

# COMDEKS PHOTOSTORY

Promoting Resilience of Socio-ecological Production Landscapes

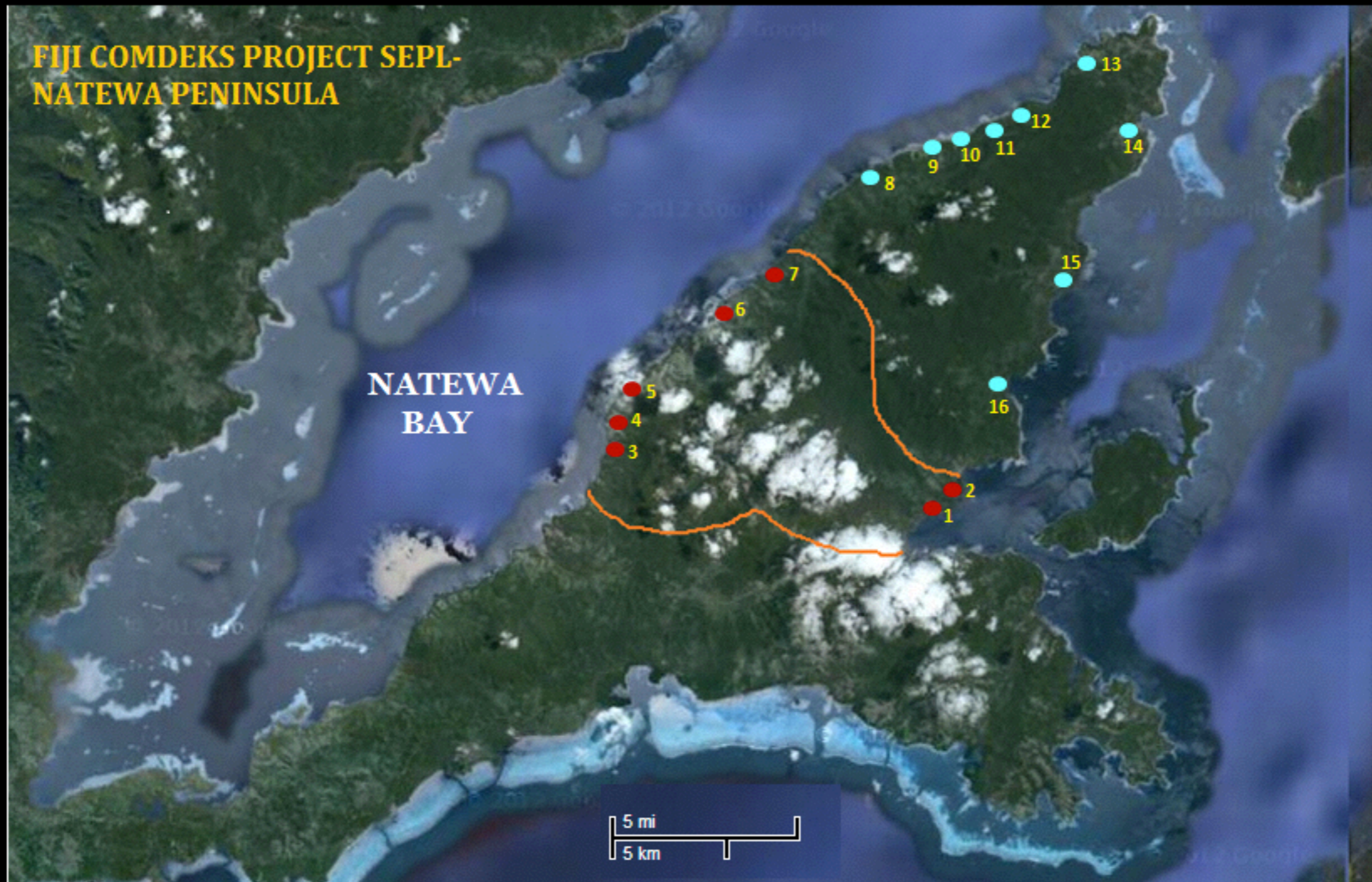
Natewa-Tunuloa Peninsula, Fiji

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The Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative (COMDEKS) Project is a unique global project implemented by UNDP as the flagship of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI).





The COMDEKS Project in Fiji targets the Natewa-Tunuloa Peninsula, located on the wet, windward side of Vanua Levu (Southeastern end). During the COMDEKS community consultation process each of the sixteen villages within the landscape's two districts of Natewa and Tunuloa were visited.





The Natewa-Tunuloa peninsula landscape was selected in part for its ability to provide an opportunity to document and revive traditional practices, as part of the essence of maintaining and rehabilitating the socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS), such as the cultivation of irrigated taro field called "vuci".





The area was once a regional center for the production of tapa or masi, a traditional cloth made from bark. COMDEKS activities in the area present an opportunity to meld local traditional knowledge and practices with modern innovations, concepts, and technology to invigorate the landscape and its communities.





Livelihoods within the target landscape are largely agriculture driven, as industry within the landscape is almost non-existent. The area has been a major timber and copra producing area though these industries have declined in recent years. While some crops have emerged as major revenue sources, much of what is cultivated is for subsistence consumption.





The road network in the landscape is made from dirt and gravel and is severely degraded along some sections. In this picture, team leader for COMDEKS Fiji's scoping and baseline assessment work, Francis Areki (closest to camera), rides aboard an open punt to reach Salia village in Tunuloa. Three villages on the Northern tip of the peninsula are only accessible by boat or walking along coastal or mountain paths.





The village headman of Naqaravutu village blows a conch shell to herald the arrival of the COMDEKS team and summon villagers to a village meeting. Community consultations and a baseline assessment were conducted by COMDEKS grantee Birdlife International in early 2013.





The chief of Nailou Village receives an offering of the yaqona or kava (sci: piper methysticum) roots from the COMDEKS community consultation team in a ceremony called i sevusevu, as a token of respect and request for permission to carry out their work in the village.





Nailou villagers listen to the presentation by Fiji's COMDEKS scoping team in their village meeting house constructed from flattened bamboos.





Women of the Vusaratu and Dawa villages in Natewa discuss some points during the scoping exercise. The baseline assessment process in the Natewa-Tunuloa Peninsula was an opportunity to discuss some conservative traditional gender roles which place women in a subservient role within communities. Despite this, women in the landscape have proven a great talent in conserving community assets and natural resources. Gender integration in COMDEKS funded activities aims to strengthen women's capacities and participation in community governance and decision making processes.





Villagers of Naqaravutu wait patiently to begin a consultative meeting to discuss landscape challenges and opportunities. Throughout the Natewa-Tunuloa peninsula the limitation on economic opportunities and poor social infrastructure have contributed to underdevelopment of the landscape. Poverty incidence for the landscape population is high; surveys conducted in 2009 indicate 62% of the total population from the two districts falling within this category.





Following the completion of the COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategy in Fiji project development is underway and projects are expected to be approved in the coming weeks. A launch event for approved projects within the Natewa-Tunuloa Peninsula landscape is expected to take place in September. COMDEKS Projects under consideration for implementation within the Natewa-Tunuloa landscape include: nursery establishment to rehabilitate former plantation areas in the Tunuloa District; revitalization of traditional vuci plantations; establishment of protected forest areas; additional small community-based projects focused on the promotion of alternative livelihood activities, and a capacity building, knowledge management project.