TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Kibiri Economic Growth Centre (EGC)

Project Title: Kibiri Economic Growth Centre (EGC)

Development Location: Kibiri, Vella La Vella Island, Western Province, Solomon Islands Lead **Proponent:** Kibiri Economic Growth Centre Development Authority (KEDA) in partnership with the SIPO (Rainbow) Tribe.

Regulatory Authority: Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology (MECDM) / Environment and Conservation Division

Legal Basis: Environment Act 1998 (Sections 31 & 32); Planning and Development Act (Cap 154)

Prepared by: Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology

1.0 INTRODUCTION & PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Kibiri Economic Growth Centre (EGC) is a planned multi-sectoral rural expansion covering 269 hectares of customary land, transitioning the area from historical commercial logging to localized economic development. The project encompasses coastal zones, flat agricultural plains, perennial river catchments, and forested elevated areas.

Proposed functions include an international trade port, aquaculture facilities, light industry/agro-processing (kava, cocoa, copra, and fish), commercial zones, an 800kWp solar mini-grid, and residential expansion for up to 5,000 people. Given the massive footprint and proximity to globally significant marine ecosystems within the Coral Triangle, a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE EIA

The primary objective of this EIA is to identify, predict, and evaluate the potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of the Kibiri EGC project. Specifically, the EIA must:

1. Fulfil the statutory requirements of the Environment Act 1998 for Category A and B prescribed activities.
2. Establish accurate baseline data for marine, terrestrial, hydrological, and social environments.
3. Assess the specific environmental risks identified in the Scoping Report (siltation, industrial runoff, solid waste/sanitation).
4. Formulate an actionable Environmental Management Plan (EMP) that enforces mandatory spatial setbacks and engineering controls.
5. Establish a framework for the Tribal Ranger Program and quarterly compliance auditing.

3.0 SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

The EIA must cover the entire 269-hectare footprint and adjacent affected areas (marine and downstream). The assessment must evaluate impacts across all project phases: Pre-construction, Construction, Operation, and Decommissioning.

3.1 Project Components to be assessed:

- Category A (Full ESIA Required): Multi-purpose commercial shipping wharf, large-scale open-water/pond aquaculture, 30+ hectare agricultural land clearing.
- Category B (Limited Assessment Required): 800kWp solar mini-grid, light manufacturing/processing units, centralized health clinics, central market square.
- Category C (Generic Best-Practice Codes): Mangrove eco-tourism boardwalks, KEDA administrative offices, community school infrastructure.

4.0 EIS CHECKLIST & STUDY REQUIREMENTS

The EIS report must follow the MECDM EIS checklist structure. The following specific tasks and studies must be executed:

4.1 Project Description

- Provide a detailed master plan of the 269-hectare site, detailing zoning (e.g., Zone A2 agro-processing, residential, port).
- Provide designs for the international trade port, jetties, aquaculture facilities, and solar mini-grid.
- Detail the projected population influx (3,000 to 5,000 residents) and workforce numbers.

4.2 Baseline Environmental Profile (Physical, Biological, Social)

- Marine Environment: Map and assess the health of the northern shoreline coral reefs and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) within the Coral Triangle. Assess current water clarity and marine biodiversity.
- Watercourses & Hydrology: Map the critical perennial river along the southern boundary. Assess baseline freshwater quality, flow rates, and groundwater table depths.
- Topography & Climate: Map the low-lying inundation belts (0–10 meters above sea level). Incorporate sea-level rise data (currently 8mm/year) and assess vulnerability to coastal storm surges and tropical cyclones.
- Socio-Economic & Cultural: Map customary land boundaries. Identify, map, and register all "Tambu" (sacred/culturally significant) sites. Assess current community health, livelihoods, and infrastructure.

4.3 Impact Assessment & Evaluation (Based on Scoping Tracks)

The EIA must rigorously analyse the three principal environmental risks scoped:

1. Siltation and Coastal Degradation:
    - *Source:* Maritime cargo wharf construction, port jetties, and upgrading of logging-era unsealed transport corridors.
    - *Impact:* Topsoil erosion from heavy downpours, silt runoff smothering coral systems, and degradation of Blue Economy assets.
2. Industrial Runoff & Groundwater Pollution:
    - *Source:* Concentrated kava washing, cocoa fermentation, copra drying, and fish-processing shared warehouses (Zone A2).
    - *Impact:* Unmanaged organic and chemical wastewater polluting the freshwater table and marine food sources.
3. Solid Waste Accumulation & Sanitation Deficits:
    - *Source:* Influx of 3,000 to 5,000 permanent residents and central market operations.

- *Impact:* Ad-hoc waste accumulation, public health risks, micro-plastics, and hazardous leachate seeping into coastal ecosystems.

5.0 MANDATORY MITIGATION & ENGINEERING CONTROLS

The EIA and subsequent Environmental Management Plan (EMP) must enforce the following minimum design targets as condition precedents for development consent:

1. Mandatory Spatial Setbacks: All permanent port structures must maintain a 30-meter setback from the high-water mark. Civil/residential buildings must maintain a 100-meter setback.
2. Riparian Safeguards: Establish and enforce a rigid 50-meter buffer around the primary southern river. No agricultural clearing or impermeable manufacturing floors are permitted within this zone.
3. Hydrological Waste Isolation: All industrial occupants in agro-processing clusters must design, build, and maintain closed-loop water recycling facilities operating under a strict Zero-Discharge Policy.
4. Sanitary Infrastructure Allocation: The EMP must outline the isolation of a 3–5 hectare plot, positioned at least 500 meters from any residential block or waterway, to establish an engineered sanitary landfill prior to Phase II deployment.

6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT & MONITORING PLAN (EMP)

The EIA must include a comprehensive EMP that sets up the following monitoring benchmarks, integrating local community participation:

1. Tribal Ranger Program Integration: Design a program to train and commission local wardens from the SIPO Tribe to collect baseline marine water clarity samples and stream chemical samples on a bi-weekly timeline.
2. Tambu Site Protection Protocol: Ensure all sacred/cultural areas are permanently mapped and protected by a strict 20-meter exclusion boundary before any construction equipment enters the site.
3. Quarterly Audit Schedules: Establish a strict reporting protocol requiring KEDA to file physical progress and environmental tracking statements with MECDM every three months.

7.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION & DISCLOSURE

- Conduct extensive stakeholder consultations with the SIPO (Rainbow) Tribe, local communities, Western Province authorities, and relevant NGOs.
- Provide evidence of consultation, including meeting minutes, attendance lists, and a matrix detailing how community concerns have been addressed in the final EIS.

8.0 EIS REPORT STRUCTURE & FORMAT

The final EIS report submitted to MECDM must adhere to the Ministry's standard format, containing at minimum:

1. Executive Summary
2. Legal and Regulatory Framework
3. Project Description
4. Methodology of the Assessment
5. Existing Environment (Baseline Data)
6. Impact Assessment and Evaluation (incorporating the 3 scoped impact tracks)
7. Alternatives Analysis (Including "No Project" alternative)
8. Environmental Management Plan (EMP) (Incorporating Mandatory Mitigation Controls)
9. Monitoring Plan (Tribal Rangers & Quarterly Audits)
10. Public Consultation Report

9.0 TIMELINE & SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- The EIA study shall be completed within 12 months of the issuance of this ToR.
- The Proponent (KEDA) must submit a hard copies and a digital copies of the Draft EIS to MECDM for review.
- Following MECDM and public review, a Final EIS incorporating all feedback must be submitted for final development consent consideration under Section 32 of the Environment Act 1998.