcher wishes, he may call a special meeting of the committee to consider the application, but the expenses for such meeting will be paid for by the researcher.
- (5) Upon the approval by the management committee, all proper documentation and provincial and national permits must be sought and approved.

All reports, raw materials collected during the course of the research, which may result in any of the publications, should be made available to the GELCA-MC, with the original copyrights held by the member communities of GELCA. Any traditional knowledge obtained by the researchers must be acknowledged and shall remain the property of Member communities of GELCA. All photographs taken within the boundaries of GELCA-CPA sites should be acknowledged and copies of all photographs should remain with member communities of GELCA. Research done and results taken must comply to the principles of the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the bio-prospecting rules of International Treaties by respecting the GELCA members' right to consent on the use of resources, its by-products and

in benefits sharing. Any profit derived from the use of this knowledge must be returned to the GELCA member communities.

Research in GELCA marine biology and traditional knowledge of GELCA marine resources should be documented.

10. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

GELCA Community Members being the owners and stewards of the GELCA-MA sites, and other communities as common users of the surrounding reefs, will be included in the decision making process through the community representative on the GELCA-MC. There is to be a program on a regular consultative meetings, engagement and awareness organised by the GELCA-MC with the help of partners to ensure the members of all communities concern are fully aware of their responsibility in the resource management of the GELCA-CPA sites.

Training package to be organized by GELCA through funds received from appropriate donors to broaden the understanding and to acquire appropriate resource management skills and techniques which could be used to help other resource owners.

11. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GELCA-MC AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The GELCA Management Committee (GELCA-MC) together with the chiefs and elders of GELCA communities will be responsible for outsiders and other organizations. Through co-operations with other interested organizations, it is expected that the interests, goals and aims of GELCA-MC be further realized. The Western Provincial Government will be informed of the program activities.

GELCA, the local CBO for Member Communities on Ghizo Island, would play a major role in facilitating many of the activities. Exchange of information, training and participation in various programme activities should be the base of mutual relationship and understanding with other parties.

12. LONG TERM PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY.

12.1 Management Plans and Business Plans

To ensure long term sustainability of GELCA sites management program, two important strategic documents must be compiled and adhered to : 1) GELCA Management Plan and 2) GELCA Business & Development Plan. These documents would be the blue print for field, administration and financial undertakings of GELCA sites. These working documents must have a fixed timeframe, either a 3 year planning program or a 5 year planning program. At the end of the allocated time frame, the documents are to be reviewed and re-designed for the next set of timeframe

12.2 Capacity Building Programs

More targeted capacity building work for the GELCA-Management Committee to function independently is required. A good start will be a focus on developing capacity of a general manager and a team of community wardens who will be tasked with enforcing the management plan and with educating subsistence users with GELCA member communities about sustainable management of marine resources. It is envisioned that these community wardens will report to GELCA Management Committee and will be employed by the Association.

Donor funding may be sought to pay these wages and to provide training, however the long term objective would be for GELCA –MC to finance the payment of staff through levies on tourists, or through a line budget from the Association or the WP Government. Potential support for GELCA-MC through an endowment would also be investigated.

Training programs must be developed for these Community Rangers, covering areas of community engagement, negotiation and conflict resolution as well as conservation management and resource monitoring programs.

12.3 Financing of GELCA sites

There are several options for the financing of GELCA sites. There is a possibility of a levy on visitors using the marine environment of GELCA. One option that seems to be one of the simplest and most straight forward systems would be for the dive operators to remit this to GELCA-MC on an honesty system or through signing an agreement between the operator and GELCA-MC.

An alternative might be to charge the levy at the airport on visitors arriving at Nusatupe. There are numerous options available and these required further discussions between GELCA-MC, Operators and the WP Government. Options for long term financing via an international NGO should also be explored.

12.4 Review of the Management Plan

It is important that this plan has the degree of flexibility to be able to operate and change in the village content but is realistic rigid enough to deliver on the conservation objectives.

Changes will be made, if necessary upon the majority vote of the resource management committee. A review process of this management plan will be done every two (2) years. Ongoing biological and socio-economic monitoring exercise shall also be used to determine the need for change in rules of this management plan.

**13. APPROVAL AND ENDORSEMENT OF GELCA SITES
MANAGEMENT PLAN (GELCA - MP).**

The GELCA Resource Management Plan document has been discussed,
agreed and accepted by the Executive of member communities of GELCA
in its meeting on 20....., Gizo Island.

Thus, confirming our endorsement by our signatures:

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Secretary of GELCA- MC

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ANNEX: 1

GELCA CONSERVATION PROTECTED AREA

TERMS OF REFERENCE

GELCA MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

The management of the Gizo Environment Livelihood Conservation Association (GELCA) CPA is overseen by the GELCA Resource Management Committee. This new umbrella body has been established by GELCA constitution. The body is comprised of member representatives of the main families, women's groups and youth groups of various communities of Ghizo Island.

(i) Role of GELCA Management Committee (GELCA-MC).

The basic responsibility of the GELCA-MC is to supervise the implementation of the management plans and management rules for the GELCA Management Sites.

The other functions of the GELCA-MC are:

- Powers to declare any marine sites within the customary and alienated areas of GELCA as management areas;
- Apply periodic restriction on the harvesting of sea resources as it sees fit for the benefit of the community and the resource base;
- Formulate, periodic review of bylaws and rules affecting the sites on short term and for a longer period of time if need be;
- Review the management plan and decide on any changes affecting management rules;
- Enforcement of management rules through appointed Community Conservation Officers;
- To screen and approve all external research applications to conduct research on GELCA sites;
- Periodic advise to GELCA member Communities and the appropriate Chiefs on the GELCA sites;
- Recommend training for GELCA staff and officers.
- Approve research applications.
- To resolve any disputes or conflicts arising among the participating communities or within the conservation area;
- To present a detailed progress report at least once a year to the appropriate Provincial Executive.

(ii) GELCA-MC Membership

The GELCA-Management Committee members will be according to the numbers stipulated in GELCA Constitution.

Apart from the above members, the appropriate Government Organization and NGO would be asked to have a member to sit in the committee.

There are other senior members of the tribal communities who resided outside Solomon Islands, who by virtue of their membership and status within GELCA can be called to attend the meetings. They are eligible to cast vote.

The management committee meets four times a year and more frequently if needed, to make decisions affecting the GELCA-CPA sites. These meetings are only for management committee members.

(iii) GELCA-MC meetings

The GELCA-MC shall meet at least once a quarter or once in three months or four times a year and shall be held in a place appointed. The GELCA Resource Management Office is to be the venue of all GELCA-MC meetings. A quorum of 50% plus two office bearers is required to conduct any business. In addition an annual general meeting is held in which all members of the public are entitled to attend.

In consultation with the chairman, the Secretary shall call an extra ordinary meeting according to circumstances and should the need arise.

(iv) Term of Office

The term of office of each members of GELCA-MC shall be in accordance to the terms provided the rules of GELCA member communities or the constitution. Members who are not part of the member communities of GELCA shall be 2 years.

(v) Decision making

Only committee members have the right to vote on management decisions. Should the GELCA-MC cannot come to a consensus over a customary issue affecting any of the GELCA sites, the matter must be referred to the Executive committee of GELCA for decision. The executive committee will consult the various chiefs on the best option to take to maintain the recognized powers of the chief.

The decisions on management policy, changes in rules and bylaws or matters affecting the GELCA sites not of a customary nature, is to be jointly considered by GELCA-MC, the Executive of GELCA and the appropriate chiefs for a solution.

(vi) Resolving Disputes

It is the responsibility of the GELCA-MC to resolve any disputes arising from the administration and uses of the Management Area. Any dispute that is trivial in nature and of the ownership rights shall be referred to the Elders Committee or the tribal chief owning conservation protected area.

(vii) Approval of Management Plan

The plan shall be presented to the GELCA-MC for comments and then on receiving their endorsement, be presented to the members of the community.

On receiving the agreement of the member communities, it is submitted to the GELCA Executive for endorsement.

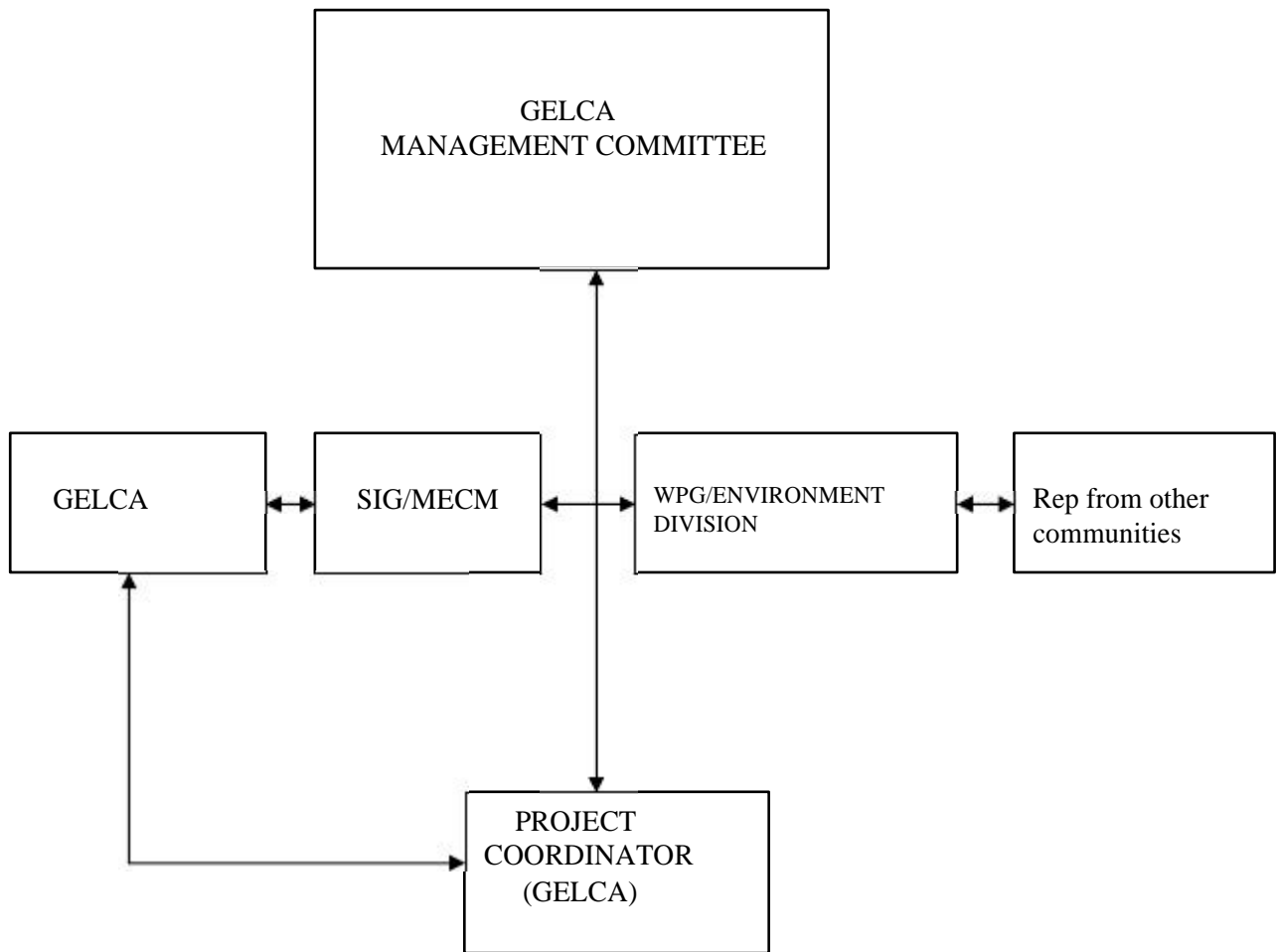
(viii) Payment of allowances/stipends

Appropriate sitting allowances per day would be paid to the members of the committee in any officially duly called meeting. For members residing outside Ghizo travelling arrangement would be made for both ways or in the alternative members to pay their own fares and be refunded on production of properly authorized receipts

Daily allowances for GELCA MC Members attending meetings would be considered by the Association or according to the relevant constitution.

ANNEXE 2:

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE OF GELCA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



ANNEXE. 3

Map of Gizo Environment Livelihood Conservation Association Conservation Protected Area



ANNEXE. 4:

Lists of Zonation of Ghizo Communities.

Zone 1: Babanga to Marie Point

1. Babanga Village
2. Epanga Island
3. Worldfish Centre
4. Nusabaruku Village
5. Fishing Village
6. Lire Settlement
7. Marie Point

Zone 2: New Manra to Vanikuva

1. New Manra
2. Camp 2, Titiana
3. Titiana Village
4. Nusakao Camp
5. Voruku Settlement
6. Vanikuva Settlement
7. Vanikuva Camp

Zone 3: Simboro to Leoko

1. Simboro
2. Suvania
3. Paeloge Village
4. Sitovaka Camp
5. Tiroduke Camp
6. April 2 Camp
7. Hakaroa Village
8. Hakaroa Camp
9. Leoko Settlement

Zone 4: Bibolo to Saeraghi

1. Bibolo Village
2. Mile 6 Camp
3. Tirololo Camp
4. Vorivori Village
5. Saeraghi Camp 1
6. Saeraghi Camp 2
7. Saeraghi Village

Zone 5: Kogulavata Settlements to Tingetanga Settlements

1. Kogulavata Settlements
2. Sepo/Oravae Island
3. Pusinau Settlement
4. Lembu Settlement
5. Logha Station
6. Tingetanga Settlement

ANNEXE. 5

WESTERN PROVINCE MARINE CONSERVATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREAS ORDINANCE 2010

AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MARINE CONSERVATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREAS IN WESTERN PROVINCE.

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

1. Short title and Commencement
2. Interpretation
3. Negotiation to establish Marine Conservation Area
4. Negotiation proceedings to be recorded
5. Membership
6. Board of Marine Conservation Areas
7. Powers to establish Marine Conservation Area
8. Declaration of Marine Conservation Area
9. Management Committee
10. Authorised Officers
11. Prohibited Fishing Methods
12. Powers of Authorised Officers and Conservation Rangers
13. Powers of Authorised Officers and Conservation Rangers without a Warrant
14. No liability of Authorised Officer and Conservation Rangers
15. Prohibition of Arms
16. Willful obstructions
17. Failure to comply with inquiry
18. Destroying of Evidence
19. Penalties
20. Power of Forfeiture
21. Powers to make Regulations

SCHEDULE 1 – NEGOTIATION

SCHEDULE 2 – APPOINTMENT OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

SCHEDULE 3 – APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATION RANGERS

SCHEDULE 4 – CODE OF CONDUCT

SCHEDULE 5 – SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION

1. Short Title and Commencement

This Ordinance may be cited as the Western Province Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas Ordinance 2010, and shall come into effect upon passage by the Western Provincial Assembly, assent by the Minister of Provincial Government and publication in the Solomon Islands Gazette.

2. Interpretation

In this Ordinance, unless the context otherwise requires –

“Alienated Land” means land under the custodian of the Commissioner of Lands or the Premier;

“Authorised Officer” means a person or group of persons duly appointed to manage, control or supervise the Conservation Areas in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance;

“Chiefs” means Chiefs or other traditional leaders residing, or representing his tribe for better management and control of the tribe’s affairs, including customary land matters;

“Commercial Gain” means selling the good or products for profit.

“Marine Conservation Area” means a conservation area to be established as provided by section 6 of this Ordinance.

“Customary Land” means any land not being registered land other than land registered as customary land, or land in respect of which any person becomes or is entitled to be registered as an owner of an estate, lawfully owned, used or occupied by a person or community in accordance with the current customary usage.

“Executive” means the Executive of the Provincial Government of Western Province as established in accordance with the Provincial Government Act 1997

“Marine resources” means any fish and any other animal plant or thing living in or found in salt water including but not limited to the following species: beche de mer, clam, crab, crayfish, crocodile, green snail, pearl oyster shell, prawn, seaweed, trochus, turtle, coral and dugongs.

“Land” means and includes land, reefs and lagoons in Western Province.

“Minister” means the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Western Provincial Executive Assembly.

“MCRMA” means Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas.

“Marine Pollution” means the introduction by man, directly or indirectly, of substances or energy to marine environment resulting in harmful effects such as hazards to human health; hindrance of marine activities, including fishing; impairment of the quality for the use of seawater, and reduction of amenities.

“Marine Pollutants” means substances which have the potential to destabilize the natural processes in the marine which affects the physical nature of the marine environment, the biological processes of marine resources and in turn affect humans who use the marine environment and resources. Marine pollutants include noxious substances that have high toxic levels, oxygen-depletion substances which require allot of oxygen in order to be degradable, solid wastes are manmade such as general litters, plastics, bottles and textiles and land-based sediments and runoffs.

“Ordinance” means laws made for a Province by a Provincial Assembly under part IV of the Provincial Government Act, applicable only to a particular Province;

“Perpetual Estate” is similar to a Freehold Title where the owner has exclusivity with respect to a right to dispose of the land. Only Solomon Islands citizen can hold the Perpetual Estate;

“Person” means person, persons, body corporate, associations, co-operative and any other body of persons.

“Ranger” means a person appointed in accordance with section 9(2) of this Ordinance.

“Take” means in relation to terrestrial resources to cut, uproot, hunt, kill, capture, sell, purchase, or export; in relation to any wildlife resources to kill, harm, hunt, capture, sell, purchase or export and in relation to marine resources to fish, catch, kill, harm, capture, sell, purchase or export.

“Terrestrial resources” means any tree, flora or fauna, alive or dead, living on land, which is of a species indigenous to Solomon Islands and is or was growing in the Western Province.

“Vessel” means any ship, boat, canoe, raft or other craft for use in or on water and being of any size, constructed of any material and whether powered by engine or other means.

“Wildlife resources” means all indigenous birds, insects and animals including, but not limited to butterflies, reptiles, mammals, amphibians, and mammals whether dead or alive.

“WWF” means WorldWide Fund for Nature

3. Negotiation to establish Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas

- (1) Any person or group of persons or Organization or company who is interested in establishing a Conservation and Resource Management area may negotiate with:
 - (a) Chiefs and landowners if the area is customary owned, or
 - (b) Title holders if the area is a registered estate, in consultation with the Premier, or
 - (c) The Premier of Western Province if the area is alienated or Government land.
- (2) Notwithstanding the preceding subsection, the Premier may be consulted on all issues affecting a government leased land;
- (3) Interested parties who wish to apply shall observe Schedule 1 of this Ordinance.

4 Negotiation Proceedings to be recorded.

- (1) The proceedings of the negotiation between interested parties shall be recorded and admitted as part of the records of the proceedings herein;
- (2) All parties shall have copies of the records of the proceedings evidencing the processes pertaining to the negotiation in this regard;

5. Membership

- (1)** Membership shall be classified in two categories, each of which shall have its set of qualifying criteria, rights and privileges. Category one shall consist of members of the Board whom shall be appointed by the Minister and category two shall consist of members whom shall be appointed by the Board in consultation with the respective established Working Community Committees.

- (2) Notwithstanding the preceding sub-section, all persons who are directly involved in the establishment and development of Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas shall be ordinary members of the MCRMA;

6. Board of Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas

- (1) There shall be established a Board to be known as the Board of Western Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas;
- (2) Members of the Board shall be appointed by the Minister and shall consist of the Provincial Secretary (Western), a nominee of Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) office (Western); a nominee of the Fisheries Division (Western), a nominee of the Regional Lands office (Western), a nominee of the Police Division (Western) and a nominee of the Customs Division (Western);
- (3) The Minister may appoint other members to be members of the Board who possess relevant qualifications, interests or expertise as he deems fit and proper for better management, control, and expansion of the service;
- (4) Members of the Board whom the Minister appoints shall be for 2 years unless he or she is terminated;
- (5) At all meetings of the Board, the Provincial Secretary (Western) or in his absence such member as the other members present may select, shall preside and act as the Chairperson of the Board;
- (6) Every document issued by the Board shall be signed by the Chairperson or the Secretary, affixed with the MCRMA Common Seal;

7. Management Committee

- (1) For the better management of any Marine Conservation and Resource Management area and for the good administration of the Ordinance and Regulations made hereunder, the Board having declared such Marine Conservation and Resource Management areas, in consultation with the established Working Community Committees shall appoint members of the Management Committee with clear and precise roles and responsibilities in accordance with Schedule 2 of this Ordinance.
- (2) Members of the Marine Conservation and Resources Management committee shall accept to abide with these provisions and the Code of Conduct stipulated in Schedule 4 of this Ordinance.
- (3) The Board shall appoint the Chairperson of the Management Committee who shall chair all meetings or in his or her absence, such member as the other members present may select, shall preside and act as the Chairperson

of the committee;

- (4) There term of office shall be 2 years;

8. Powers to establish Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas.

- (1) The Minister may, in consultation with the Board make regulations which shall be published in the Solomon Islands Gazette and exhibited at the office of the Provincial Government of Western Province establishing areas within Western Province to be Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas.
- (2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, such Regulations may –
 - (a) regulate the management of natural resources within any Marine Conservation and Resource Management areas;
 - (b) prescribe the forms and contents of any application, certificate, license or authority required by this Ordinance;
 - (c) prescribe fees and matters relating to fees; and
 - (d) prescribe, provide for or regulate any other matter which may be necessary to effectively carry out this Ordinance.
- (3) The Minister may, upon receipt of recommendations of the Board suspend any Marine Conservation and Resource Management Area and direct investigations forthwith as to ascertain whether the suspension is warranted or not;
- (4) Having satisfied with the report, the Minister may either confirm or lift such suspension as he considers fit and proper;

9. Suspension and Termination of Members

- (1) The Board shall have the power to:
 - (a) suspend or
 - (b) terminateany member who by his or her own act contravenes this Ordinance or Regulations;
- (2) The suspension or termination of

9. Declaration of Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas

- (1) The Board may, in consultation with the Minister declare approved Marine Conservation Areas within Western Province.

10. Authorised Officers

- (1) All fisheries, police and customs officers whether members of the Public Service seconded to the Western Province or direct Provincial employees shall be authorised officers of the Marine Conservation and Resource Management areas in Western Province but only on working related situations;
- (2) In addition, the Board may appoint any other persons as Marine Conservation and Resource Management Area Rangers of a particular Conservation and Resource Management area in Western Province as stipulated in Schedule 3 of this Ordinance;
- (3) The Management Committee of a Marine Conservation and Resource Management Area shall issue identification cards to such persons whilst in the execution of their duties and responsibilities;
- (4) A Marine Conservation and Resource Management ranger shall, at all reasonable hours wear an identification card evidencing his authority over a conservation area;
- (5) In the event where a Conservation and Resource Management ranger fails to produce or exhibit an identification card, and for the avoidance of doubt, the Management Committee shall be informed without delay;
- (6) Conservation and Resource Management rangers shall be responsible for the protection and management of such protected areas;

11. Prohibited Fishing Methods

- (1) Any person who-
 - (a) permits to be used, uses or attempts to use any explosives or any poison or other noxious substance, for the purpose of killing, stunning, disabling or catching fish or any living creatures or in any way causing damage or destructions to such fish or living creatures within the conservation and resource management areas;
 - (b) carries or has in his possession or control any explosive, poison or any other noxious substance in circumstances which raise a reasonable presumption that such explosive, poison or other noxious substance is intended to be used for any of the aforesaid purposes,

shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of One Thousand Dollars or to imprisonment for nine months or both such fine and such imprisonment.

(2) Any person who, knowingly or having reasonable cause to believe that any fish has been taken in contravention of the provisions of this section, without lawful cause, receives or is found in possession of such fish or other marine products and shall be guilty of an offence and liable-

(a) Where the circumstances of such receipt or possession raise a reasonable presumption that the fish or marine products are intended for the purpose of sale, or profit to a fine of One Thousand Dollars or to imprisonment for nine months or to both such fine and such imprisonment; or

(b) Where no such presumption arises, to a fine of Five Hundred Dollars or to imprisonment for six months or to both such fine and such imprisonment,

12. Powers of Authorised Officers and Rangers.

For the purposes of ascertaining whether there is or has been any contravention of the provisions of this Ordinance or Regulations made hereunder, any authorized officer or Marine Conservation and Resource Management ranger may:

- (1) at all reasonable hours enter any establishment and premises, other than a premises used exclusively as a dwelling house;
- (2) stop, board and search any foreign or local vessel or canoe within the waters of the Western Province;
- (3) stop and search any vehicle transporting or reasonably suspected of transporting any terrestrial, wildlife or marine resources taken from a Conservation and Resource Management area;
- (4) make such examination and inquiry as may appear necessary to him concerning any premises, establishment, vessel or vehicle in relation to which any of the powers conferred by this section have been or may be exercised and take samples of any terrestrial, wildlife or marine resource found therein;
- (5) require any person to produce his permit or his authority if it appears to the ranger that such person is doing any act for which a permit or other authority is required under this Ordinance and take copies of such permit or other authority.

13. Powers of Authorised Officers and Rangers without a warrant

- (1) Where an authorised officer or a Marine Conservation and Resource Management ranger has reasonable grounds for believing that an offence against the provisions of this Ordinance or Regulations made hereunder has been committed, he may without a warrant:
 - (a) stop, board, search any local or foreign vessel, canoe or vehicle which he believes has been used in the commission of that offence or in relation to which he believes such offence has been committed;
 - (b) search the packages belonging to any person, whether in their personal possession or found within any premises, vehicle, vessel or canoe;
 - (c) arrest any person whom he believes has committed such an offence, and if the authorized officer making such arrest is not a police officer, he shall without unnecessary delay, hand over such person to a police officer or in the absence of a police officer, shall take such person to the nearest police station;
 - (d) seize any equipment, gear, explosive, poison or other noxious substance which he believes has been used, carried, possessed or controlled in the commission of such offence;
 - (e) seize any species of terrestrial, wildlife or marine resource, or product thereof, which he believes to have been taken in contravention of this Ordinance or any regulations made hereunder.
- (2) The authorised officer or ranger who seizes anything under subsection (1) shall produce receipt or receipts to the person from whom the seizure is made.
- (3) Anything seized under subsection (1) (d) may be detained pending the outcome of any legal proceedings under this Ordinance or any regulations made hereunder.
- (4) Any species of terrestrial, wildlife or marine resource, or product thereof, seized under subsection (1) (e) may be returned to its natural habitat forthwith where that is considered by the authorized officer to be necessary for its survival, or may otherwise be detained pending the outcome of any legal proceedings under this Ordinance.

14. No liability of Authorised Officer or Ranger

No authorised officer or Conservation and Resource Management ranger shall be personally liable in respect of any act done or omitted by him in good faith in the execution or purported execution of his powers and duties under this Ordinance or any regulations made hereunder.

15. Prohibition of Arms

- (1) No person shall in a Marine Conservation and Resource Management Area be in possession of any arms other than such as may be authorized by a permit issued in accordance with any regulations made under powers contained in this Ordinance.
- (2) Subsection (1) shall not apply to a member of the Government Armed Forces or Police who carries arms in a Marine Conservation and Resource management Area upon a duty which involves the carrying of arms.
- (3) Notwithstanding the preceding subsections, the carrying of arms by Government Armed Forces or Police shall be work related at that material time, otherwise the carrying of arms is not permitted.

16. Willful Obstruction

- (1) Any person who willfully obstructs, assaults or threatens or obstructs, assaults or threatens with violence an authorized officer or a

Conservation and Resource Management ranger in the execution of his

duties shall be guilty of an offence and liable upon conviction to-

- (a) a fine not exceeding One Thousand Dollars or imprisonment for up to nine months or both such fine and imprisonment.
- (b) pay reasonable compensation to the victim as the court may see fit.

17. Failure to comply with enquiry

Any person who fails to comply with any lawful enquiry made by any authorised officer or the ranger under this Ordinance, shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding One Thousand Dollars or imprisonment for up to nine months.

18. Destroying of evidence

Any person who unlawfully destroys any species or product thereof, or any equipment, gear, explosive, poison, noxious substance or any other thing whatsoever with the intent to avoid the seizure of the said substance or thing, or the detection of any offence shall be liable to a fine of not exceeding One Thousand Dollars, or imprisonment for up to nine months or both such fine and imprisonment.

19. Penalties

Any person who contravenes the provisions of section 13 of this Ordinance or the Regulations made hereunder shall be guilty of an offence and liable to penalties as follows:

- (1) Where the offence was not committed for commercial gain the person committing the offence shall be liable to a fine not exceeding One Thousand Dollars or imprisonment for one year or both such fine and imprisonment;
- (2) Where the offence was committed for commercial gain, the person committing the offence shall be liable to a fine not exceeding Two Thousand Dollars or imprisonment for up to two years imprisonment or both such fine and imprisonment.

20. Power of Forfeiture

Where any person is convicted of an offence under this Ordinance or any regulations made hereunder, the court shall, in addition to any other penalty it may impose, order that any species, product thereof, equipment, gear or other substance used in the commission of such offence or in respect of which such offence has been committed, or the proceeds of sale of such species or product thereof or equipment, gear or other substance used in the commission of such offence, shall be forfeited and shall be sold or disposed of in such manner as the Court may direct; and the proceeds of any such sale as is ordered by the Court shall be paid to the Management Committee of the Conservation and Resource Management area which the offence has been committed or as the Court may think fit.

21 Power to make Regulations

The Minister may make Regulations in support of this Ordinance in circumstances and to the extent that will promote, improve, manage and protect the activities within the meaning of this Ordinance.

SCHEDULE 1

FORM 1

**NEGOTIATION TO ESTABLISH MARINE CONSERVATION AND
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREA.**

[Negotiation section 3]

1. Name of Negotiating Party:

2. Address:

3. Name of landowner or tribe or registered owner:
(delete what is not applicable)

4. Address: _____

5. Briefly state the purpose of the negotiation:

6. State resolution(s) reached by parties:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Names of persons attending [with their titles or occupations].
(For purpose of gender balance, please identify whether you are a female or male. Use a separate sheet and all persons attending must sign).
8. This document reflects the true negotiating processes by parties involved and further affix our signatures hereunder:

A. Signature: _____
Negotiating Party

B. Signature: _____
Property Owner

DATED THIS DAY OF 20

SCHEDULE 2

FORM 2

APPOINTMENT OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE *[Management Committee- section7]*

TO: _____

Address: _____

The Board of Western Province Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas at its meeting on _____ day of _____ 20____ duly appointed you to be a member of the Management Committee of the Western Province Marine Conservation and Resource Management areas.

Your term of appointment is for two (2) years commencing on the date of this Notice of Appointment.

CHAIRMAN _____)
Board of Western Province Marine Conservation and _____)
Resource Management Areas. _____)

SECRETARY _____)
Board of Western Province Marine Conservation and _____)
Resource Management Areas _____)

DATED THIS DAY OF 20

I, _____ **HEREBY** accept the offer with strict compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance and the Code of Conduct stated hereto.

Signature of Appointed Member of)
Management Committee _____) _____

DATED THIS DAY OF 20

(Duplicate to be returned to the Secretary of the Board)

SCHEDULE 3

FORM 3

APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT RANGERS

[Conservation and Resource Management Rangers –section 9(2)]

TO: _____

Address: _____

The Board of Western Province Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas at its meeting on day of 20 duly appointed you to be a Conservation Ranger of the Western Province Marine Conservation and Resource Management area namely _____ .

Your term of appointment is two years commencing on the date of this Notice of Appointment.

CHAIRMAN)
Board of Western Province Marine Conservation and)
Resource Management Areas.)

SECRETARY)
Board of Western Province Marine Conservation and)
Resource Management Areas)

DATED THIS DAY OF 20

I, **HEREBY** accept the offer with strict compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance and the Code of Conduct stated hereto.

Signature of Appointed Conservation and Resource Management Ranger:

DATED THIS DAY OF 20
(Duplicate to be returned to the Secretary of the Board)

SCHEDULE 4
CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Intention of Code of Conduct

- (1) This Code of Conduct is created for better Management and for better Administration of this Ordinance and for maintenance and enhancement of public interest and confidence in the integrity of Western Province Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas as well as raising the standard of performance herein.
- (2) In compliance with this Code, members agree to -
 - (a) build creative and trusting working relationship with members of the public;
 - (b) perform their duties and responsibilities diligently;
 - (c) respect and foster basic human rights and the laws of the land;
 - (d) avoid creating disputes or other social problems within the Western Province Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas;
 - (e) discourage discrimination;
 - (f) maintain a high degree of discipline and self-reliance.
- (3) Any member who is -
 - (a) incompetence to perform duties;
 - (b) convicted of a criminal offence warranting imprisonment of more than six

(6) months;

- (c) abusing or misusing the property or funds of Western Province Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas;
- (c) acting against the purpose or interest of Western Province Marine Conservation and Resource Management Areas or
- (d) committing other wrongful acts both criminal or civil;

shall be dealt with by the Board in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 5 of this Ordinance.

SCHEDULE 5

SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS AND MEMBERS.

1. The Board may by two-third majority vote of the full Board suspend or terminate any officer or member who is found breaching the Code of Conduct as stated in Schedule 4 and the provisions of this Ordinance.
2. Subject to this Ordinance, member means landowner or landowning group or a tribe or an owner of a registered land, an authorised officer, conservation ranger, member of the Management Committee and/or member of the Board.
3. Any person described under paragraph 2 of this Schedule is found guilty for committing a wrongful act, the following procedures shall apply-
 - (a) a fourteen (14) day written notice of the determined suspension or termination be served on the member setting out the reasons for such suspension or termination;
 - (b) the member be allowed to respond within seven (7) days to the allegations or file a defence, stating his reasons why he should not be suspended or terminated.
 - (c) upon receipt of the written response, the Chairman of the Board shall give notice within seven (7) days from the date the response or defence is

received to convene a meeting to finally decide on the matter.

- (4) The decision of the Board is final, however, any person aggrieved by such a decision by the Board may take up his or her case to a tribunal of his or her choice.

Enacted by the Western Provincial Assembly this day of 2010

.....
Eric Kikolo,
Clerk to the Assembly

Assented to by the Minister of Provincial Government this day of 2010

.....
Minister of Provincial Government