

## FP044: Tina river hydropower development project, Solomon Islands

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*CSO comments on the project given as intervention during the 16<sup>th</sup> GCF Board Meeting, April 2017*

We would like to highlight and applaud the efforts made by the Government of the Solomon Islands to proactively work with and secure the support of indigenous local communities. Stakeholder engagement, especially stakeholder communities, is a vital component of the principle of country ownership.

As civil society organizations have clearly stated, we have significant concerns about GCF financing for large hydropower. **It is a last-century technology with a well-documented track record of environmental and social impacts. Large hydro is particularly vulnerable to climate change, and its reservoirs can emit significant amounts of greenhouse gases. Methane in particular.**

That said, we recognize that the Tina River project **is not your usual large hydro project. At 15 megawatts, it is a modest-sized hydro project in a SIDS country with the impressive goal of displacing expensive diesel. It also has a real chance, unlike most hydro projects, to expand needed energy access. It has a limited local footprint and also is innovative in its benefit-sharing mechanisms for indigenous communities.**

It is important, though, to distinguish between **Tina River and the business-as-usual hydro projects** that have, for example, filled the portfolio of the Clean Development Mechanism. **GCF should not be in the business of supporting large hydro, and we believe Tina River should be a very specific exception to this rule.**

That is not to say that we do not have some concerns about the project. There are a number of issues that should have been ironed out before bringing it to the GCF board:

- No climate change vulnerability assessment was disclosed. We have been told that a modeling exercise has been conducted but was not disclosed for review. Such assessments should be routine to ensure that projects, especially those vulnerable to hydrological changes, are climate resilient.
- GCF support is requested to upgrade the road construction to provide access to the proposed dam site. **In principle, GCF funds should be allocated to project components that have demonstrable value added or transformative potential.** We are also concerned whether the costs associated with the project are not underestimated, and seek clarity about who will bear the unanticipated cost and time overruns that are typical for this type of project.
- Finally, we note that **the project will facilitate access to and increase pressures upon a unique biodiversity hotspot located upstream of the project. This area should be formally protected.**