**Screening a Proposal - Viru Wharf**

**Project Background and Summary**

The Government of Solomon Islands (SIG) with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in providing funding for the rehabilitation and upgrading of selected infrastructure under the Land and Maritime Connectivity Project (LMCP) ‘the Project’. The project seeks to rehabilitated and upgrade roads in Guadalcanal and Honiara, the international ports of Noro and Honiara and seven domestic wharves in six provinces in the country.

This will include the rehabilitation and upgrading of the following road sections in Honiara and Guadalcanal:

* Hibiscus Avenue from Pt Cruz Hot Bread roundabout to Town Ground including the Mud Alley Road
* Road from the Honiara City Council to Town Ground (section of the main road from the city centre towards the West)
* Port Access Roads – (3 road Sections)
* East – West inner bypass road (Holy Cross to Hibiscus Avenue)
* Town Ground to White River – Upgrade from two lanes to four lanes (existing sealed, urban)
* White River to Doma – Rehabilitate (existing sealed, rural)
* Tambea to Naro – Upgrade and sealing (existing unsealed, rural) – including the Bridge at Kesao)
* Naro Hill to Lambi – rehabilitate (existing unsealed rural) – including the bridge at Malachchi)
* Henderson to Mberande – Rehabilitate (existing sealed, rural).

Including seven potential wharf improvements, upgrading or new wharf construction. The wharves considered are:

* Viru Wharf, Western Province;
* Buala Wharf, Isabel Province;
* Matangasi Wharf, Malaita Province;
* Waisisi Wharf, Malaita Province;
* Moli Wharf, Choiseul Province;
* Kirakira Wharf, Makira Ulawa Province; and,
* Ahanga Wharf, Renbel Province.

Also, the upgrading of the International Ports of Noro and Honiara. The LMCP is implemented by the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) through the Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MID) as the executing agency (EA). The Central Project Implementation Unit (CPIU) of the MID is the implementing agency (IA).

The project overall day to day management is done through the CPIU under which MID is the executing agency. The focal point is the Permanent Secretary (PS) of MID with assistance from the MID Civil Engineering Director and the MID designated project job manager. Cardno Emerging Markets of Australia in partnership with LBS Engineers Ltd a local established engineering consultancy firm are engaged as the design consultants had undertaken feasibility studies of the project sites and had done detailed design consultancy for the upgrading and rehabilitation of the prioritized assets.

Therefore, this report is prepared specifically for the construction of a new wharf at Viru Harbor in the Western Province. Viru Harbor, is located south of the main New Georgia Island. An important project requirement is a PER which meets the requirements of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology (MECDM) according to the Environment Act 1998 and the Environment Regulation 2008. Following the approval of the PER, the Director of the Environment and Conservation Department (ECD) within the MECDM will issue a Development Consent to MID for the construction of Viru Wharf.

**Description of the Location, Nature and Size of the Prescribed Development**

Viru is located in South New Georgia Island in Western Province. The proposed subproject site is at Tetemare Village in Viru Harbour and can be located on co-ordinates 6049’41.36’’S and 156031’22.91’’E.



 

The villages immediate to the project site are Tetemara and Tombe villages. Tombe is on the opposite side of the proposed wharf site which is at Tetemara. There are other villages but are located farther inland but since roads had been constructed by the logging operation people often travel by vehicles to Viru. The produces sold at the market are fresh garden produces, cooked and baked farmed produces including fish sold fresh and cooked. The products are sold to mostly the public and also to passing passengers. The most common items on sale are sweet potatoes, tapioca, taro, banana, coconut, fruits (including pawpaw, mango and citrus), various green vegetables, other vegetables (including pumpkin and capsicum) and nuts, particularly ngali nuts and cooked marine products. The farmed produces as well as fish and sawn timbers are the main sources of income for people in this community.

Landownership at the project area is customary and ownership is traced through patrilineal lineages. Land use in most of the communities in the project area is mostly gardening and the coastal area is only used for anchorage of OBM powered boats and is overgrown with littoral coastal vegetation.

The subproject will not traverse any sensitive ecosystems, protected, ecologically sensitive or densely populated areas and will not create any conflicts in resource use or development. The sub-project will have insignificant impacts on any rare or endangered species that may be present in the area or the Island. The proposed subproject site is an old log pond which is currently being used by the Eagon Company. There are no coral reef beds or corals identified in the area except for sediment or mud infiltrated into the harbour by the three river systems. There are no major effects of the wharf on the coral reefs, littoral drift and the coastal zone expected and it will be insignificant due to the existing environment, even though there is a pre-existing issue of coastal erosion in the area. The design of the wharf will cater for this issue. Armouring of the shoreline may also be required.

The sub-project will not create any major impacts on cultural or heritage (tambu) sites. No land acquisition or resettlement will be required.

**5.4. Need for the Project**

The sub-project feasibility and detailed design phase is under the Transport Sector Project Development Facility (TSPDF) of the MID but is to be included under the Land and Maritime Connectivity Project (LMCP) of the MID during construction. The overall project aims at improving connectivity and efficiency of trade activities in the Solomon Islands by proving improved land and maritime infrastructure.

The Viru harbor is accessed by villages as further west of the harbor as far as Roviana for transporting goods and travelling passengers to and from Honiara.The overall project is essential to improve connectivity and efficiency of trade activities by providing better access to services and markets.

**5.5. Justification for the Project**

The demand for access to wharf infrastructure is very high in the project area as shipping services in the area often berth at the existing wharf site. existing wharf is no longer serviceable and safe although it is still accessible due to its location and easy road access by villages.

The harbour provides safe berthing and easy landing for intra and inters island small boats and provide for safe boarding and debarkation of travelling passengers in the vessels. Also, the wharf will enable improvements to loading and off-loading of cargoes and other materials from the ships onto the wharf deck and visa-versa.

There are few ships servicing the area via their scheduled routes (North-South/South-North) on a monthly basis to no shipping services over 3 months in 2019 due to the sediment laden water surrounding the existing wharf. Most people travel in a Ship to and from Honiara due to cheap and affordable fare, despite, travelling time which takes about 2 days. Those who wish to travel to Honiara in the quickest and shortest route travels via Solomon airlines which provides daily flight services to the nearest airport at Seghe, which is about 40 to 90 minutes from Viru but it is a very expensive exercise.

Important infrastructure such as wharves are valuable assets to communities or villages in the provinces as it will not only be used by people from the immediate villages but by people from other villages that can access Viru harbor. Without such infrastructure services to support socio-economic livelihoods will remain poor and people will be unfortunate or reluctant to carry out some important livelihood activities.