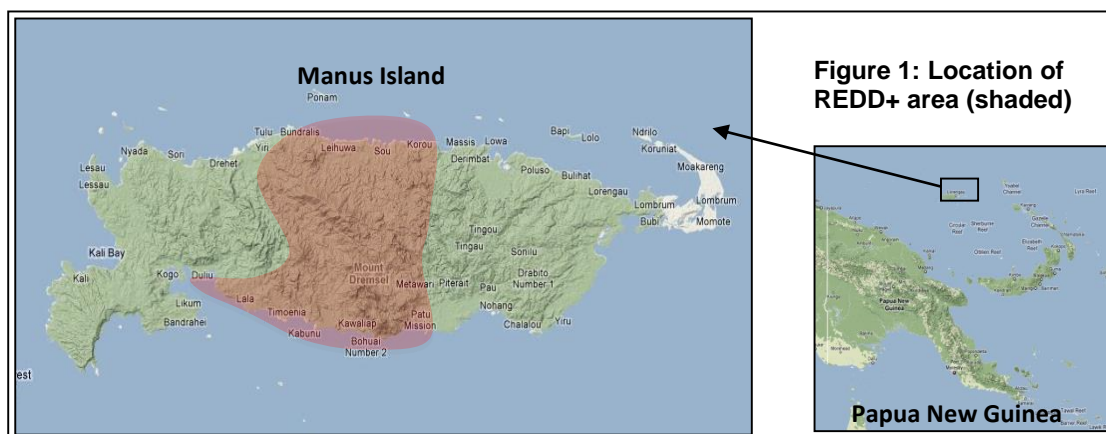




Profile of Wildlife Conservation Society supported Village-REDD+ Demonstration Project in Manus Province, Papua New Guinea

A Village-REDD+ demonstration project is being implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Papua New Guinea Program, an international non-profit conservation organization, in the central region of Manus Province of Papua New Guinea (PNG). The project design and approach recognizes the significance of customary land tenure in PNG and the meaningful participation of local landowners and local level governments in decision-making via a bottom-up planning process, hence the name 'Village-REDD'. The project also recognizes the importance of collaborating with various partners and relevant agencies within different levels of formal government in PNG (national, sub-national and local), while working with and promoting traditional forms of governance and social groupings such as clans as equally essential. The Village-REDD+ Project started with initial research and field assessments in 2009 followed by a pilot-testing phase from June 2012 – Dec 2014 with funding support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. At the national level, WCS participates actively at various fora including several technical working group meetings sanctioned through the PNG Office of Climate Change and Development (OCCD). WCS currently has a Memorandum of Understanding with OCCD, and further plans to develop similar arrangements other relevant government agencies. An important aim is to bridge the gaps between national REDD+ and climate change policy development and on-the-ground experiences and lessons learnt in the field.



Since 2012, several key activities have been implemented by WCS PNG. These include:

- Ongoing Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) sought from participating clans in the demonstration area. Eighty two (82) clans and sub-clans were engaged during this exercise. WCS also supported the national UN-REDD and OCCD to conduct REDD+ training FPIC clinics for key stakeholders in Manus Province, and further refine the national FPIC guidelines developed through OCCD.

- Clan land boundary mapping for participating clans in two Local Level Governments (LLGs) on the north and south coasts of Manus. This will allow future land use planning at the LLG and community level and potentially assist in designing an appropriate benefit distribution and carbon buffer system.
- Forest biomass and carbon inventory of the demonstration area. Seventy seven sampling plots of circular, nested design have been established randomly throughout the forest region (most of these plots will become permanent plots once a future carbon monitoring system is in place). Participatory forest monitoring is an important component of future monitoring plans and has started with training of relevant community members.
- Conservation contracts (or arrangements) are being negotiated with participating communities to provide interim REDD+ benefits in the form of livelihood projects such as rainwater catchment systems to assist local communities that decide against logging and other large-scale forest clearance-related activities.
- Environmental legal handbook is being developed by WCS with assistance from the Center for Environmental Law and Community Rights. This will be used as a resource in conducting targeted legal trainings for community leaders and developing LLG and/ or provincial laws.
- Integrating Village-REDD+ into LLG and provincial plans has been useful; the Manus Provincial Forest Management Committee has indicated strong interest in putting forest blocks in central Manus under protection which is currently under immense threat from large-scale rubber development and logging.

With ongoing approval and support from OCCD, WCS will transition and develop the Village-REDD+ project via a Jurisdictional Nested REDD+ approach. A Project Document (PD) following the Verified Carbon Standard/Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards (VCS/CCBS) guidelines and methodologies is being pursued. The JNR approach provides the most advanced and complete guide for



jurisdictional programs and can easily be aligned to future compliance REDD+ mechanisms. The Village-REDD+ project covers a total area of about 74, 800 ha. WCS envisages this will increase once we demonstrate the success of this project. Funding is needed to advance a Village-REDD+ JNR project at the Manus Provincial level. Support is also needed to develop the institutional and management arrangements for a future 'Carbon Bank', an entity that would become the jurisdictional and or project proponent for the Manus Village REDD+ project. In addition, provincial and local level governments' capacities will need to be scaled up to ensure transitioning from scenario 1 to scenarios 2 and 3 under the JNR framework, and to test the benefit sharing and distribution mechanism with clans committed to forest conservation on central Manus Island.