



Solomon Islands Submarine Cable Company Limited

# Solomon Islands Submarine Cable Project

Social Impact Assessment

August 2018

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The Solomon Islands Submarine Cable Company (SISCC) is managing the installation of a new submarine telecommunications cable which includes both an international connection between the Solomon Islands and Australia and domestic cable connections between various islands within the Solomon Islands. The international cable system is referred to as the Coral Sea Cable System (CS2). The element of the CS2 that occurs within the Solomon Islands Economic Exclusion Zone (EEZ), inclusive of the international branch into the Solomon Islands and the internal domestic connections, is herein referred to as the Solomon Islands International and Domestic Network (SIIDN).

The installation of submarine telecommunications cables in the Solomon Islands has been under consideration for the last eight years and was previously managed by the Solomon's Oceanic Cable Company (SOCC). Under the management of SOCC the cable installation was subject to two related Initial Environmental Examinations (ADB 2012 and ADB 2014) submitted to the Asian Development Bank in support of the proposed development application processes. Since then, the project has evolved; and now provides opportunity for connection into Papua New Guinea. The CS2, an international cable, will traverse from Sydney into the Coral Sea, where it will branch with one section landing at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea and the other section landing at Honiara, Solomon Islands.

The SIIDN cable installation, managed by the SISCC, is co-funded by the Solomon Islands and Australian Governments and the overall delivery of the cable installation is currently being supervised by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The SISCC is responsible for delivery of works within the Solomon Islands EEZ, inclusive of seeking all relevant permits and managing construction and operational works.

## 1.2 Purpose of this report

The SISCC is seeking decision on need for, and if required, issue of development consent for the SIIDN Project. An environmental impact assessment (EIA) is required as part of the development consent approval (DA) in accordance with S17(1) of the *Environment Act (1998)* (EAct) & Regulation 6 of the Environment Regulations 2008.

The proposed works are considered to be prescribed development of low risk to the environment and as such an EIA through a PER is to be completed in accordance with the Solomon Islands Government EIA Procedural Guidelines, 2010, as illustrated by the flow chart in Figure 1-3.

SIIDNSIIDNSIIDNSISCC engaged GHD to prepare the PER, this Social Impact Assessment (SIA) has been undertaken as a component of the environmental approvals process as well as to comply with the environmental and social safeguard policy of DFAT funded projects.

This SIA verifies the applicability of social safeguards for the project, addresses them as needed and consolidates them with other broader social issues/impacts. The SIA has also provided the opportunity to refine project design and site locations in order to avoid or minimise any social impacts.

## 1.3 Structure of this report

This SIA report presents the results of the social assessment that was undertaken for this project for during May to August 2018. The content of the SIA report is as follows:

- Section 1 Introduction - Defines the purpose and scope of the SIA.
- Section 2 Project Overview – A description of the submarine cable project, including information about the construction and operation of the cable.
- Section 3 SIA Methodology -An overview of the research methods that were deployed to conduct the research and reporting for this SIA. It also includes a review of the policy, legal and administrative framework that may have an influence on social assessments in the Solomon Islands. Consideration has been given to the safeguard policies of DFAT and relevant legislation.
- Section 4 Social Baseline - Sets the social context for each of the four land-based project sites by describing relevant social attributes of the communities or property owners located along the cable route.
- Section 5 Social Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures - Identifies, categorises, describes and assesses the social impacts of the Project. It provides a significance rating for each of the Project impacts and suggests mitigation measures to minimise or avoid the social impacts on the property owners and surrounding communities.
- Section 6 Social Impact Management and Monitoring - Summarises the project's social impacts and proposed mitigation measures, consolidates the various mitigation measures into implementable management strategies and provides an institutional framework to implement the proposed management strategies.
- Section 7 Conclusion – An overview of the findings and recommendations of the SIA.

#### 1.4 Scope and limitations

This report: has been prepared by GHD for Solomon Island Submarine Cable Company Limited and may only be used and relied on by Solomon Island Submarine Cable Company Limited for the purpose agreed between GHD and the Solomon Island Submarine Cable Company Limited as set out in section 1.1 and 3 of this report.

GHD otherwise disclaims responsibility to any person other than Solomon Island Submarine Cable Company Limited arising in connection with this report. GHD also excludes implied warranties and conditions, to the extent legally permissible.

The services undertaken by GHD in connection with preparing this report were limited to those specifically detailed in the report and are subject to the scope limitations set out in the report.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this report are based on conditions encountered and information reviewed at the date of preparation of the report. GHD has no responsibility or obligation to update this report to account for events or changes occurring subsequent to the date that the report was prepared.

GHD has prepared this report on the basis of information provided by Solomon Island Submarine Cable Company Limited and others who provided information to GHD (including Government authorities)], which GHD has not independently verified or checked beyond the agreed scope of work. GHD does not accept liability in connection with such unverified information, including errors and omissions in the report which were caused by errors or omissions in that information.

The following limitations apply to this report:

All attempts have been made to research the most current and valid data and information for the social baseline. The most recent national population census was undertaken in 2009, which reports on data across the country and for each Province. Other more recent population data and reports are available at the national level, however more recent provincial and town/village

data is not consistently available. The data has therefore been supplemented with information gathered from the stakeholder consultations and observations made by the SIA team during the field visit in May 2018.

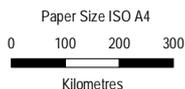
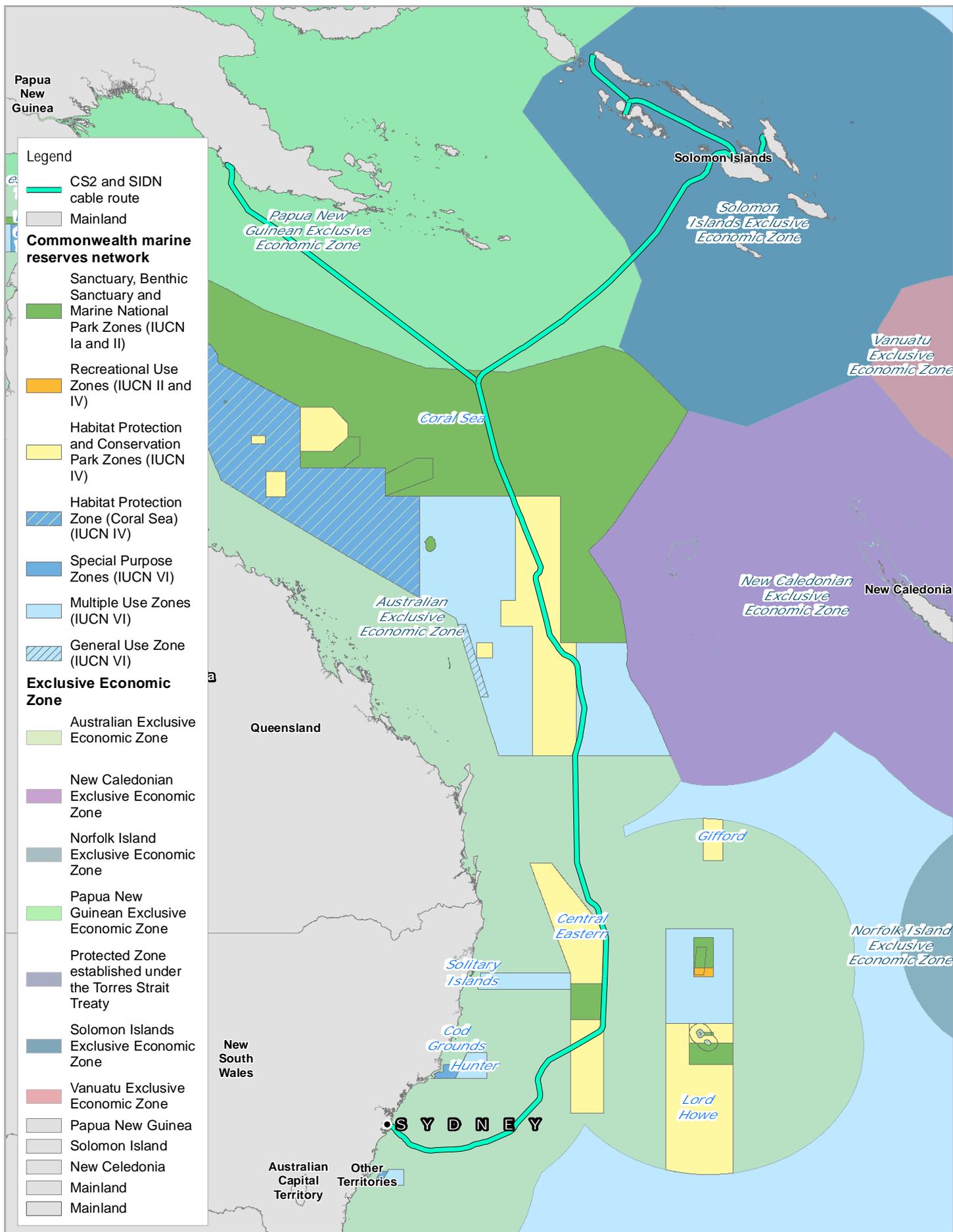
## 2. Project overview

The SIIDN project will entail the CS2 international connection into Honiara and three domestic cable connections within the Solomon Islands EEZ. These three domestic cables will connect Honiara with the outlying provincial centers of Taro Island (in Choiseul Province), Noro (in Western Province) and Auki (in Malaita Province). The proposed CS2 and SIIDN cable routes are shown in Figure 2-1 and Figure 2-2.

Marine works will include installation of the submarine cable along the seabed, through the intertidal areas up to the terrestrial landing points. The land based components will include the on-shore landing point, land cable duct route from the landing point to a cable landing station (CLS).

A number of technical studies have been undertaken to support the development of the project and have informed the preparation of this Public Environment Report (PER) and the associated Social Impact Assessment (SIA). Key studies include:

- Alcatel, 2018, Coral Sea Cable System (CS2) Site Survey Reports, Site: Solomon Islands Domestic
- Fugro Australia Marine Pty Ltd (2018a), Desktop Study for the Coral Sea Cable System, Volume 5: Solomon Islands Permitting Issues, Fugro Document No: GPH116414-05 (Appendix A)
- Fugro Australia Marine Pty Ltd (2018b), Desktop Study for the Coral Sea Cable System, Volume 4: Solomon Islands Landings, Fugro Document No: GPH116414-04 (Appendix B)
- Jacobs (2018), Coral Sea Cable Installation Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act - Section 160 Supporting Information Document, Document No: IW175400-0000-NP-RPT-001 | F (Appendix C)
- SISCC (2018), Summary Business Case for Investment Coral Sea Cable System (CS2) and Solomon Islands Domestic System (Appendix D)
- SISCC (2016), SISCC Business Plan 2016-2036 (Appendix E).



Horizontal Datum: WGS 1984  
Grid: GCS WGS 1984

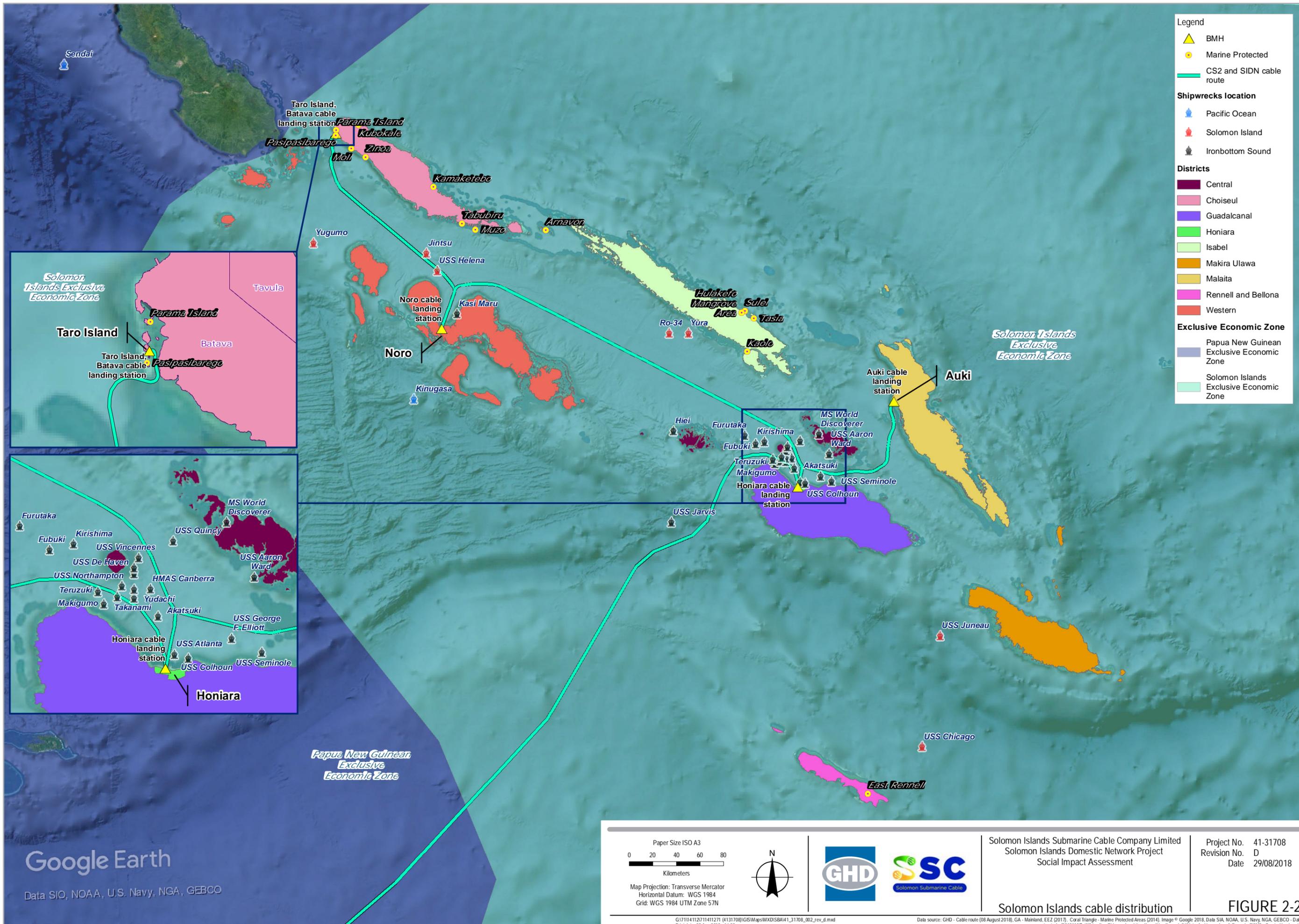


Solomon Islands Submarine Cable Company Limited  
Solomon Islands Domestic Network Project  
Social Impact Assessment

Project No. 41-31708  
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Overview of Coral Sea Cable Route

FIGURE 2-1



Solomon Islands cable distribution **FIGURE 2-2**

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 Print date: 29 Aug 2018 - 16:23  
 Data source: GHD - Cable route (08 August 2018), GA - Mainland, EEZ (2017), Coral Triangle - Marine Protected Areas (2014), Image © Google 2018, Data SIA, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO - Date extracted (20181107), Wikipedia - Shipwrecks - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\_of\_shipwrecks\_of\_Oceania (2018). Created by: jzmalic

# 3. Methodology

## 3.1 Approach to the SIA

The approach for this SIA was developed based on the following factors:

- Relevant policies and regulations in the Solomon Islands
- Addressing the requirements of DFAT's *Environmental and social safeguard policy for the aid program* (2018) to identify, assess and minimise impacts of the project on indigenous people; children, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups; and minimise displacement and resettlement as a result of the project
- Coupled with the DFAT Safeguards the SIA process was also driven by best practice in social impact assessment, particularly the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) (2003, 2015)

## 3.2 Overview of the SIA Methodology

This section provides an overview of the SIA methodology. The following steps were undertaken to develop the SIA:

### 3.2.1 Project Background and Scoping

This step involved developing an understanding of the project, understanding DFAT's environmental and social safeguards policy and its requirements. Steps taken also defined the project study area, identified relevant stakeholders, developed the SIA methodology, conducted an initial scoping of social issues that might be triggered by a project of this nature and developed an outline structure of the SIA report. A preliminary scoping of impacts was undertaken to gain an understanding of the potential social issues that may be relevant to the project. Key information sources used to identify potential community/stakeholder issues included:

- Review of the various technical studies undertaken for the project including the 2012 SIA undertaken for the project under SOCC
- Identification and review of other similar project impact assessment reports and other relevant documents for projects in the area to provide an understanding of the Project study area
- Meetings with project staff and other technical specialists working on the project

### 3.2.2 Defining the Study Area (Local, Provincial and National)

Given the very limited physical footprint of the project on land, and the relatively low impact nature of submarine cable installation in deep sea and near shore areas, the SIA was focused largely at the local area. The study area was defined by the villages or towns and immediate areas surrounding the land based components of the cable including the cable landing point, beach manhole (BMH), the cable ducts to be installed and where they connect to cable landing stations. These local areas include:

- Honiara – the private properties and roads intersected by the cable route
- Noro – the government easement land and road intersected by the cable route
- Auki – the customary land, roads, village and areas in Auki town intersected by the cable route

- Taro – a small beach, small pathway intersected by the cable route and property adjacent to TeleKom land

Secondary zones of influence in regard to project construction and operation are not anticipated. Provincial information (where available) has been drawn upon to contextualise the limited information available at the local level.

### 3.2.3 Site Visits

Site visits and meaningful consultations with stakeholders were a crucial part of the SIA. The site visits involved preparations based on the previous site selection reports, observations, detailed discussions with the Solomon Telekom staff, who were familiar with the project sites and consultations with key informants present at the sites. This provided opportunity to record existing conditions at the sites and understand any anticipated project impacts on each site and its surroundings.

The SIA team undertook site visits in conjunction with the stakeholder consultations in May 2018 (task 3.2.4 below). This included walking the cable route in each location to understand the surrounding environmental and social context.

### 3.2.4 Meaningful Consultations with Stakeholders

The following stakeholder meetings were undertaken:

- Meetings with the project team to understand the project locations, construction methodology and operations
- Meetings with national government officials, and provincial and town government officers at each site
- Meetings with private landowners, customary landowners, community members, key stakeholders and directly affected residents as relevant at each site
- Informal discussions with general community members and key informants at each site

The stakeholder engagement activities focussed on gathering information to develop a social baseline, identifying social impacts, discussing the potential significance of impacts and determining potential mitigation measures.

A list of stakeholders consulted for the SIA is provided below:

- SISCC
- Ministry of Fisheries
- Provincial government representatives at Auki, Noro and Taro
- Aisisiki Group Leader and Landowner Auki Site
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education
- Solomon Islands National Statistics Office
- Community members and key informants at each site

### 3.2.5 Social Baseline

The purpose of the social baseline is to provide an understanding of the existing social and cultural conditions and characteristics of the communities identified in the study area. Desktop

research, stakeholder consultations and site visits were carried out to gain an understanding of the social characteristics of the study area.

### 3.2.6 Social Impact Identification and Assessment

A social impact identification and assessment process was carried out for both the construction and operation phases of the project. Impact identification and assessment was based on information from multiple sources. A description of the likely social impacts was prepared based on the empirical information collected during site visits and consultation activities. The social impacts were then assessed based on the criteria described in section 5.2.

### 3.2.7 Social Impact Management Recommendations

Based on an assessment of the potential social impacts, mitigation measures were developed to minimise the identified potential social impacts.

## 3.3 Regulatory and Legislative Framework for the SIA

The SIA is bound by two sets of requirements, the DFAT environmental and social safeguard policy, and the legislative framework in the Solomon Islands. The governing framework for this SIA is briefly described below:

### 3.3.1 DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy, 2018

DFAT's Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy for the Aid Program 2018 (DFAT, 2018) outlines DFAT's approach to managing the environmental and social impacts of Australian aid investments. The key social aspects relevant to this Project include:

- **Children, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups** – this safeguard recognises that poorly planned projects can have an adverse impact on children, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, and therefore seeks to avoid these by ensuring their development needs are considered in impact assessment and management plans.
- **Displacement and resettlement** - The objective of this safeguard is to avoid or minimise involuntary physical or economic displacement of people or their livelihoods through effective planning and assessment in the preparatory stages of a project, and through its own investigations and monitoring. It includes displacement due to involuntary acquisition of land or restrictions on land use and access for proposed development.
- **Indigenous peoples** – the objective of the indigenous people safeguard is to ensure development projects respect the dignity, human rights, aspiration, cultures and customary livelihoods of indigenous peoples. Potential impacts on indigenous peoples should be fully understood and assessed in an environmental and social management plan, or an indigenous peoples plan, and consultation should be undertaken with indigenous peoples to ensure they are engaged, supported and enabled to benefit from the project in culturally appropriate ways.

The following policy principles are considered relevant and addressed as shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy, 2018 as relevant to the SIA

DFAT Principles	Relevance
<p><b>Principle 1: Do no harm</b></p> <p>Seek to protect the rights, health, safety, and livelihoods of people including children, women, indigenous people, and other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. Maintain the health, diversity and productivity of the environment.</p>	<p>Social risks and impacts associated with health, safety and livelihoods of the surrounding community have been identified and described in SIA section 5 and measures to address these risks and impacts are provided in SIA section 6.</p>
<p><b>Principle 2: Identify, access and manage environmental and social impacts</b></p> <p>Identify potential environmental and social risks in the early stages to allow for avoidance, or where avoidance is not possible, minimise, mitigate or offset. Assess and manage direct and indirect environmental and social impacts through management plans and monitor and report on their delivery.</p>	<p>Social risks were identified early on in the process through site inspections and suitable design changes have been incorporated to avoid and minimise social impacts. A full description and assessment of impacts is provided in SIA section 5 and impact mitigation measures are provided in section 6.</p>
<p><b>Principle 3: Engage effectively with stakeholders</b></p> <p>Provide affected people with access to information about the investment, its risks and potential social and environmental impacts. Engage with affected parties and other stakeholders early and ensure consultations include directly and indirectly affected parties. Provide accessible and culturally appropriate grievance redress mechanisms and ensure they are handled promptly, transparently and without retribution or cost to the party that raised the concern.</p>	<p>SISCC and GHD teams undertook stakeholder consultation as part of the preparation of this SIA and the Public Environment Report (PER). In addition SISCC has been involved in ongoing stakeholder consultation with stakeholders and will continue to do so through the planning and delivery of the project (SIA sections 3.2.4, 6.3.2, 6.3.4)</p>
<p><b>Principle 4: Work effectively with partners</b></p> <p>Comply with partner country safeguard laws and policies and where possible build partners' capacity to develop and implement environmental and social governance systems. Work with partners to manage safeguard risks in a way that maximises the use of country systems and avoids imposing duplicate or unnecessary safeguard assessment and management planning requirements.</p>	<p>SIA section 3.3.3 provides a list of legislation in Solomon Islands that is relevant to social issues, which are mainly related to land access. They are addressed in this SIA in sections 5.4 and 6.3.</p>

DFAT Principles	Relevance
<p><b>Principle 5: Promote improved environmental and social outcomes</b></p> <p>Where possible, promote improved environmental and social outcomes by integrating ecologically sustainable development into aid investments. Improve the implementation and outcomes of aid investments by effectively identifying and managing environmental and social risks.</p>	<p>Social benefits from the project are outlined in this SIA under section 5.3 and improved outcomes through management and mitigation of social impacts are presented in SIA section 6.</p>

### 3.3.2 DFAT Child Protection Policy 2017

DFAT's Child Protection Policy 2017, has also been considered in the development of this Project. It is understood that the principles based Child Protection Policy (2017) is more relevant to organisations and projects with work with children or have the potential to engage with children. Given the nature of the SISCC project in the Solomon Islands, the following policy principle are considered relevant and addressed as shown in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2 DFAT Child Protection Policy, 2017 as relevant to the SIA

DFAT Policy Principles	Relevance
<p><b>Principle 1: Zero tolerance of child exploitation and abuse</b></p> <p>DFAT has a zero tolerance approach to child exploitation and abuse. DFAT works to minimise the risks of child exploitation and abuse and trains its staff and partners on their obligations under this policy.</p>	<p>This principle is considered within the workforce policy for the project. SISCC and its contractors will not engage child labour for any construction and operations work.</p>
<p><b>Principle 2: Assess and manage child protection risk and impact.</b></p> <p>Careful management to identify, mitigate, manage or reduce risks to children that may be associated with DFAT functions and programs.</p>	<p>Safety risks to children and others around construction sites are considered in the construction safety management for the project.</p>
<p><b>Principle 3: Sharing responsibility for child protection</b></p> <p>Commitment, support and cooperation of partner organisations and individuals who help deliver programs administered by DFAT.</p>	<p>SISCC through its terms and conditions to engage cable construction contractors, will ensure the responsibility of child protection is share by all parties involved in delivering the project.</p>
<p><b>Principle 4: Procedural fairness</b></p> <p>DFAT will apply procedural fairness when making decisions that affect a person's rights or interests. DFAT's partners are expected to adhere to this principle when responding to concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse.</p>	<p>NA</p>

DFAT Policy Principles	Relevance
<p><b>Principle 5: Recognition of the best interests of the child</b></p> <p>Australia is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Committed to upholding the rights of the Child and Australia’s obligations under this convention. In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.</p>	As per response to Principles 1, 2, 3 above.

### 3.3.3 Legislative Requirements in Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands legislation does not require social assessment as such, and to date, no requirements for environmental assessment and approvals has been identified which may include social assessment. However, there is other legislation with relevance to some aspects of social impacts. These implications are primarily from the point of view of land access and rights of use and compensation. The relevant legislation is listed in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3 Solomon Islands legislation relevant to the SIA

Act	Relevance with Social Impacts
Telecommunications Act (2009)	Provides a framework for access, licensing and dispute resolution for telecommunications infrastructure and service providers.
Lands and Titles (1988)	Provides the legal framework for land access; defines “customary land” and sets out procedures for land acquisition, which is also described in the Telecommunications Act for the purpose of telecommunications service providers.
Fisheries (1998)	This act provides a framework for fisheries management including licensing of fishing vessels and processing plants, zoning of fishing area and prohibited areas and approval of fishing methods.

## 4. Social Baseline for the Study Area

### 4.1 Introduction

The following sections present a social description of the study area, drawing on existing data, and information collected during site visits during 21 May to 1 June 2018. Data availability for much of the areas is limited, however as the scope of the project and potential impacts in the areas proposed for development are also small scale, this information is considered adequate for this assessment.

### 4.2 National Context

The population of the Solomon Islands in 2018 was estimated to be 666,557 persons (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, n.d (a)). The annual national growth rate between 2009 and 2012 was 3.8% (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2015). Urbanization is low with 81% of the population living in rural areas. The average household size is estimated to be six persons, with over half of the population less than 20 years old (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2015).

People of the Solomon Islands are primarily Melanesian (95.7%), with minorities primarily from Polynesia (2.4%) and Micronesian (1.1%) (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2015). Solomon Islanders have close cultural ties to Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Land ownership and use are largely organized along tribal lines, and people maintain strong connections to their islands of origin (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office *et al.*, 2015).

The main religion in the Solomon Islands is Christianity, with a variety of denominations represented in the country. There are also many languages spoken, although English is the official language, and Pidgin is widely used (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office *et al.*, 2015).

In 2015 the Gross Domestic Product was \$1,075 USD, up from \$720 USD in 2010. In 2015 almost all the population were employed in either Services (49.5%) or Agriculture (48.1%), with the remaining 2.4% employed in Industry. This has changed since 2005 when 52.9% were employed in Agriculture and 45% in Services (United Nations Statistics Division, 2018).

The majority of Solomon Islanders depend on agriculture, fishing and forestry for their livelihoods. According to the Demographic and Health Survey 2015 (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office *et al.*, 2015), two thirds of the country's labour force is engaged in the primary industries sector, which consists of subsistence crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities, and fishing.

Important cash crops include copra and palm oil. In recent years, forests of the Solomon Islands have been overexploited, however the government continues to progress timber harvesting policies with the aim of reforming the industry so that it is sustainable. Other key industries include the resources and fisheries sectors, with a large tuna processing facility located in Noro (see section 4.4). Tourism, particularly diving, is also viewed as an important industry, however the growth of tourism is constrained by lack of infrastructure, including telecommunications, and transportation (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office *et al.*, 2015).

The Solomon Islands are made up of nine provinces, and the capital of Honiara, which together make up ten local government administrative areas. Malaita province has the largest population (27%), followed by Guadalcanal (18%), Western Province (15%) and Honiara (13%) (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009a).

About 12.7% of the Solomon Islands population live below the poverty line<sup>1</sup>. The prevalence of poverty varies considerably across the provinces, and is higher than the national average in Makira, Guadalcanal and Honiara. In Makira, almost 1/3 of the population is poor, and in Guadalcanal about one in five persons lives in poverty. Poverty rates in the other provinces (excluding Honiara) are in the 7-10% range, but Honiara's poverty rate of 15% is also higher than the national average despite the nominal higher incomes in Honiara. This is due to the higher cost of living in the capital than the rest of the country, therefore the risk of someone living in poverty is higher. Despite this, rural households are more likely to be poor compared to urban households, with about 87% of the poor living in rural areas (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, n.d.(b)).

Residents of the provincial centers, where government services, businesses and paid jobs cluster, do better on average in regard to income. However they also live with the unreliable services, transport and power present in often stagnant small economies (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2006).

Physical infrastructure in the Solomon Islands is limited outside of Honiara. Slightly less than half of all households in the country have access to electricity, with most of these in urban areas. In 2015, the main sources of lighting for households were electricity (45%) and solar (40%). In rural areas, the main source of drinking water is community standpipes (45% of households), followed by river/spring (25%), household tank (13%) and community tanks (11%). In urban areas, 57% of households are supplied by metered pipes, followed by household tanks (16%), with the remainder of households (27%) supplied by other sources (e.g. river/spring, community tank (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2015).

Electricity supply in the Solomon Islands is only available to about 12% of the population, with most of these in Honiara and provincial centers (52% of urban households and 4% of rural households in 2009). Most households (75% across the country) use kerosene lamps for lighting (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009a).

As an island nation, many Solomon Islanders rely heavily on transport by boat. Outside of the main urban centres, the road network is limited. Domestic flights also connect the provincial centres to Honiara.

The Solomon Islands has achieved a comparatively low level of social development, ranking 156 out of 188 countries and territories in 2015. The 2015 UN Human Development Index (HDI) Score for the Solomon Islands is above the average for countries in the low human development group, but below the average for countries in East Asia and the Pacific. Countries which are close to the Solomon Islands in size and HDI rank are Kiribati and Vanuatu. There has been an improvement across several indicators of human development in the Solomon Islands over the past 15 years, including life expectancy and expected years of schooling (United Nations Development Programme, 2016).

The 2012/13 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) indicates that 38% of the population were currently attending school, 47% had already left school, and 15% had never attended school. There is a higher occurrence of females who had never attended school in rural areas. Some of the barriers to school attendance were identified as lack of parental support, and travel distance, and reasons for not completing schooling included school being too expensive. Of those who had completed school, 54% had completed primary education, 22% junior secondary, 14% senior secondary, and 9% completed higher education/training. Completion of further studies is higher in urban areas (22%) compared to rural areas (4%) (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2015).

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<sup>1</sup> A Solomon Island-specific "poverty line" is specified as the minimum expenditures needed to obtain basic food and non-food goods taking into account prevailing consumption patterns in the country (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, n.d. (b))

### 4.3 Social Profile of Honiara

As the capital of the Solomon Islands, Honiara serves as the main administrative, educational and economic centre for the country. The main economic activities in Honiara are in the services sector, including wholesaling, retailing, banking, restaurant and hotel related businesses (UN Habitat, 2012).

The population of Honiara in 2018 was estimated to be 86,529 persons (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, n.d (a)). This is equivalent to approximately 13% of the total population of the country. The age profile of Honiara is very different to other provinces. Although the high proportion of young people is similar to other provinces, there is a larger proportion of 15 to 30 year olds, which reflects the in-migration of people from other provinces for employment and education opportunities in the capital (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009b).

Approximately 35% of Honiara residents live in informal settlements. Basic urban services (water, power, garbage collection) vary between formal and informal settlements, with the informal settlements usually lacking adequate services. The growth of informal settlements in Honiara can be attributed to several factors including population growth, increasing rural-urban migration, lack of affordable housing, and lack of developable land for low and middle income earners (UN Habitat, 2012).

Connection to infrastructure and basic services is much higher in Honiara than the national average; two thirds of Honiara households are connected to the electricity main grid compared to the average of 12% across the country (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009a and b).

The informal sector provides job opportunities for people without a formal education and is a vital link between the rural and urban economies, with the marketing of food products and handicrafts (UN Habitat, 2012).

Honiara has an international and a domestic airport, a seaport, and public transport includes buses, taxis and pick-up trucks and a number of accommodation facilities. Telecommunications are delivered by several providers (Solomon Telekom, B-Mobile, Vodafone), and their mobile services have been extended throughout the islands and into rural villages via satellite and telecommunication towers (UN Habitat, 2012).

#### 4.3.1 Cable landing site

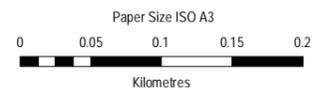
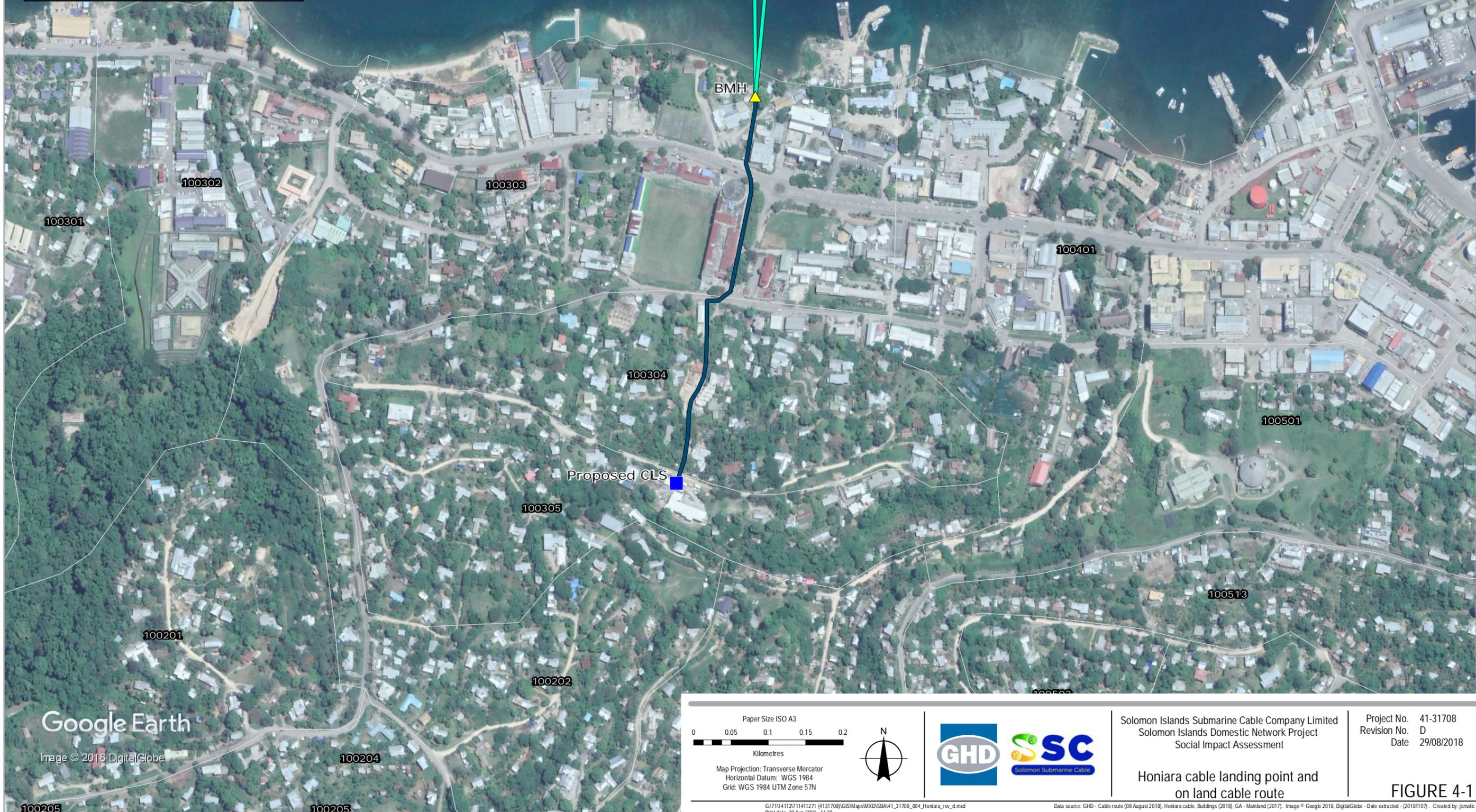
The proposed cable landing location will be positioned a few meters apart from the proposed BMH (located approximately at co-ordinates S09°25.747' / E159°56.993' [Alcatel, 2018]) on the Eastern side of the SMI site (the former G Club) opposite town ground in Point Cruz, Honiara.

The cable will be installed through a single articulated duct that could be pinned to the fringing reef, where required, and connected to a shore based BMH. The land based cable will run in a trench from the SMI site, across Tandai Highway around Townground and up the hill to Lengakiki Ridge. This route includes use of an easement over private property up the hill to avoid impact upon users of Hibiscus Avenue and Lengakiki Road during construction works. A CLS will be located on a site located on Lengakiki Ridge. The location of the landing site and the location of the proposed beach manhole (BMH) in Honiara is shown in Figure 4-1, Figure 4-2 and Figure 4-3.



**Legend**

- ▲ BMH
- Proposed CLS
- CS2 and SIDN cable route
- Enumeration



Map Projection: Transverse Mercator  
 Horizontal Datum: WGS 1984  
 Grid: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 57N



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Honiara cable landing point and  
 on land cable route

**FIGURE 4-1**

The SMI site includes several buildings, a sheltered seating area, small sports field, hard courts, a disused pool and gymnasium. Several of the buildings are used by the University of the South Pacific (USP) for Pacific TAFE courses. During the field visit, the team spoke to a USP student who was using the electricity and seating in the shelter to plug in her laptop and study. The student indicated this is common practice for USP students, and teachers from the campus also use the shelter for meetings. According to the student, there are classes at the campus every day of the week. The team also observed the hard courts being used for an event on a Saturday. Students travel to the campus by public buses, private cars, and by walking and access the campus via Mendana Avenue.

The property borders the beach to its north, Mendana Avenue to its south, on the other side of the eastern fence of the property are office buildings on a private property.

Mendana Avenue is the main road in Honiara, travelling parallel to the coastline. It is very busy during the day with many vehicles and pedestrians travelling along the road. Opposite the cable landing point there is a hotel and retail complex. During the SIA site visit, Mendana Road was being upgraded in several sections. Consultation and observations during the site visit indicated that Mendana Road becomes heavily congested during the mornings and evenings, particularly where road construction activities were occurring.



Figure 4-2 View of Honiara landing site looking towards the beach



Figure 4-3 Honiara cable route on land

Mendana Avenue is very busy, particularly in the morning and evening peak, with congestion observed each day during the SIA field visit. The main road, and the other streets the cable route will travel along and across in Honiara are well used by a large number of cars, trucks and pedestrians. The CLS site is surrounded by office and residential properties with a school on the other side of the ridge.

Throughout the Solomon Islands, fishing for subsistence/consumption or for cash is common, and although this area is not a regular fishing ground or launch point, local fishermen are very likely to informally and irregularly fish the beaches and waters where the cable will land.

#### 4.4 Social Profile of Noro

The population of Western Province in 2018 was estimated to be 95,579 persons (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, n.d(a)). This is equivalent to approximately 14.3% of the total population of the Solomon Islands.

The main urban centres in the Western Province are the capital of Gizo, Noro, Munda and Nusa/Roviana, with only 13% of the population classified as urban. Western province has a young age structure, with 41% of the population under 15 years of age, and a low proportion of adults aged 20 to 30 years, who are likely to migrate to Honiara or other urban centres for education and employment (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009c).

In 2009, access to electricity in Western Province was better than for many other areas of the Solomon Islands, with 12% of households connected to the electricity main grid which is consistent with the national average. While access to safe sanitation was lower in Western Province compared to the national average (44% of households do not have access to a toilet facility compared to 33% across the country), access was better than some provinces (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009a).

In Western Province, 55% of the average household's income could be attributed to the sale of fish, crops or handicrafts, which is higher than the national average of 44% (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009a). As in other parts of the country, subsistence fishing provides for a major component of local diets and a key cash product for households.

The cable will land in Noro, which is the main industrial centre in the province. Noro has grown rapidly over recent years, from 3,365 persons in 2009 to 6,054 in 2016. This has brought both

opportunities for economic development, as well as challenges associated with unemployment, squatting, and pressure on infrastructure and services (Noro Town Council, 2017).

Known as 'Tuna Town' in the Solomon Islands, Noro is home to the country's two biggest commercial fishing companies: Soltuna Fishing and Processing, and the National Fisheries Development. Together, the two companies employ 1,550 people, and the majority of workers are female (Noro Town Council, 2017). Many of the employees live in a village directly next to the cannery. Noro hosts the country's second international seaport, particularly busy for fishing vessels and timber shipments. There are several schools, shops and services, and a market located in Noro town.

Noro is connected to Munda by a well-maintained highway. A post office, Telekom office, bank, rural hospital, police post, schools and tourist accommodation all provide services in Munda. At the time of the SIA field visit in May 2018, Munda Airport had just undergone upgrade works and was about to start operation as an international airport. Further industrial growth is planned for Noro and expansion of the tourism industry is also proposed for Munda, which is a key destination for scuba divers.

#### 4.4.1 Cable landing site

The Noro beach landing site is located north-east of the Noro town centre. The proposed landing point for the cable will be positioned a few meters apart from the BMH (approximate coordinates S08°12.879' / E157°12.268' [Alcatel, 2018]) within a government easement located just outside the centre of Noro, the land located adjacent to Markworth area (Figure 4-4). Once landed, the cable will then proceed from the BMH through the easement, buried to approximately 1.5 m depth. This area is currently covered in dense vegetation (Figure 4-5) which will need to be cleared to support installation works.

Once the cable reaches Niep Road, it will be trenched in an alignment parallel to that road towards the CLS, located in the Solomon Telecom base station site off Niep Road, approximately 0.5 km from the landing site (Figure 4-6).

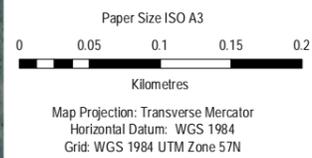


- Legend
-  BMH
  -  Proposed CLS
  -  CS2 and SIDN cable route
  -  Noro on land cable
  -  Enumeration



Google Earth

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Noro cable landing point and  
on land cable route

FIGURE 4-4

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Print date: 29 Aug 2018 - 16:21

Data source: GHD - Cable route (08 August 2018), Cable, Buildings (2018), GA - Mainland (2017), Image © Google 2018, DigitalGlobe - Date extracted - (20181107) - Created by: jmatic



Figure 4-5 View of the government easement looking towards the beach



Figure 4-6 Solomon Telekom station based site off Niep Road

At the time of the SIA site visit the government utility easement area was primarily vacant bush land that had recently been partially cleared (Refer to ), with three informal vegetable gardens located up the rise towards Niep Road with banana, cassava, potato and taro plantations (Figure 4-7). A breeding sow and piglets that belonged to the caretakers of the adjacent Markworth land were seen tethered to trees on the easement and in the Markworth site. Consultations with caretakers of the Markworth site and the caretakers of the site located to the east of the easement identified that the three informal gardens in the easement were planted by three families who lived in the village next to the cannery. During the SIA team visit to the village, heads of these three families were at work at the cannery and therefore unavailable to meet with the team. Consultation with the villagers identified that the heads of each of these three households had a job at the cannery and the produce from the gardens on the easement were mainly used for household consumption, and sometimes sold at the local markets.



Figure 4-7 Informal vegetable gardens on the easement

During the site visit, several people were observed walking from the west, through the Markworth land and the easement, with some fishing and collecting shellfish in the vicinity of the landing point. Many pedestrians and several cars were also observed using the Niep Road reserve during the site visit. Niep Road leads to a site that used to be a saw mill (Figure 4-8). Consultations with the Western Provincial Government office indicated that there are future development plans for the saw mill site, however the timing of this was not known. Consultation with the provincial government also indicated that the properties along Niep Road are identified in the town plan for industrial development, however there is also no set timeframe for this future development.



Figure 4-8 Neip road near the easement



Figure 4-9 Solomon Telekom based station site off Neip Road

#### 4.5 Social Profile of Auki

Malaita is the most populous province in the Solomon Islands accounting for about a quarter of the national population. The population of Malaita in 2018 was estimated to be 166,908 persons (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, n.d (a)).

Similar to other provinces, Malaita has a young age profile, with 43% of people under 15 years old, and a low proportion of adults aged 20 to 30 years (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009d).

Access to electricity in Malaita was lower compared to the national average in 2009, with 3% of household connected to the electricity main grid compared to 12%. However access to safe sanitation was better in Malaita compared to the national average (21% of households do not have access to a toilet facility compared to 33% across the country) (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009a).

In Malaita, 45% of the average household's income could be attributed to the sale of fish, crops or handicrafts, which is consistent with the national average (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009a).

Auki is the provincial capital, with a population of around 5,000 persons in 2009 (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009d). Auki is the main port, with shipping services to Honiara and to other parts of the island and a daily market providing the focal points of the town. As the provincial capital, Auki town supports a post office, Telekom office, bank, several primary and high schools, local market, several stores, and six or more tourist accommodation options.

While many houses and buildings in town are made of prefabricated materials, housing on the town fringe and outside of the urban area was observed to be more traditional in style and materials, using predominantly thatch. Most houses, be they on land or over water, are built on stilts of various heights. Many households have traditional dugout canoes for their significant

fishing and local transport. Subsistence fishing in traditional canoes is common both in both coral areas and into nearshore marine zones.

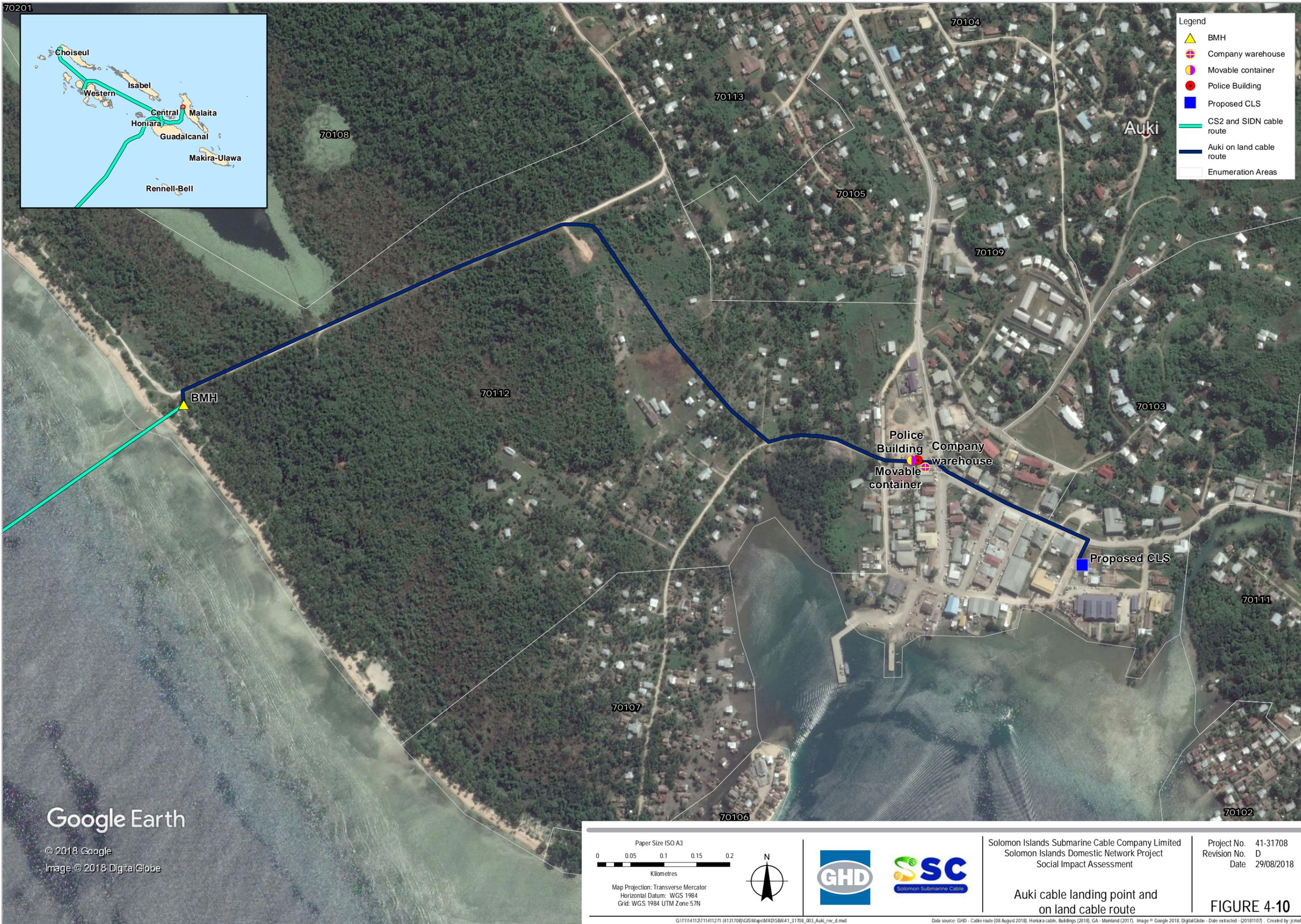
#### 4.5.1 Cable landing site

The proposed landing point for the cable at Auki will be positioned a few meters apart from the BMH located at the approximate co-ordinates S08°46.226' / E160°41.209' (Alcatel, 2018) (Figure 4-10). Once installed, the cable will extend from the beach alongside the existing Kunu Road (Figure 2-12); this will effectively widen the road by approximately half a meter. The cable alignment will cross the Langa-Langa freshwater lagoon at the bridge over the culverts (Figure 2-13) and head towards the centre of Auki town centre to the CLS site. The route from the landing site to the CLS site is identified in Figure 2-14. Crossing the lagoon along the road, will mitigate the risk of draining or causing ecological damage to the lagoon.

The cable will pass through the Lilisiana Village within the customary land of the Aisisiki Group. Within the customary land the cable route travels past approximately 20 houses in close proximity and the edge of the Alotaa School boundary. Along the roads beyond the customary land there are mainly houses located on either sides of the road and commercial use along the roads in town.

The beach and waters in the vicinity of the cable landing point is used for fishing and recreational activities by the locals.

Consultations with locals revealed that the road is primarily used by locals accessing the beach for recreational purposes. The water near the landing site is occasionally used by local fishermen for subsistence fishing activities.

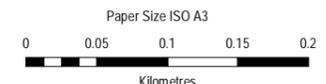


**Legend**

- ▲ BMH
- Company warehouse
- Movable container
- Police Building
- Proposed CLS
- CS2 and SIDN cable route
- Auki on land cable route
- Enumeration Areas

Google Earth

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Map Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Horizontal Datum: WGS 1984  
Grid: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 57N



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Auki cable landing point and  
on land cable route

**FIGURE 4-10**

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Print date: 29 Aug 2018 - 16:25

Data source: GHD - Cable route (08 August 2018), Honiara cable, Buildings (2018), GA - Mainland (2017), Image © Google 2018, DigitalGlobe - Date extracted - (20181107) - Created by: jcmatic

The Aisisiki Group owns a large area extending from the northern headland of Auki harbour north for approximately 2.5km including the adjoining reefs and extending inland for approximately 5 to 6km. The land on which Auki town sits was previously within their customary land but was sold to the Government to become the Provincial capital.

The Aisisiki Group are descendants of a family of three brothers and two sisters, with a current estimated 2000 tribe members. Many of the original tribe members reside in Aisisiki Village and Busuniniu Villages (both villages located approximately 4 to 5 km from the project site), with more living in Dukwasi Village (less than 2km from the project site).

The nearest residents to the site reside in Lilisiana Village, located along the existing road approximately 500m from the beach (Figure 4-13). There are approximately 100 households housing 500 people, which has grown rapidly since it was established. Residents of the village are not members of the Aisisiki Tribe, but have purchased or lease plots from the Aisisiki group. These villages are administered by committees, with Jonathon as the chairmen, and other members of the board all Aisisiki Tribe members.



Figure 4-11 Unnamed Road along which the cable route will travel within customary land

To the north of the beach landing is Langa-Langa freshwater lagoon (Figure 4-12). Ten families from Lilisiana village plant sago and swamp taro between the beach and the lake, along the cable route. The families use the taro for family consumption, while the sago is used for construction of houses.

The cable route also travels past approximately 50 families from Lilisiana village. Around twenty huts were observed in close proximity to the route by the SIA team (Figure 4-13). The route also travels on the edge of the Alotaa School boundary, which is both a primary and high school. Students who attend the school come from throughout Auki.

According to consultations, some local people fish in the vicinity of the landing site, usually in March and between June to December. These people would consume the fish within their families, and may occasionally sell any additional catch at the local market. Fish are caught by line fishing, and there is no net or trawler fishing in that location. Other local people use the area for recreational purposes including swimming, canoeing and picnics at the beach.



Figure 4-12 Cable crossing at Langa Langa freshwater lagoon



Figure 4-13 Houses in Lilisiana village next to the cable route

## 4.6 Social Profile of Taro

The population of Choiseul province in 2018 was estimated to be 39,336 persons (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, n.d(a)). This is equivalent to approximately 5.9% of the total population of the Solomon Islands.

Access to electricity in Choiseul in 2009 was lower than the national average, with 4% of households connected to the electricity main grid compared to 12%. Access to safe sanitation was significantly lower in Choiseul compared to the national average; 72% of households do not have access to a toilet facility compared to 33% across the country (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009a).

In Choiseul, 52% of the average household's income could be attributed to the sale of fish, crops or handicrafts, which is higher than the national average of 44% (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009a).

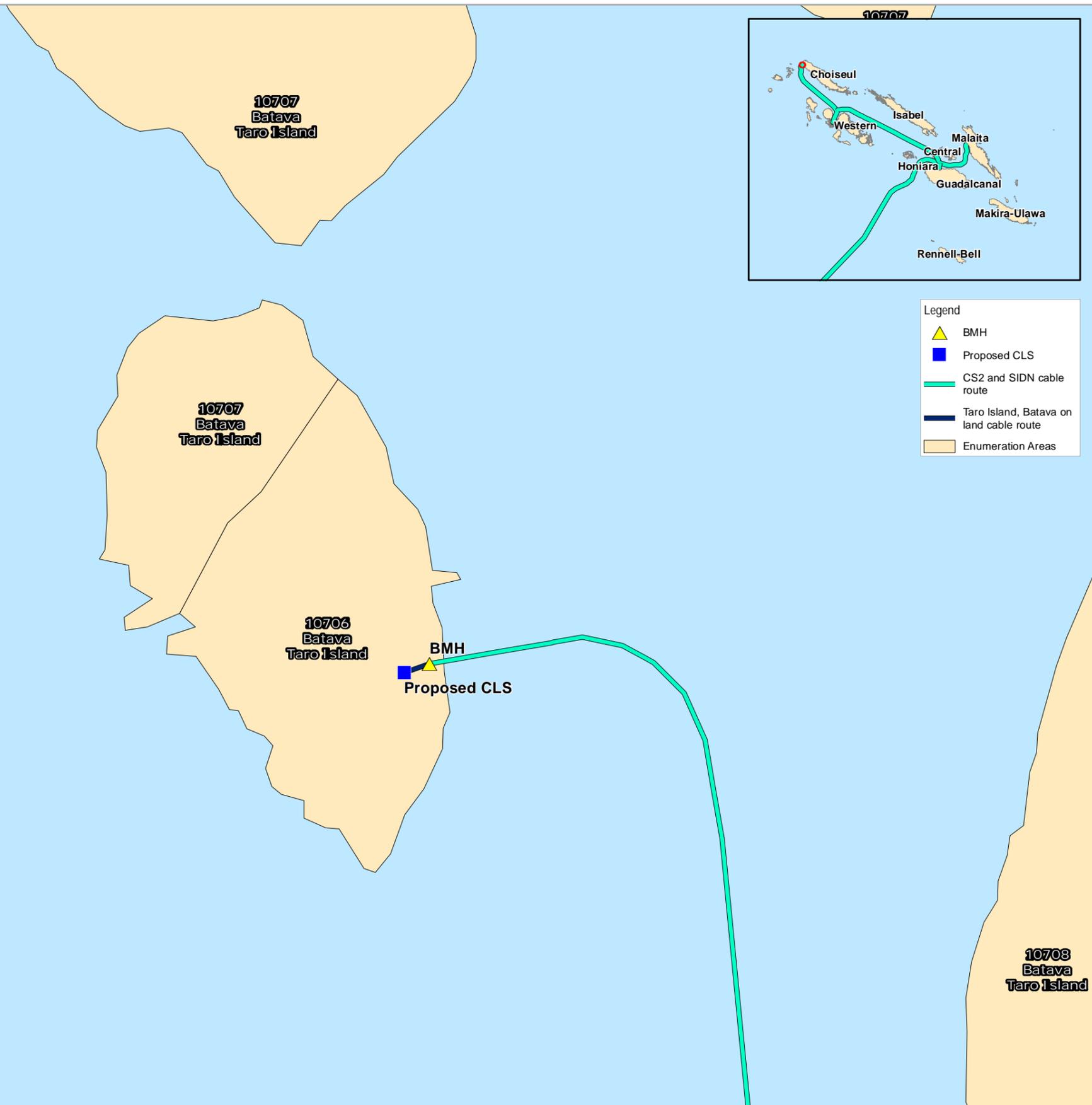
Taro is the provincial capital of Choiseul. Taro Island's estimated population is 1,423 inhabitants (2014), approximately 53% are male and 47% are female; 28% are youth and children (Fugro, 2018b). It is mainly a service town with a hospital, government offices and infrastructure located on the island include Royal Solomon Islands Police and RAMSI and Telekom, a market and the island is serviced by an airport with 2-3 flights from Honiara per week. There are 6 accommodation facilities in Taro with approximately 100 rooms. These facilities are mainly used for government staff coming from Honiara for training activities.

### 4.6.1 Cable landing site

The proposed landing site for the cable at Taro will be positioned a few meters apart from the BMH located at co-ordinates S06°42.759' / E156°23.936' (Alcatel, 2018) (Figure 4-14). Once installed, the cable will be trenched a very short distance from the BMH across a footpath into the CLS to be constructed on Government land adjacent to the existing Telekom compound (Figure 4-15 and Figure 4-16).



**\*\*Photos taken from airplane while on site**



**Legend**

- ▲ BMH
- Proposed CLS
- CS2 and SIDN cable route
- Taro Island on land cable route
- Enumeration Areas

Paper Size ISO A3

0 0.05 0.1 0.15 0.2

Kilometres

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Horizontal Datum: WGS 1984  
Grid: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 57N



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**Taro cable landing point and  
on land cable route**

**FIGURE 4-14**

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Data source: GHD - Cable route (08 August 2018), Honiara cable, Buildings (2018), GA - Mainland (2017), Solomon Island National Statistics Office - Administrative boundaries (2009), Image © Google, CNES/Airbus, Digital Globe (Date extracted - 20180807) - Created by: jcmatic



Figure 4-15 Aerial view of Taro landing point



Figure 4-16 BMH and CLS to be located just outside of Telekom fenceline

The cable landing point is at a small beach, with a house located on one side and the beach used by the home owner to keep their boats. There are other houses on the other side of the beach, but further away from the landing point. The cable crosses a small road which is used for pedestrian access by the households in that area and sometimes to access the airport from the town centre. Adjacent to the CLS is a primary school football oval which is also used as the town open space. The ground is used by the school students and by general community for recreational sport in the evenings and for town gatherings. The road from the western side of the ground is the main road that connects the town with the airport and southern side of the island.

Fishing or recreational activities are not known to be undertaken in the vicinity of the beach where the cable landing is proposed.

# 5. Social Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures

## 5.1 Introduction

In the context of this report, a social impact is considered to be something that is experienced by humans in either a physical or perceptual sense which results directly from the social change processes that are invoked by the project. It includes consideration for ADB’s Social Safeguards, as well as adaptation of relevant International Principles for Social Impact Assessment developed by the IAIA, which incorporate precautionary<sup>2</sup> and uncertainty<sup>3</sup> principles when predicting social impacts (IAIA, 2003). This means that even though some impacts have not been fully confirmed, they were still considered as part of the assessment. It is acknowledged that the predicted social impacts and their significance may change as the project progresses.

This section describes the potential social impacts that were identified through stakeholder consultations, site visits, other technical studies and the consultant’s knowledge of the nature of this project and its activities and the region. It provides a significance rating for the identified impacts to determine their priority from the perspective of needing to mitigate or manage them and recommends mitigation measures to manage the social impacts.

## 5.2 Criteria for Social Impact Rating

The significance of social impacts was identified using the criteria shown in Table 5-1. Significance ratings reflect the likelihood and consequence of impacts, as well as their duration, spatial extent and relative importance to the study communities. The risk ratings used in this assessment were adapted after being applied in previous SIA research conducted by the consultant and are considered best practice.

The identification of social impacts and the assessment of their significance was based on the Project information available at the time of writing this SIA report.

Table 5-1 Social impact assessment criteria

Criteria	Description
Nature of impact	<b>Positive</b> - Impacts that result in net benefits for the community.
	<b>Negative</b> - Impacts that result in detriments for the community or specific stakeholder groups
	<b>Neutral</b> - A change that does not result in a positive or negative impact but allows continuation of the usual function
Type of impact	<b>Direct</b> - Impacts resulting directly from social changes caused by the proposal
	<b>Indirect</b> - A secondary impact that occurs as a consequence of a direct impact rather than the actual proposal

<sup>2</sup> In order to protect the environment, a concept which includes people’s way of life and the integrity of their communities, the precautionary approach shall be applied. Where there are threats or potential threats of serious social impact, lack of full certainty about those threats should not be used as a reason for approving the planned intervention or not requiring the implementation of mitigation measures and stringent monitoring.

<sup>3</sup> It is recognised that our knowledge of the social world and of social processes is incomplete and because the social environment and the processes affecting it are changing constantly, and vary from place to place over time our social knowledge can never be fully complete.

Criteria	Description
Duration of impact	<b>Temporary</b> – construction phase
	<b>Long term</b> – operation phase
Level of impact	<b>Negligible</b> – Marginal change from the baseline conditions so no discernible effect is expected and those affected could not notice the change
	<b>Minor</b> – A small but measurable change from the baseline conditions. Changes are expected to be temporary and/or only affect a small number of people and those affected could be expected to easily adapt or cope with the change.
	<b>Medium</b> – Noticeable and relatively substantial change from the baseline conditions. Changes may be longer term or temporary and affect a large number of people and affected would need a substantial capacity to adapt or cope with the change.
	<b>Major</b> – A change fundamentally altering the baseline conditions in the community and affecting a large number of people, and/or a moderate number of people over the long-term and those affected would have limited or no capacity to adapt to change.

### 5.3 Potential Social Benefits that may be realised from the Project

A literature review of benefits of telecommunication technology (ICT) more broadly in the Pacific Island countries point towards its ability to address some of the key challenges that are faced by the region (Olutimayin, 2002). As sea locked nations, the Pacific Islands region has great physical distance from the global economic centres, which has reportedly contributed to the regions development challenges (Lowe-Gallen, 2015). With ICT, the distance between these global centres, and the gaps that this has brought in development, health services, employment opportunities, and education, are beginning to close (The World Bank, 2009). As Galgal (2017) notes, it has been forecasted that the ICT industry will create 16,000 new jobs, and contribute to a rise of 6.2% in GDP in the Pacific Islands region. Access to ICT forms a technological bridge that connects the Pacific Islands regions to these global resources, meaning that social, health and economic disadvantage is positively impacted.

The Solomon Islands currently rely on satellite for international telecommunications connectivity, which is expensive and has limited bandwidth. Individual submarine cable links, on the other hand, can enable seamless global communication through formation of a virtual regional network as a part of global networks. The reliability of submarine cables is high, especially when multiple paths are available in the event of a cable break. Also, the total carrying capacity of submarine cables is in the order of magnitude of terabits per second while satellites typically offer only megabits per second and display higher latency.<sup>4</sup>

A regional communication network in the Solomon Islands is expected to accelerate regional integration by providing increased frequency and quality of international communications among the connected countries.

Improved international connectivity will allow the region to form a sizable market for digital products and services, and connected Pacific Developing Member Countries (PDMCs) will be

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.wired.com/epicenter/2008/02/googles-submari/>

able to develop new business opportunities. It will strengthen the existing regional public goods and encourage new ones by allowing countries to share knowledge and limited human resources available in PDMCs. Improved services and lower cost of international connectivity through the submarine cable will stimulate competition and increase demand for broadband Internet. In turn, this will lower the cost of retail telecommunications services, especially broadband internet.

This project has been set up in view of supporting the Solomon Islands to provide affordable and high capacity international bandwidth options. It is believed that this project will enable the population of the Solomon Islands to access lower-cost broadband internet and other communications services, thus contributing to its socioeconomic development<sup>5</sup>.

Faster and cheaper connectivity is expected to have numerous positive development impacts, including reduced transaction costs for business, government and household communications; new business opportunities, i.e. investments in e-commerce and business process outsourcing facilities; improved public service delivery, in particular to support e-education and e-health services which are of great interest to the Government. This is expected to benefit trade in local services, e.g. tourism, as well as provision of services within the country.

A report by ABC (2013), shows that although ICT resources have been limited in the Solomon Islands, there is still training in ICT available, and that information and support on technical equipment is regularly sought through people's social networks. Community email provider, PFnet provides the area with a number of regional community email hubs (Chand et al., 2005). Schools and community groups have also reported to share their ICT equipment (ABC, 2013). There has been a reported improvement in the provision of education in some schools that have been donated equipment. In addition, it is expected that as a result of broadband internet, there will be local employment opportunities available to the community (ADB, no date). Furthermore, as the ADB (no date) reports, there is a significant link between GDP and the increase of the ICT industry, and that the GDP per capita is likely to continue to increase with the increase of the ICT investment.

Currently, there is a relatively low saturation of internet in the Solomon Islands, meaning that its availability is mostly limited to urban centres. Personal use of the internet comes at a high cost, however platforms such as Facebook and online news outlets have gained popularity (Ofotalau, 2013). There has reportedly been a greater uptake of such platforms by women and children in the Solomon Islands (Chand et al., 2005). This greater uptake is important to note given that ICT has been identified as a tool through which to promote gender equality through the increase of access to information (Asian Development Bank, no date).

Despite there not being a large uptake of internet use in Solomon Islands to date, there have already been benefits experienced by people who live there. These benefits are likely to further increase and strengthen with the speed and accessibility that the broadband network serviced by the submarine cable will bring.

## 5.4 Land Access Impacts

Potential impacts on land access will primarily be during construction, as little or no maintenance of the cable ducts will be required during operation, and any restrictions on use of the cable easement will not affect any existing land use.

### 5.4.1 Honiara

As described in section 4.3 the cable will land on the beach at Honiara and will be ducted through a property privately owned by SMI, until it meets the Mendana Road. The cable will

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<sup>5</sup> <http://pid.adb.org/pid/LoanView.htm?projNo=44382&seqNo=01&typeCd=3>

also travel through the driveways of another two to three privately owned residential properties. It will be ducted under the driveways of these properties as it travels up the Lengakiki Ridge before it reaches the CLS.

SISCC has initiated consultation with all the property owners and have informed the SIA that all the landowners are supportive and open to future voluntary land access negotiations.

At the SMI site, the cable route will be located close to the eastern edge of the property to minimise impacts on the buildings and regular activities conducted on the property. During the site visit it was observed that this area is fairly unused and construction activities are unlikely to disrupt current use of the property, but may temporarily limit access to the eastern boundary of the property.

Construction activities through the driveways of the private residential properties at the Lengakiki Ridge are likely to disrupt easy access in and out of the residences, especially for cars, however access to the residences through one side of the driveways will be maintained at all times.

Once construction of the cable ducts is completed, the land over the duct will be reinstated and existing use of the land can be continued during operation of the cable.

Consultation should be undertaken with the landowner to ensure the groups who use these facilities are aware of the construction activities and are informed about any potential access restriction to the eastern side of the SMI property.

### **Impact significance rating**

Impact	Nature	Type	Duration	Level of impact	Impacted parties
Temporary disruption to accessing the eastern edge of the SMI property. Property is understood to have limited use	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Negligible</b>	SMI property users
Temporary access inconvenience to private property owners / residents along cable route up the Lengakiki Ridge	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Minor</b>	Private property owners / residents

### **Mitigation Measures**

The following mitigation measures are recommended to manage the land access impacts in Honiara:

- To ensure fair process is in place, consultation and land access and easement compensation negotiation will be carried out with all private property owners by SISCC's legal advisors and compensation negotiation will be undertaken in accordance with applicable legislation as listed in section 3.3.3. Third party independent assessors will also be engaged to ensure fairness in the process.
- Reinstatement of the land disturbed for construction to its current use.
- Consult with the property owners and provide adequate information about the construction activities so that the users can be informed of any changes to their properties or access.
- Restore roads to existing or improved conditions after the duct is constructed.

## 5.4.2 Noro

As described in section 4.4 the cable will land on the beach and ducted through land designated as a Utility Easement by the Government of Western Province, then follow Niep Road to the existing Telekom compound. Both the utility easement and the registered road are broad to accommodate the small foot print of the cable.

As the cable duct will be located on government easement land and registered public roads, access approvals will not pose an issue for the Project. Niep Road which connects the utility easement and the CLS is a wide road, mainly used by pedestrians who are residents of the village located next to the tuna processing plant, and by people accessing the saw mill property at the end of the road. It is anticipated that no impact or inconvenience will be caused to the road users.

At the time of the SIA consultant's site visit it was observed that the utility easement was recently partially cleared bushland, with three small informal vegetable gardens located near Niep Road end of the easement (refer to section 4.4). It is anticipated that these three vegetable gardens would be displaced for the construction of the cable duct.

As discussed in section 4.4, SIA consultations indicate the families who cultivate consume some vegetables within their households, some may be traded informally with other households, and some may be sold at the local markets. The loss of the vegetable gardens during construction may lead to the loss of a food source for each household, as well as loss of some household income from the occasional sale of the vegetables. SIA consultations identified that the three heads of each household earn their primary income from their job at the cannery and income from the sale of the vegetables is incidental. In addition, the SIA team was informed that other land close to the village could be used by the families as alternate plots for the garden. In addition, once the cable has been installed, there may be opportunity for the land next to the cable easement to be used again for vegetable farming provided the cable could be accessed if required and subject to permission from the provincial government who own the easement.

As this project will result in the displacement of the three informal gardens and have flow on impacts on food and, to a lesser extent, income of three households, the involuntary economic displacement condition of DFAT's Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy, 2018 is triggered and therefore is dealt with in accordance with DFAT requirements to address such impacts (refer to section 5.10.1).

### **Impact Significance Rating**

Impact	Nature	Type	Duration	Level of impact	Impacted parties
Displacement of vegetable gardens in Noro which may lead to some loss of food and incidental household income	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Minor to Medium</b>	Three households who tend the vegetable plots
Temporary disruption to Niep Road causing inconvenience to road users	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Negligible</b>	Road users

### **Mitigation Measures**

- To ensure fair process is in place, consultation and land access and easement compensation negotiation will be carried out with all private property owners by SISCC's legal advisors and compensation negotiation will be undertaken in accordance with

applicable legislation as listed in section 3.3.3. Third party independent assessors will also be engaged to ensure fairness in the process.

- Reinstatement of the land disturbed for construction to its current use
- SISCC will undertake further consultations as required with the households who tend the vegetable plots to correctly identify who uses the plots, the number of plants within each and determine the appropriate amount of compensation per household. This consultation and negotiation should be undertaken according to the project stakeholder consultation plan (SCP) section 6.2.2.
- SISCC will seek legal advice and undertake consultation and compensation negotiation with the families that cultivate the vegetable gardens. Compensation will be done in accordance with the most applicable legislative framework ie Telecommunications Act (2009) or Lands and Titles (1988) for the temporary loss of the vegetable gardens.
- SISCC will engage with the Provincial government representative in Noro to provide alternate land to the three families to relocate the vegetable gardens, prior to the project construction. The timing of this relocation will be managed in such a way that the families will harvest the produce from the existing gardens and move to the newly allocated land for their next cropping cycle. This will minimise the loss of produce (food) they get from the existing gardens.

#### 5.4.3 Auki

As described in section 4.5 once on land the cable route will be partly located on an unnamed road, past a fresh water lagoon and through the Lilisiana Village within the customary land of the Aisisiki Group, and then partly along existing roads through the town till it connects to the CLS in town near the market.

Waters along the beach, the beach itself, the unnamed road and Lilisiana village are registered as Customary Land. The Customary land is legally registered in the name of a single communal group called the Aisisiki group, represented by traditional leader Mr Jonathan Malai. Land access for construction will have to be negotiated with the customary owners. SISCC commenced the formal consultation process with the customary groups in June 2018, but have had informal discussions with them prior to that. Initial consultations have been held with Mr Jonathan Malai as the representative of the Aisisiki. He indicated they are supportive of the development through their land.

There are also eight other communal groups that dispute the ownership of this land, but they do not have any legal rights on the land, with Aisisiki ownership confirmed by the local court in 2013. They have expressed their support for the project which was confirmed during the SIA consultations. However it will be important to continue to include these groups in future consultations to minimise the risk of potential disputes developing over land access negotiations.

The cable route will also pass approximately 20 houses in the Lilisiana village, and the Alotaa School boundary. Consultation with Mr Jonathon Malai indicated that the Aisisiki group will work with SISCC to identify a cable route through the village that will be on the border of plots on which houses and the school is located.

### Impact significance rating

Impact	Nature	Type	Duration	Level of impact	Impacted parties
Eight other claimant groups dispute the customary ownership of the land, which pose a risk to the project and should be included in the customary land access negotiations	Negative	Indirect	Long term	<b>Minor</b>	Project, other unregistered claimants

### Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures are recommended to manage the land access impacts in Auki:

- To ensure fair process is in place, consultation and land access and easement compensation negotiation will be carried out with all private property owners by SISCC's legal advisors and compensation negotiation will be undertaken in accordance with applicable legislation as listed in section 3.3.3. Third party independent assessors will also be engaged to ensure fairness in the process.
- Reinstate the land disturbed for construction to its current use
- SISCC will engage in further consultations and land access negotiations with the customary owners - Mr Jonathan Malai who is the leader of the Aisisiki group. These negotiations will be held in accordance with the Project SCP and legal advice sought by SISCC.
- SISCC will engage with the other eight claimants of the customary land, and provide information about the project. This will help to minimise group conflicts therefore minimise the risk to the project.
- In collaboration with Mr Jonathan Malai, SISCC will consult with the households and the school in the Lilisiana village to inform them about the project construction activities.

#### 5.4.4 Taro

The cable will travel through a small beach, across a walking track, and connect to the proposed CLS on government land adjacent to the Telekom compound. As such no private properties will be impacted by the project. All public land disturbed for construction will be reinstated to its current use.

### 5.5 Workforce Impacts

It is anticipated that for construction of the land based components of the project a workforce of 10-15 workers will be required at each site. The majority of the workforce will be locally sourced at each site, generating employment opportunities during construction. An additional two to three specialists (engineers) or supervisors will be sourced from Honiara for the sites at Noro, Auki and Taro.

These specialists will be temporarily accommodated in Noro, Auki and Taro during parts of the construction period. SIA consultation with the provincial government representatives and informal discussions with the accommodation providers and community in these towns have indicated that there are a number of accommodation facilities in each of these towns that cater to government staff that visit the provinces from Honiara and that the specialist SIIDN project workers can be easily accommodated at these facilities.

The highly specialised crew on the submarine cable installation ship will continue to be accommodated on the ship while the submarine cable is being connected to the BMH, which is expected to be for approximately two to four days at each site.

A general risk related to the presence of non-residential workforce is potential of impacts on community values through harassment of women or children. This was also considered as part of the assessment. The project will require a small number of non-residential workers; these are expected to be at each site for a small duration of time.

SISCC, through its contractors' terms and conditions will ensure that no child labour or illegal migrant workers will be engaged on the project and that non-residential workers who will be accommodated at the site for short durations will conduct themselves within legal and good citizen behaviour.

Once built, the cables will require little or no maintenance, any operational workforce required will be sourced locally or may require short (one to two days) visits by one or two workers from Honiara, and therefore no ongoing operational workforce impacts are anticipated.

### Impact significance rating

Impact	Nature	Type	Duration	Level of impact	Impacted parties
Potential to generate local employment in Honiara, Noro, Auki and Taro during construction	Positive	Indirect	Temporary	<b>Minor</b>	Local communities
Potential risk to community values (safety of women and children) due to presence of non-residential workers	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Major</b>	Women and children

### Mitigation Measures

No negative social impacts are anticipated from the project workforce, hence no mitigation measures will be required to manage workforce impacts.

To maximise the benefits from the project SISCC, through its contractors' terms and conditions will ensure that:

- Preference is given to local workforce where possible and suitable
- No child labour or illegal migrant workers will be engaged on the project
- Non-residential workers who will be accommodated at the site for short durations will conduct themselves as per a legal and good citizen behaviour code of conduct, as per contractor terms and conditions of engagement.

## 5.6 Traffic and Site Safety and Access Impacts

It is anticipated that the construction method for the cable ducts will be labour intensive and involve use of machines. This will depend on the availability and access at each site. The cable ducts will have approximately a 0.5 meter footprint once constructed. However at all four sites, the land based cable route will travel across or along roads or pathways, and may therefore cause traffic safety concerns or access disruption during construction and installation activities.

In Honiara, the cable route will travel for a short distance along the Mendana Road, before it loops around the roundabout, along another street to cross Hibiscus Avenue, before the cable enters private property easement.

It is anticipated that, during the construction of the cable duct, sections of these roads will be temporarily inaccessible, and traffic and pedestrians may be diverted away from the construction site on to other side of the road. This may cause temporary inconvenience to road users, and cause delays due to traffic congestion near construction sites, which is currently a common occurrence in Honiara. Residents living in the area to the south of the main road and up the hill may experience inconvenience in accessing their neighbourhood while the cable duct is being constructed. Residents on the private properties used for the cable to travel uphill will also be inconvenienced to get in and out of their properties during construction. Access along these roads and to residential and commercial properties will be maintained at all times during construction.

In Noro, the cable duct would be constructed along the edge of the existing Neip Road. It is possible that during construction road users may experience a temporary disruption and may have to walk off the road through the grassed/bush area along the road. However due to the width of the road and flat land along the road, access will be maintained for road users during construction.

In Auki, the cable would cross the local beach road, and after passing through the village it would travel along the village road for a short distance, and across several streets in town. Due to the short construction period, temporary interruption may occur for villagers and townspeople accessing the beach or Lilisiana village. In town, consultation with the Provincial Government confirmed there are other streets available for detours during construction. Therefore there may be minor inconvenience for road users and pedestrians in town, but access is expected to be maintained.

In Taro, the cable would cross a small walking track between the beach and the CLS site. There are alternate walk ways and roads for pedestrians to maintain access to properties, shops and services, therefore this is not expected to result in changed access.

Construction of the cable ducts at all four sites will be along existing beaches, roads, private properties near residences and near schools in Auki and Taro. It is highly likely that construction activities would attract local people and children out of curiosity to the construction site to look at the works. Safety of local people especially children around construction sites and machinery will have to be an important consideration as part of the construction management.

### **Impact significance rating**

Impact	Nature	Type	Duration	Level of impact	Impacted parties
Temporary disruption to traffic along cable route roads in Honiara potential causing congestion and delays along Medana Road and hibiscus Road	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Minor</b>	Local residents in Honiara
Temporary disruption to local traffic and pedestrians along roads in Noro, Auki and Taro where construction of cable ducts is proposed	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Negligible</b>	Local communities in Noro, Auki and Taro

Impact	Nature	Type	Duration	Level of impact	Impacted parties
Potential safety risks for local community, especially children around construction sites	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Major</b>	Local communities in Honiara, Noro, Auki and Taro

### **Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation measures to manage traffic and safety impacts will include:

- SISCC through its contractor terms and conditions will include the preparation and implementation of a construction management plan and a traffic management plan by the contractor that will construction the land base components of the cable. These should include measures to (but not limited to):
  - Minimise traffic and access disruption
  - Maintain safe access to all adjacent properties
  - Maintain safety of surrounding communities, school children where the cable route is located near schools in Taro and Auki through fencing or putting barriers to restrict access to construction sites,
  - Consultation with key stakeholders to inform them about construction activities (such as private property owners, users, Honiara Council and provincial governments in Noro, Auki and Taro and the Aisisiki Group, residents of the Lilisiana village and schools near the cable route in Auki and Taro)
  - Gather community feedback through a grievance redress procedure developed in conjunction with SISCC
- Inform local communities through notifications and key informants about dates of project construction activities.

### **5.7 Amenity Impacts**

Construction activities will generate intermittent noise and dust during standard construction hours between 6am to 6pm Monday to Saturday. It is expected that noise and dust may impact the following stakeholders at each site:

- Honiara – users of the SMI property such as the USP students and staff, particularly those who may be using the shelter near the beach for study or classes; offices in the lot next to the site; road users including pedestrians; residents and businesses located next to the cable route along the Lengkiki Ridge.
- Noro – caretakers of the properties adjacent to the easement; road users including pedestrians
- Auki – road users including pedestrians; Lilisiana villagers particularly those living in houses adjacent to the cable route; students and staff at Alotaa School although the route is located on the edge of the school boundary and away from classrooms
- Taro – the residents adjacent to the beach landing point; Telekom staff, primary school and users of the ground

It is expected that increased noise and dust levels would cause temporary disturbance for these stakeholders which would be experienced during the short construction timeframe at one location. However it is expected that these changes to amenity will be minimal and would allow people to go about their daily lives. There are no noise standards in Solomon Islands to be

applied to the Project, however construction equipment used for the project will be light machinery and manual labour.

#### **Impact significance rating**

Impact	Nature	Type	Duration	Level of impact	Impacted parties
Temporary increase in noise and dust levels for surrounding community	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Minor</b>	Surrounding community at all sites

#### **Mitigation Measures**

Measures to mitigate noise and dust impacts include:

- Limit construction activities 6am to 6pm Monday to Saturday
- Any noise and dust generating machinery and equipment to be maintained in good working condition.

### **5.8 Impacts on Commercial Fishing**

Commercial fishing is a large and important industry in the Solomon Islands. Offshore tuna fisheries are a key industry and an important employer in the country. With waters rich in tuna, both processed and raw tuna are major exports for the country. It is expected that both domestic and foreign fishing vessels could be found on the survey and cable ships route. According to SIA consultation, long line and purse-seine fishing occurs all year round.

Fishing vessels will need to avoid the survey and cable ships and maintain a safe distance to prevent fishing equipment from being entangled with the cable. Consultation with the Ministry of Fisheries indicates that providing advance notice to the Ministry and local harbour masters at each location would allow them to communicate with the commercial vessels to avoid the path of the survey and cable ships and find other temporary fishing grounds.

Due to the short duration of the survey and cable laying activities and small footprint of the project, it is expected that commercial fishing activities will be able to continue on other nearby fishing grounds.

Once the cable is laid, there is potential for fishing lines and deep sea trawler equipment to become entangled with the cable. Consultations suggested that once laid, the cable will be marked on maritime charts, which will identify exclusion zones for anchorage in shallow waters and, in deep waters, notify vessels of submerged infrastructure to act as a prompt for fishing vessels to avoid risk of hooking up on seabed infrastructure.

#### **Impact significance rating**

Impact	Nature	Type	Duration	Level of impact	Impacted parties
Temporary disruption to commercial fishing vessels during survey and cable laying	Negative	Direct	Temporary	Negligible	Commercial fisheries

Impact	Nature	Type	Duration	Level of impact	Impacted parties
Possibility of fishing gear being entangled into the cable causing interruption of service and need to repair cable	Negative	Direct	Long term	Medium – on cable	SISCC
	Negative	Direct	Long term	Minor – on fishing vessel	Commercial fisheries

### Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures are recommended to manage impacts on commercial fishing activities:

- Consultation with the Ministry of Fisheries, SIMSA and the Harbor Masters in Honiara, Noro, Auki and Taro prior to construction to provide them with project specific information such as dates of the survey work and cable laying, so they can notify commercial fishing vessels and other vessels expected in the vicinity at the time.

## 5.9 Impacts on Subsistence Fishing

As discussed in section 4, subsistence fishing is an important activity for many households, both as a source of income, as well as for household diets and nutrition. Subsistence fishing is mainly associated with shallow water and inshore coral reefs.

Observations during the site visits and SIA consultations revealed that subsistence fishing is often undertaken near the cable landing route in Auki and sometimes in Noro. However local stakeholders consulted confirmed that people would be willing to move to other fishing areas during the short timeframe required to lay the cable, as these areas are not considered primary fishing grounds. With advance notification about the cable construction work provided to the community in town, no disruption to subsistence fishing activities is anticipated.

### Impact significance rating

Impact	Nature	Type	Duration	Level of impact	Impacted parties
Potential temporary disruption to subsistence fishers during cable laying in Auki and Noro	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>No impact - negligible</b>	Local community members

### Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures are recommended to manage impacts on subsistence fishing activities:

- Consult and provide notification to Ministry of Fisheries, Provincial Governments and local communities about project construction details such as dates of project construction activities, route of the cable ship and measures to avoid fishing in the project area for the duration of construction.

## 5.10 Impacts on DFAT Social Safeguards

The site visits and SIA consultations have confirmed that displacement and resettlement safeguards are triggered by the project, but the indigenous people safeguards are not. Implications for these safeguards are discussed below.

### 5.10.1 Displacement and Resettlements

The project footprint is small, and will pass through various land types. There would be no physical displacement of people, houses or structures, with some private property impacts in Honiara and Taro, and customary land in Auki. These would be managed through consultation and negotiation with individual property owners as discussed in section 5.4.

Displacement of vegetable gardens / plants for three families is expected in Noro, which could result in partial economic displacement for these households. Impacts of this economic displacement and mitigation measures are discussed in section 5.4.2.

#### ***Impact Significance Rating***

As the significance rating of these impacts has been assessed under land access impacts, they are not re-assessed in this section (refer to section 5.4.2 for significance rating of involuntary resettlement impacts).

#### ***Mitigation Measures***

Detailed mitigation measures to minimise and avoid impacts due to the displacement of the informal vegetable gardens are presented in section 5.4.2. Due to the fact that physical displacement of people and households will not occur, but only minor partial economic displacement is expected, preparation of a specific Resettlement Action Plan is not considered commensurate to this type and level of impact, however measures required to address the impact are fully detailed in section 5.4.2.

### 5.10.2 Indigenous Peoples

Water and land near the cable landing site and part of the cable duct route in Auki is held under customary ownership and registration of the Aisisiki Group, which is represented by Mr Jonathan Malai. As discussed in section 4.5 the water, beach and swampland are primarily used by the Lilisiana villagers who lease land from the Asisiski group, and occasionally by members of the Aisisiki. Consultations with Mr Jonathan Malai confirmed that the Asisiski are supportive of the project and willing to engage in land access negotiations with the project. Further, Mr Jonathan Malai facilitated consultation between the SIA project team and community members, including some Lilisiana villagers.

Although this land is legally registered in the name of the Asisiski group, there are eight other clans that dispute this claim. Although Mr Jonathan Malai has been consulting with these groups, there is a possibility that conflicts regarding the project may arise due to these disputes. As part of project stakeholder consultation and land access negotiation SISCC will continue to engage with these groups to keep them informed about the project and if possible provide some employment opportunities on the project, where appropriate.

The DFAT policy aims to protect the dignity, human rights, aspiration, cultures and customary livelihoods of indigenous peoples. Whilst the land owners at Auki are Indigenous people, consultations indicate they use the land and waters infrequently, and those who would be most impacted are the non-Indigenous residents of Lilisiana village (as discussed in sections 5.4.3,5.6,5.7,5.9), as such impacts on indigenous people and their customs and practices are not expected. The indigenous people considerations will be included during the land access negotiations to the extent commensurate to the level of impact on the indigenous people.

### ***Impact Significance Rating***

No impact significance rating is required as impacts on indigenous peoples are expected..

### ***Mitigation Measures***

SISCC will continue to undertake stakeholder consultation activities in accordance with the Stakeholder Consultation Plan (section 6.2.2) in consideration of the rights and needs of the indigenous people.

#### 5.10.3 Children, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups

This SIA has not identified any inequalities on children, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups being triggered by the project.

No exploitation of child labour and safety of children and general community near the project construction sites is considered, as noted in sections 5.5 and 5.6. This will also be included in the impact mitigation measures.

### ***Impact Significance Rating and Mitigation Measures***

Significance rating for impacts on safety of children has been considered in sections 5.5 and 5.6 and impact mitigation measures are included in section 6.2.

## 6. Social Impact Management and Monitoring

### 6.1 Summary of Social Impacts

The impacts discussed and assessed in section 5 are summarised in below.

Table 6-1 Summary of social impacts

Impact	Nature	Type	Duration	Level of impact	Impacted parties
<b>Land Access Impacts</b>					
Temporary disruption to accessing the eastern edge of the SMI property. The eastern edge has limited use on the property	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Negligible</b>	SMI property users
Temporary access inconvenience to private property owners / residents along cable route up the Lengakiki Ridge	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Minor</b>	Private property owners / residents
Displacement of vegetable gardens in Noro which may lead to some loss of food and incidental household income	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Minor to Medium</b>	Three households who tend the vegetable plots
Temporary disruption to Neip Road causing inconvenience to road users	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Negligible</b>	Road users
Eight other claimant groups dispute the customary ownership of the land, which poses a risk to the project and should be included in the customary land access negotiations	Negative	Indirect	Long term	<b>Minor</b>	Project, other unregistered claimants
<b>Workforce impacts</b>					
Potential to generate local employment in Honiara, Noro, Auki and Taro during construction	Positive	Indirect	Temporary	<b>Minor</b>	Local communities
Potential risk to community values (safety of women and children) due to presence of non-residential workers	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Major</b>	Women and children
<b>Traffic and Site Safety and Access Impacts</b>					

Impact	Nature	Type	Duration	Level of impact	Impacted parties
Temporary disruption to traffic along cable route roads in Honiara potential causing congestion and delays along Mendana Road and hibiscus Road	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Minor</b>	Local residents in Honiara
Temporary disruption to local traffic and pedestrians along roads in Noro, Auki and Taro where construction of cable ducts is proposed	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Negligible</b>	Local communities in Noro, Auki and Taro
Potential safety risks for local community, especially children around construction sites	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Negligible</b>	Local communities in Honiara, Noro, Auki and Taro
<b>Amenity impacts</b>					
Temporary increase in noise and dust levels for surrounding community	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Minor</b>	Surrounding community at all sites
<b>Impacts on commercial fishing</b>					
Temporary disruption to commercial fishing vessels during survey and cable laying	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>Negligible</b>	Commercial fisheries
Possibility of fishing gear being entangled into the cable causing interruption of service and need to repair cable	Negative	Direct	Long term	<b>Medium – on cable</b>	SISCC
	Negative	Direct	Long term	<b>Minor – on fishing vessel</b>	Commercial fisheries
<b>Impacts on subsistence fishing</b>					
Possible temporary disruption to subsistence fishers during cable laying in Auki and Noro	Negative	Direct	Temporary	<b>No impact - negligible</b>	Local community members

## 6.2 Social Impact Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures and precautionary measures have been developed commensurate to the level of impacts and described in section 5. These measures have formed part of the project's Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) which is included in the Project PER.

### 6.2.1 Summary of social impact management measures

A summary of the social impact management measures is provided in Table 6-2.

Table 6-2 Summary of social impact mitigation measures

Potential Impacts	Controls / Actions	Inspection / Criteria/ Target/ Responsibility
Land access and easement management	Access to land for securing cable easement will need to be negotiated with landholders. SISCC will consult and negotiate voluntary land access with all affected landholders including Commissioner of Lands, Provincial Government, Customary groups and private owners.	SISCC will consult with all relevant parties and engage legal advisors and any required compensation negotiation will be undertaken in accordance with applicable legislation.  SISCC has initiated land access consultation with all landholders since June 2018 and will continue to engage through the land access and compensation negotiation process.
Involuntary economic displacement of informal vegetable gardens in Noro	Further consultations is required with the households who tend the vegetable gardens located along the government utility easement in Noro to correctly identify who uses the plots, the number of plants within each and determine the appropriate amount of compensation per household, in accordance with applicable legislation.  Notify Noro Town Council about timing of construction activities and seek their assistance to relocate the gardens to alternate land to avoid any livelihoods impacts on the families.	SISCC will consult with all relevant parties and engage legal advisors and any required compensation negotiation will be undertaken in accordance with applicable legislation.
Access and disturbance to customary waters and land in Auki	SISCC will engage in further consultations and land access negotiations with the customary owners - Mr Jonathan Malai who is the leader of the Aisisiki group. These negotiations will be held in accordance with legal advice sought by SISCC.  SISCC will engage with the other eight claimants of the customary land, and provide information about the project. This will help to minimise group conflicts therefore minimise the risk to the project.	SISCC will consult with all relevant parties and engage legal advisors and any required compensation negotiation will be undertaken in accordance with applicable legislation.

Potential Impacts	Controls / Actions	Inspection / Criteria/ Target/ Responsibility
	In collaboration with Mr Jonathan Malai, SISCC will consult with the households and the school in the Lilisiana village to inform them about the project construction activities.	
Construction workforce benefits	To maximise the benefits from the project SISCC, through its contractors' terms and conditions will ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preference is given to local workforce where possible and suitable</li> <li>• No child labour or illegal migrant workers will be engaged on the project</li> <li>• Non-residential workers who will be accommodated at the site for short durations will conduct themselves within legal and good citizen behaviour code of conduct.</li> </ul>	SISCC will include these condition as part of any appointed Contractor's terms and conditions and monitor through review of tender submissions and regular reporting. Contractors will be responsible to implement such aspects within their workforce strategy.
Amenity impacts - Noise and vibration and dust from construction activities may impact on nearby sensitive receptors including residential dwellings and schools	Work hours will be between 6am and 6pm Monday to Saturday only. All machinery and equipment used for construction is maintained in good order.	The Site Clerk will ensure works occur within the given periods and ensure all machinery and equipment used for construction is maintained in good order
Traffic and site safety - Interference with other users of the area affected by cable laying (traffic and site safety and access)	Cable corridor will traverse through areas including roads, footpaths, private lands and public spaces. During installation works or operational maintenance other users of these spaces will be affected to manage safety and environmental risks. This will include impacts upon traffic passage. Stakeholders with potential to be affected will be notified of proposed construction works and relevant management plans will be in place to mitigate risk of	The Contractor will develop site relevant traffic, safety and construction management plans that prescribe measures to mitigate risk of interference with other users. The Site Clerk will ensure described measures are implemented.

Potential Impacts	Controls / Actions	Inspection / Criteria/ Target/ Responsibility
	<p>safety or traffic incidents occurring. These should include measures to (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise traffic and access disruption</li> <li>• Maintain safe access to all adjacent properties</li> <li>• Maintain safety of surrounding communities, school children where the cable route is located near schools in Taro and Auki through fencing or putting barriers to restrict access to construction sites,</li> <li>• Consultation with key stakeholders to inform them about construction activities (such as private property owners, users, Honiara Council and provincial governments in Noro, Auki and Taro and the Aisisiki Group, residents of the Lilisiana village and schools near the cable route in Auki and Taro)</li> </ul> <p>Gather community feedback through a grievance redress procedure</p>	

## 6.2.2 Stakeholder Consultation Plan (SCP)

In accordance with the mitigation measures suggested to manage the social impacts in section In accordance with the ESMP, a SCP will be prepared and implemented by SISCC in conjunction with the contractors. The SCP outlines potential methods of consultations and communication, stakeholders to be consulted, the timing and purpose of consultations. The consultation plan should be read in conjunction with the mitigation strategies in section 5.

### *Methods of consultations/communication*

Various forms of communication will be required for effective consultations. Some appropriate forms of communication for this Project are listed below:

- Face to face meetings with government officials, directly affected persons and land owners
- Written communication in the form of letters, notifications or legal agreements to ministries, other government offices, communities, affected persons and land owners
- Community information sessions specifically around project sites

It is recognised that there will be other consultation efforts and methods that will be deployed by SISCC for the benefit of the project.

### *Stakeholder Consultation Plan*

Table 6-3 presents a consolidated consultation plan to comply with DFAT requirements for meaningful consultations through the project implementation and operational phases.

Table 6-3 SCP

Project phase	Stakeholders to be consulted	Purpose of consultation
<b>Prior to construction</b>	Community at proposed project sites – Honiara, Noro, Auki and Taro (including the GST group in Auki)	Create general awareness about the project, disseminate project information and engage with community for confirmation and further identification and management of social impacts
	Land owners of proposed project sites – private property owners and customary land owners	Initiation of land access process, with initial meetings, notifications and land access negotiations to arrive at an agreement
	Vegetable farmers / growers in Noro	Confirm who the families are, the size of plots/number of plants, and initiate compensation process as per the legislative compensation process and rates
	Department of Fisheries, Department of Mining, SIMSA, provincial governments of Guadalcanal, Malaita, Western Province and Choiseul and local governments of Honiara, Noro Auki and Taro	To generate awareness about the project, its potential social and environmental impacts, timing of project construction, discussing required co-operation from the agencies and providing notifications within their jurisdictions
	Construction contractor	To inform the contractor about the project terms and conditions particularly regarding maximising compliance with the ESMP and their role in consultation and grievance redress.

Project phase	Stakeholders to be consulted	Purpose of consultation
During construction	Land owners at project sites, local community around project sites	Maintain contact to inform any changes to project construction program or any unidentified project impacts, attend to grievances or inquires, provide information on safety around project sites
	Department of Fisheries, maritime office, harbour master	Maintain contact to update information on the movements of the Marine Survey Ship and the Cable Laying Ship
Operation	Landholders, maritime authorities	Consult with property owners prior to accessing their land for any maintenance activities as per the negotiated agreement drawn prior to construction. For maintenance work of cable in case of breakage or damage to cable.

### 6.2.3 Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)

The Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) collates all impact management measures from the social and environmental assessment. The detailed ESMP is provided in the Public Environmental Report (PER) for the Project.

### 6.2.4 Grievance Management Procedure

To meet the requirements of the Solomon Islands Government EIA Procedural Guidelines, 2010 and DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguards, 2018, a Grievance Management Procedure will be put in place. Grievance Management Procedure detailed below will be adopted where relevant in addressing any potential grievances raised in response to the project.

#### **For land access**

To ensure fair process is in place consultation and land access and easement compensation negotiation will be carried out with all private property owners by SISCC's legal advisors and compensation negotiation will be undertaken in accordance with applicable legislation.

Should land owners not be satisfied that SISCC is progressing with fair and reasonable intentions, an independent party may represent the land owner's interests in identifying and/or raising the issue with the SISCC Principal to seek resolution. The cost for the third party assessors, if required, will be negotiated and agreed between SISCC and the landholders.

The Land and Titles Act does not include grievance redress mechanisms for negotiated agreements (be they transfers, leases or easements) where these are not under the auspices of the Commissioner of Lands. However the Telecommunications Act requires service providers to advise land owners as to how they can access impartial legal advice, with this advisory service pre-empting a grievance redress requirement, as the negotiation is not underpinned by default compulsory acquisition.

#### **During construction**

During construction and to a lesser extent, operation of the project it is possible that people may have concerns with the project's environmental and social performance. In order to capture and address these concerns the grievance management procedure will allow affected persons to register their complaints and provide the project an opportunity to resolve them.

This grievance management procedure places ultimate responsibility for grievance resolution with SISCC, however on site complaints can also be directly addressed by the Contractor's Site Clerk.

If the complaint is straightforward then the Site Clerk will resolve the complaint immediately. If the complaint is complicated and outside the control of the Site Clerk, it will then be referred to the Contractor Principal, who will have 48 hours to respond with an appropriate mechanism to resolve the complaint and will communicate such to the affected person.

The Contractor Principal should maintain records of all complaints and resolution procedures and report these to SISCC on a schedule agreed through contract conditions.

If the affected person is not satisfied with the complaint resolution, they may be able to take the complaint to the SISCC. If the affected person is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal to the National Court, which will initially be at their own cost.

All complaints made to the Site Clerk are to be documented in a register that will be maintained by the Site Clerk or Contractor Principal at the site. Details of the complaint should be recorded by date, name, contact address and reason for the complaint. A duplicate copy of the entry will be given to the affected person for their record at the time of registering the complaint and another copy of the complaint will be sent to the Contractor Principal.

Complaints are to be responded to within 48 hours and then further updates if required to be provided every two days, until the complaint is resolved. Complaints resolution via the Site Clerk will be free of charge to the affected person. The complaints register will show a record of who within the Contractors staff has been directed to deal with the complaint and the outcome of the complaint. The register will also record other details such as the date and time when the action was commissioned, complaint was resolved, when and how the affected person was informed of the decision. The register is then signed off by the person who is responsible for the decision and dated. The register is to be kept at the SISCC Offices or at the Contractors site office near the project sites; registers are to be maintained as public documents.

### ***During operation***

Very few complaints are expected to arise during operations. It is anticipated that complaints during operations will be mainly about cable vandalism, unlikely incidences where anchors or fishing gear might be caught in the cable and potential environmental impacts during cable maintenance works.

SISCC will ensure contact details for any complaints are made available to any member of the public through display of information on the CLS infrastructure. During operations should any person wish to report an incident to SISCC's representatives they should use those details. SISCC's representatives will respond within 48 hours of receipt of the complaint following the same procedure as that described above for management during construction.

## **6.3 Implementation of Social Impact Management Measures**

The implementation of the social impact management measures identified by this assessment will be undertaken as part of the project ESMP. This section identifies the parties who will be responsible for implementation of the ESMP.

The roles and responsibilities of key participants in implementing the ESMP for the project are outlined below:

- The SISCC Principal
- The Site Clerk (also referred to as site supervisor, assigned by the Contractor Principal)
- Contractor and Staff

The Construction Contractor will be responsible for ensuring this ESMP is implemented by all staff or any subcontractors involved with the construction works.

The SISCC Principal will ensure that all contractual documents specifically quote an ESMP in terms of responsibility for addressing and implementing relevant environmental and social requirements. The contractual documents should also indicate that the Contractor is responsible for ensuring legislative and ESMP compliance controls are maintained on site.

The SISCC is responsible for confirming, and if required, obtaining, Development Consent from the ECD within MECCDMM. Alternatively, the SISCC is responsible for obtaining a waiver of Development Consent requirements. The SISCC Principal will provide such to the Contractor in support of project delivery.

The Contractor is responsible for obtaining all other relevant approvals/permits/licences prior to works commencing.

The Contractor will appoint a Site Clerk who will have overall responsibility for ensuring that all employees, subcontractors, and persons involved with the planning and carrying out of the proposed works are familiar with their obligations to comply with environmental or social requirements.

Successful implementation relies upon support for, and compliance with, the ESMP's requirements from all involved parties. Table 6-4 outlines the phases of the project and the responsibilities of the principal, Site Clerk and contractor(s) and staff during the phases of the project.

**Table 6-4 Roles and responsibilities for implementation of social impact management measures**

Phase	Role	Responsibility
<b>Planning</b>	SISCC Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for the overall supervision and co-ordination of the project. Responsible for ensuring environmental compliance during the design phase.</li> <li>Responsible for undertaking appropriate land access consultation, negotiation and compensation with private, government, customary landholders and informal vegetable garden owners in Noro.</li> <li>Responsible for consultation with stakeholders and public notification about the project.</li> <li>Responsible for review of the draft ESMP and preparation of final ESMP prior to construction commencing, including finalisation of the SCP and Grievance Management Procedure.</li> <li>Agree procedures for emergency response.</li> <li>Agree frequency and method of auditing, monitoring and other matters which are to be reported to SISCC.</li> </ul>
<b>Construction or Operational works</b>	SISCC Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key contact and representative of SISCC</li> <li>Responsible for ensuring contracts adequately identify requirement for ESMP adherence and compliance</li> <li>Responsible for reporting any breaches of ESMP conditions to the ECD within MECCDMM</li> <li>Responsible for regular progress reporting to DFAT</li> </ul>
	Contractor Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for obtaining all required site licences to support effective implementation of the ESMP and completion of all works with regards to legislative obligations</li> </ul>

Phase	Role	Responsibility
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for ensuring reviewing, updating and revising the ESMP to be consistent with legislative requirements for site works</li> <li>Responsible for ensuring adherence and compliance with the ESMP including preparation of management plans and workforce strategy as outlined in the ESMP</li> <li>Responsible for reporting any breaches of ESMP or legislation to the SISCC</li> <li>Responsible for appointing an appropriate Site Clerk to oversee all ESMP requirements</li> </ul>
	Site Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for supervising, managing and implementing environmental and social controls, requirements, licences and procedures described by the Contractor Principal and/or the ESMP</li> <li>Conducts environmental audits/monitoring during all stages to ensure implementation of requirements</li> <li>Ensures provision of appropriate training or site instructions to site staff to enable them to meet their environmental and social obligations</li> <li>Maintains records of site works, including any training regarding adherence to ESMP requirements, site incident reports or site complaints management</li> <li>Responsible for the emergency response procedure for environmental, health, safety or other social incidents and reporting of such to the Principal</li> </ul>
	Contractor(s) and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement environmental and/or social controls described by the ESMP and/or Site Clerk</li> <li>Report all incidents to the Site Clerk</li> </ul>

## 6.4 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms

To address DFAT’s social safeguard requirements, SISCC will be responsible for social monitoring through the planning, construction and operations phases of the project. This will also include supervision and monitoring of its sub-contractors.

Monthly progress reporting by SISCC to its Board of Directors will record compliance and shortfalls with the social management strategies. These progress reports will be consolidated and submitted to DFAT at a frequency agreed between DFAT and SISCC during project planning, construction and operations phase.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the social impacts that could result from the proposed project would mainly be experienced temporarily during project planning and construction phase. Most impacts have been assessed to be of minor significance, while some potential impacts to safety are assessed to be of greater significance. Key area of social impacts are:

- Land access and easement location, especially where private land will be required in Honiara, customary land requirement in Auki and economic displacement of three vegetable gardens in Noro
- Potential impacts on community values (child and women safety) due to presence of non-residential workforce
- Safety impacts to general community particularly children near the project construction sites
- Traffic impacts particularly in Honiara and Auki where the project construction would occur along town/city roads
- Increase in noise and dust levels for residents and commercial properties surrounding the construction site
- Reduced access to commercial and subsistence fishers in some areas during cable laying.

Suitable impact mitigation measures have been developed to manage or avoid these impacts. DFAT's social safeguards are considered and addressed as commensurate to the potential impacts. These social impact mitigation measures have been included in the overarching project ESMP which forms part of the project PER. This will enable the social impacts to be adequately addressed during construction and operation of the project.

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GHD

Level 9

145 Ann Street

T: 61 7 3316 3000 F: 61 7 3316 3333 E: bnemail@ghd.com

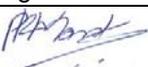
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