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The Nature Conservancy – Empowering Stewardship in the Coral Triangle - ‘**Coral Triangle Women**’ *Indonesia – BHS (Bird’s Head Seascape)*

Document prepared by WOCAN

Project Name	The Nature Conservancy (TNC) – Empowering Stewardship in the Coral Triangle – ‘Coral Triangle Women’
W+ Project ID	
Project Start Date	March 6 2025: Empowering Stewardship in the Coral Triangle (GAC) December 2024: Accelerating Impact Fund for Supporting Indonesia’s Marine Protected Area Network (existing project prior to GAC)
Project End Date	September 30, 2028 (end of reporting period is March 31, 2029.)
Date of PDD	January 10, 2026
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1. DESCRIPTION OF WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT ACTIVITIES

1.1 Summary Description of the Women’s Empowerment Activities

The project is located in Misool, one of the four major islands in the Raja Ampat Islands in Southwest Papua, Indonesia, and covers an area of 785 square miles.

Women play a critical role in natural resource management, as they are highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. Equally, the dependence on natural resources also generates extensive and intimate knowledge of the natural environment. However, women face multiple challenges related to gender asymmetries, resulting often in unequal access to resources, services and information and limits on decision making within the household and the community at large.

The barriers to women’s decision making is perhaps best reflected in the traditional, community based system of natural resource management or “*sasi*”, which involves temporarily prohibiting the harvest of resources like fish, fruit, and forest products in specific areas. This “taboo” system is based on local wisdom and customary laws to ensure resources are conserved, their quality is improved, and their abundance increased over time. The practice of “*sasi*”, which has been in existence for about 400 years in the eastern region of Indonesia, has traditionally been the exclusive domain of men in terms of decision making.

In the first example of its kind, a women’s group undertook the management of *Sasi* in Waifuna in West Papua in 2008, with their rights being fully recognized by the sub village government, church and customary holders. The group managed the harvesting, monitoring and sale of sea cucumbers and lobsters. Despite existing challenges, the women’s group increased their capacity to engage in conservation activities and decision making, while contributing to marine conservation efforts. Additionally, the whole community benefitted from changing perspectives on women’s abilities to manage natural resources effectively.

1.2 Project sector and type

The project covers the following 2 sectors:

- Conservation of marine resources
- Livelihoods

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1.3 Project implementers

Organization name	YKAN – Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara
Contact person	Hilda Lionata
Title	Indonesia Oceans Program manager
Address of Home Office and Field Office	Jl. Iskandarsyah Raya no. 66C, Third Floor South Jakarta
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Email	Hilda.lionata@ykan.or.id

1.4 Other Entities Involved in the Project's and Women's Empowerment Activities

N/A

1.5 Project activities start date

The project “Empowering Stewardship in the Coral Triangle”, supported by the Global Affairs Canada (GAC) development funding began in March 2025. It builds on the existing experience of activities supported by the Accelerating Impact fund for supporting Indonesia’s Marine Protected Area Network, which began in December 2024.

- The W+ Education & Knowledge domain will be applied to measuring outcomes from the capacity development activities associated with the GAC support.
- The W+ Leadership domain will be applied to measuring outcomes from the capacity development activities prior to the GAC support.

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1.6 W+ Domains and Crediting Period

<i>W+ Domain and title of related activities</i>	<i>Start Date</i>	<i>End Date</i>	<i>Crediting period</i>	<i>Any Associated Standard</i>
Education & Knowledge	October ¹ 2025	Mar 2027	18 months	NA
Leadership	October 2025	Mar 2027	18 months	

1.7 Description of project activities

The project aims to develop the capacity of women, through *sasi* to manage resources and enhance sustainability beyond the project life.

Through the support of the present GAC funding (2025), the project seeks to strengthen present activities, while adding a few more interventions. Activities already conducted prior to March 2025 include:

- Leadership development
- Trainings in technical knowledge to manage resources and use of modern technologies for free diving
- Building local organizational capacity of *sasi* and its members
- Accessing resources from regional sources, such as local / regional government institutions

Moving ahead, the project aims to strengthen and build sustainability through the following interventions:

- Develop a legal framework for partnerships with regional institutions
- Continue to develop technical capacity to manage resources and expand to other members the use of modern technology for free diving
- Explore ecotourism opportunities linked to sharing *sasi* custom and practice

¹ W+ assessment will measure results of activities supported under new GAC project only, that builds on related activities of previous projects.

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1.8 Project's activities, boundary and scope

The project is located in Misool, one of the four major islands in the Raja Ampat Islands in Southwest Papua, Indonesia, and covers an area of 785 square miles.

Misool, formerly spelled Mysol or Misol, is one of the four major islands in the Raja Ampat Islands in Southwest Papua, Indonesia. Its area is 2,034 km². The highest point is 561 m and the main towns are Waigama, located on the island's northwest coast, and Lilinta on the island's southeast coast.

Area: 785 mi²

Archipelago: [Raja Ampat Islands](#)

Coordinates: 1°53'41"S 130°5'1"E / 1.89472°S 130.08361°E

Location: [Oceania](#)

1.9 Conditions Prior to the Project's Initiation of Activities

Conditions prior to the present interventions through GAC funding (March 2025), the project had focused on capacity development through support from the Accelerating Impact Fund for supporting Indonesia's Marine Protected Area network. As outlined above, the prior capacity interventions were as follows:

- Leadership development
- Trainings in technical knowledge to manage resources and use of modern technologies for free diving
- Building local organizational capacity of Sasi and its members
- Accessing resources from regional sources, such as local / regional government institutions

1.10 Compliance with Laws, Statutes and Other Regulatory Frameworks

The project is in compliance with all the necessary laws, statutes and regulatory frameworks of Indonesia and has the right to engage in project activities.

1.11 Project Implementer's Right to Engage in the Project

The project implementer has all the requisite legal rights to engage in the project.

1.12 Other Forms of Environmental or Social Credit

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N/A

1.13 Additional Information Relevant to the Project

N/A

2. GENDER AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Introduction

The aim of the assessment has two interrelated aims. First it examines the inextricable link between women's empowerment and collective action within the coastal communities of Misool, through the medium of the traditional Indonesian system of natural resource management known as *sasi*. Second, it analyses the disproportionate vulnerabilities from climate related events, that women in particular have to bear, set against the broader challenges experienced by the coastal communities in Misool as they confront recurrent floods and droughts

The challenges stem from three sets of vulnerabilities: material, motivational and attitudinal, and social and organizational. Equally, the assessment delves into affirmative scenarios which are important entry points for project interventions, both to foster empowerment outcomes, and importantly, to strategically ensure outcomes are sustained beyond the project life.

The theoretical lens guiding this assessment is drawn from the conceptual framework of gender analysis. Principally, the concepts of *Position*² and *Condition*³ are applied, while also examining the gender power asymmetries through a *typology of decision making*⁴.

1. Gendered susceptibilities to climate vulnerability

The coastal area of Misool is vulnerable to climate events that lead to floods and occasional drought, which directly impact agriculture production through crop damage,

² **Position** refers to women's social status in relation to men and the society at large

³ **Condition** refers to the material situation of women

⁴ **Contractual**: where decisions are made externally and women's engagement and their roles in project activities are predetermined by external stakeholder (s)

Consultative: where decisions are made externally and women stakeholders are informed accordingly

Collaborative: where decisions are made jointly to the extent it is possible. Women stakeholders are informed and engaged in project processes

Collegial or women-led: where decisions are made by women stakeholders and project implementers services are sought

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through flooding, excessive sandy soil and lack of fresh water for cultivation and household consumption. Beyond the material impacts, climate change events affect women and men differently, largely because of existing asymmetries that make women and girls more vulnerable. Women and girls face heightened vulnerability due to their primary role in securing food /water, limits on their mobility, and care giving burdens which get intensified by climate shocks. This in turn leads to increasing health risks, higher resource burdens and reduced adaptive capacity.

While climate impacts have a bearing on the material vulnerability of both men and women, women are potentially more vulnerable in terms of emotional and psychosocial health, and their ability to sustain collectives and local organizational capacities.

Material Vulnerabilities

Women's material vulnerabilities to climate shocks are shaped by their gendered roles in food provisioning, caregiving, and household management, resulting in disproportionate impacts across livelihoods, infrastructure, and health. During the Focused Group Discussions, women from the coastal belt of Misool reported a number of negative impacts from excessive rainfall and drought that contribute to community and household vulnerabilities in four areas of agriculture, fishing, infrastructure and health.

Summary: Gendered Material Vulnerabilities reported by women

Box 1: Gendered Material Vulnerabilities

Agriculture and Food Security

- Crop failure and declining productivity due to flooding and increased sandy soils, undermining household food availability.
- Disruptions in freshwater supply for both cultivation and domestic use, increasing women's time burden in securing water.
- Washed-away land boundaries, reducing women's access to and control over productive plots.

Fishing and Household Nutrition

- Damage to boats and fishing nets, reduced fish catch and loss of income from fish sales, undermining a key source of income for women
- Fuel shortages restrict access to deep-sea fishing grounds, lowering household earnings and disproportionately affecting women, who bear primary responsibility for household provisioning.

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- Reduced availability of fish protein in diets, directly affecting household nutrition managed largely by women.
- Limited income restricts women's ability to invest in or develop alternative livelihood options.

Box 1: Gendered Material Vulnerabilities (contd.)

Infrastructure and Living Conditions

- Increased rainfall disrupts solar power, limiting women's ability to manage household energy needs and daily tasks.
- Sedimentation and flooding around homes increase women's unpaid labour for cleaning and maintenance.
- Damage to jetties and transport infrastructure restricts women's access to markets, services, and emergency support.
- School closures and drought-related fire risks intensify women's caregiving and household protection responsibilities.
- Limited access to safe drinking water increases women's health-related and caregiving burdens

Health and Well-being

- Increased respiratory illnesses, particularly among children and the elderly, intensifying women's caregiving roles.
- Higher incidence of water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea due to unsafe water sources.
- Nutritional stress within households when fish and other food sources are unavailable.

Emotional and psycho-social vulnerabilities

In addition to material challenges, both women and men reported being vulnerable to attitudinal impacts that result from severe climate events, though these impacts are experienced differently. Women reported feelings of intense anxiety, depression and emotional exhaustion, as well as increased frustration while caring for dependents such as children and elderly. Men reported feelings of anger and stress, with women sharing that men often become more demanding during times of acute pressure.

Women also noted that they frequently deprioritised their own health needs while caring for dependents, alongside feelings of 'guilt' for not being able to provide school fees for children studying away from the village in urban areas.

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Summary table: Gendered Emotional Vulnerabilities

Dimension	Women	Men
Primary emotional responses	Anxiety related to displacement and insecurity	Anger in response to stress and uncertainty
Stress related behaviour	Heightened exasperation, sometimes directed toward children	Increased demanding behaviour toward family members
Care and health priorities	Tend to deprioritise their own health care needs in favour of dependents	Less reported abandonment of personal health care
Economic related guilts	Feelings of guilt over inability to provide school fees for children studying outside the village	Similar feelings of guilt over inability to provide school fees for children studying outside the village

Social and Organizational Vulnerabilities

Women in general and those who are members of a collective (*sasi*) are impacted in multiple ways. At the household level, generally women bear primary responsibility to manage the disruptions to children's schooling, particularly for those who travel outside the community to attend school. Women are also susceptible to increased risk of sexual exploitation when displacement forces them to move to new areas for safety. Those that remain in the community face increased stress in managing land related disputes, especially over land boundaries that are washed away due to floods.

As members of a collective, women reported to have little or no time and capacity to engage in *sasi* activities particularly in monitoring and managing natural resources, particularly their ability to guard from illegal access and from poaching from outsiders.

Summary: Gendered Social and Organisational Vulnerabilities

Box 2: Key Gendered Impacts on Collective Action and Community Stability

- Disruptions to children's schooling, managed primarily by women.
- Reduced community mobility, increasing the risk of outsiders accessing local resources unimpeded.
- Weakened *sasi* structures as emergencies limit members' time and capacity for collective action.
- Impeded monitoring of natural resources under *sasi* due to crisis-related pressures.
- Increased community disputes, particularly over land boundaries erased by flooding.
- Heightened risk of sexual exploitation as women move to new areas in search of safety.

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Power Asymmetries and Decision Making

Another dimension of women's vulnerability relates to their limited decision making power, both as individuals, and as a collective through membership in a *sasi*. Despite being a key constituent of the project, that aims to generate empowerment outcomes, women and *sasi* have little or no influence in project decisions, as compared to other project stakeholders. This imbalance underscores a critical gap between the project's empowerment objectives and existing governance and power dynamics.

A focus group discussion with women members of *sasi* and the project team in Misool identified a number of key stakeholders who are key determinants to the success of the project. A closer examination of the difference in decision making (Influence) and Importance (key to the success of the project) of each stakeholder demonstrates that while SASI is Important to the success of the project intervention, their ability to Influence over all decisions is limited by the social position of women in society.

Summary: Asymmetries in Stakeholder Influence

<u>High Influence / High Importance⁵</u> • Provincial govt • BLIUD (State owned company) • BAF (Blue Abadi Fund) • GFCR (Global Fund for Coral Reefs) • Coral Fund (Debt Swap) • Tropical (Tropical Forest and Coral Reef Conservation Act)	<u>High Influence / Low Importance</u> • Elders • Church • Household males
<u>Low Influence / Low Importance</u> • Tourism Agency • Fisheries Agency • BKSDA	<u>Low Influence / High Importance</u> • Sasi • Women members of <i>sasi</i> • Eco tourism operators that provide Live on -board facilities; free diving community; homestays; markets)

2. Affirmative Scenarios

An important affirmative scenario is the existence of *sasi*, and how the membership of women has transformed this traditional institution as a leverage for women's empowerment. As a platform for collective action, *sasi* represents an inextricable linkage between sustainable natural resources management employing customary laws, that are embedded in sacred ritual, cultural symbolism and meaning. This is

⁵ Influence refers to power of decision making; Importance refers to the quality of engagement required to make the project intervention successful

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coupled with the strength of a community support mechanism (Gotong Royong), particularly important during times of stress and material vulnerability.

In addition, there are important unseen and often unrecognized transformations to individual women as a result of their participation in *sasi*- generated activities. These have generated agentic transformations through the development of ‘counter narratives’ of ‘womanhood’ and through different expectations of boys and men.

Institutions

What is *SASI*?

Box 3: About Sasi

Sasi is a traditional Indonesian system of natural resource management, particularly in eastern Indonesia, that uses customary laws to protect resources by temporarily closing off harvesting areas on land or at sea. It is a conservation practice used to allow ecosystems to regenerate and is still widely practiced by indigenous communities, though sometimes its enforcement against outsiders is a challenge. *Sasi* is a 400 year old traditional conservation system and natural resource management concept that is effective in regulating resources use in indigenous communities, solving conflicts and protecting vulnerable groups such as women and children, particularly widows and orphans⁶.

Key aspects of *Sasi*:

- **Resource management:** It regulates the exploitation of natural resources, such as fishing areas, fishing gear, target species, and harvesting times.
- **Sustainability:** The primary goal is to ensure the long-term sustainability of resources, prevent over-exploitation, and maintain ecological balance.
- **Community-based:** It is a community-led system rooted in local traditions and enforced through a combination of traditional leaders, church leaders, and local government officials, notes this Bird's Head Seascape PDF.
- **Customary laws:** The rules are often unwritten and passed down through oral tradition.
- **Symbolic:** The practice often involves ceremonies, prayers, and symbolic gestures to mark the opening and closing of harvesting periods.

⁶ <https://learn.landcoalition.org/en/good-practices/Sasi-traditional-natural-resource-conservation-and-management-system/>

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- **Adaptation:** The practice is evolving, with modern conservation efforts often supporting the inclusion of women in decision-making and integrating it with formal conservation policies, according to FAO and TNC.

Culture: Weaving nature and ritual

An important cultural moment is articulated through the ritual specialist known as a “*wind bender*” also known as a “rain shaman” in Papua and other parts of Indonesia. He is invested with supernatural power to change the weather pattern, particularly important to safeguard against storms and heavy rains while fishers are out at sea, or to prevent crop damage.

One such Shaman described how his power “descends from the family “ (clan ancestors, who are descended from the stingray fish), and is gifted with the power to control weather events.

Asked if the power can be transferred to women:

“Yes it can, particularly now that traditional ideas of female pollution associated with menstruation and child birth have changed significantly”.

However, he warned that the wrong use of this power can have severe bodily consequences for a male or female

*“For a man: enlargement of his testis
For a woman: obstructions in her genitalia”*

Local Organizational Capacity

The existence of “Gotong Royong”, which is a community self-support mechanism. Women are more likely to organize for collective action than men. Through the “Gotong Royong” and church, women engage in prayer vigils and also seek family support

Strategies for Adaptive Livelihoods

During times of climate induced vulnerability, women develop various ways of generating livelihoods. As outlined below, they range from adapting dietary needs to developing water harvesting.

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Summary: Women's Adaptive Strategies for Livelihood Resilience

- Adapt dietary needs through increased focus on minor crop production such as bananas, sago and jackfruit
- While men fish, women focus on small home gardens
- Generating income through small enterprises such as baking cakes, cookies, basket weaving for income generation
- Supplementing household food supplies through gleaning, which is the practice of harvesting fish from shallow waters to supplement the catch of men
- Since women are housebound during emergencies, they also focus on adding value to fish products (smoking and salting) for sale to neighbors and outside markets
- In gathering non timber forest products such as bamboo shoots and ferns from the local forests
- Applying traditional knowledge on natural remedies that includes mixing hot water with herbs gathered from nearby forests
- Relying on water harvesting techniques during water supply disruptions

Changing ideas of womanhood

Women members of SASI reported increasing levels of self-confidence, with enhanced mobility and social status that accompanied their engagement with the *sasi* and the project. As one of the SASI women member noted:

"....as some of us SASI members boarded the public boat to attend a meeting with the local government in the mainland, I was greeted by the surprise of other female passengers seated in third class seating as I moved beyond and upstairs to the first class section

.....they asked: how come you are not sitting in our normal seats?". I told them, 'we are the guests of the local government and have been provided tickets in first class section of the boat'

'....we felt so confident and proud'

Summary: Changing views of womanhood

Before	Present
Women should be quiet and restrained	Women actively teach and mentor other members of the <i>sasi</i> group
Women should follow the lead of husbands or fathers	Women travel independently to train other women in free diving

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Women should not engage in “too much talk”	Women demonstrate confidence and leadership through collective action
Limited space for women’s public participation	Strong belief in women’s strength through collective action
Views of an “ideal” male:	
Dominant decision-maker	Supportive husband Allows women to pursue their choices and aspirations
Sons expected to observe and comply	Sons encouraged to be responsible and engaged: <i>“Be active, take part, take a role, and not be a bystander”</i>
Minimal male involvement in conservation activities	Men participate actively in TNC and related community activities

3. SELECTION OF W+ DOMAINS

W+ Domain	Benefits	Challenges/ Risks
Education & Knowledge	- Builds capacity to manage resources - Ensures sustainability beyond the project life	Refers to Risks outlined in Women’s Empowerment Plan (WEP)
Leadership	Women leaders engage in accessing resources for <i>sasi</i> and ensure sustainability beyond project life	Same as above

The project has spent considerable prior efforts to develop capacities for women’s leadership through the *sasi*. The activities for capacity development have focused on enhancing leadership, technical knowledge, local organizational capacity, and accessing resources with the goal of ensuring *sasi* is made sustainable beyond the project life.

In the near future, with GAC funds, the project aims to assist *sasi* develop a legal framework for partnership with regional government and other institutions.

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These past actions, and planned activities for the coming year will generate knowledge and leadership outcomes. Hence, the selection of Education & Knowledge, and Leadership domains for measurement is most appropriate.

4. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PLAN (WEP)

NB: The Women's Empowerment Plan is submitted as a separate document.

Project's intentionality

<i>Policy for gender/women's empowerment</i>	<i>Budget targeted for women's empowerment</i>	<i>M&E plan for women's empowerment</i>	<i>Internal capacities for gender analysis and women's empowerment</i>	<i>Project's selection criteria of beneficiaries to demonstrate equal opportunity for participation of women from all social groups in project activities</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes <i>but partial</i>	Yes <i>but partial</i>
An overall policy for gender exists for TNC	There is a budget targeted for women's empowerment through the GAC funds	The W+ Women's Empowerment Plan has been developed	There is a gender person in YKAN and TNC. The internal capacities for gender analysis amongst project team needs considerable capacity input	While project aims are targeted towards women, the selection criteria for project beneficiaries does not precisely adhere to selection based on intersectionalities

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

For the W+ assessment, focus group discussions and individual interviews were conducted with beneficiaries in Misool. Prior to these field activities, interviews and meetings were also conducted with the YKAN team to assess the most appropriate selection of W+ domains.

The selection of Education & Knowledge domain was considered most relevant to measure the outcomes generated from the numerous capacity interventions that had already occurred in the last several years, and the new activities planned for 2026 with support from the GAC fund.

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Additionally, the Leadership domain was considered to be relevant because the focus group discussions and interviews revealed considerable leadership outcomes already exist from past interventions through support from the Accelerating Impact Fund for supporting Indonesia's Marine Protected Area network.

The measurement for both W+ domains will be conducted in March 2027. Baselines for both domains will be generated through a control group and/or recall methodologies.

6. DO NO HARM

The project seeks to expand women's participation in natural resource management, conservation, and livelihood activities across the coastal areas of Missol. While there are several challenges that inhibit women's participation in the project (see the Gender & Stakeholder Assessment), the assessment also revealed that gender-based violence is a critical risk that could undermine empowerment outcomes.

During formal focus group discussions, no women disclosed personal experiences of violence. However, women frequently noted the need to obtain their husband's consent to participate in project activities.

Identified Potential Harm: Risk of Increased GBV Linked to Women's Participation

Although the project has not triggered reported incidents of GBV, there is a recognised risk that women's participation in training, leadership roles, livelihood activities, or conservation work may potentially contribute to household tension. Increased visibility, mobility, income generation, or involvement in decision-making may be perceived as disrupting established gender roles and household arrangements. In contexts where men traditionally hold authority over finances, mobility, and public engagement, such shifts may increase the risk of emotional, verbal, or physical violence, particularly if men feel excluded, uninformed, or undermined.

Mitigation Measures (refer to the list of recommended activities in the addendum to WEP)

- Developing strategies for male-allyship
- Promote safe and socially appropriate participation modalities
- Strengthen confidential safeguarding and referral pathways

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7. BENEFIT SHARING MECHANISM

The key platform that is available for benefit sharing is *sasi* which is a traditional Indonesian system of natural resource management, particularly in eastern Indonesia, that uses customary laws to protect resources by temporarily closing off harvesting areas on land or at sea. It is a conservation practice used to allow ecosystems to regenerate and is still widely practiced by indigenous communities, though sometimes its enforcement against outsiders is a challenge. *Sasi* is a 400 year old traditional conservation system and natural resource management concept that is effective in regulating resources use in indigenous communities, solving conflicts and protecting vulnerable groups such as women and children, particularly widows and orphans.

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8. DECLARATION OF NON-INVOLVEMENT IN ANY FORM OF DISCRIMINATION, SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ABUSE OR HARASSMENT (SEAH)

Hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge, neither (name of project implementer) or any other entity involved in project design or implementation has not been involved in or will be involved in any form of discrimination, sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment (SEAH).

This signed declaration is made in good faith and with my full consent, without pressure or coercion. I understand that any breach thereof may/will result in the termination of the W+ Application.

This signed declaration forms part of the requirements of the application of the W+ Standard.

Signature of authorized representative submitting this Project Design Document

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____