



The Suai Supply Base Project: Development or Threat?

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I. Introduction

Under the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), the government plans to implement a number of projects on the Southern Coast. These projects are collectively entitled the “Tasi-Mane Project”. These projects and their locations consist of the following: 1) the Supply base area, industrial area, New Suai, Suai Airport, and the crocodile preservation area in **Suai**; 2) the refinery and petrochemical area, and Petroleum City (New Betano) in **Betano**; 3) the LNG Plant, New Beaco, New Viqueque, Viqueque Airport will be established in **Beaco**; 4) the creation of a **Freeway/Highway** from Suai to Beaco.¹ The Suai Supply Base has been a part of the government’s political vision since early 2008.²

The government took steps to award a contract to the Eastlog Company from Singapore in 2010 to conduct a feasibility study and make preliminary designs (*Front-End Engineering Design - FEED*) for the Suai Supply Base. In 2012, the Council of Ministers decided to once again designate the Eastlog Company to conduct a full study on the SSB project following the Eastlog Company’s preliminary studies. Under the second contract, the government appointed the Eastlog Company to manage the construction of the Supply Base, and granted a bid for the construction of the SSB, during the second half (semester) of the year.³

In addition, between 2011 and 2012 the government conducted surveys on the destination area for the SSB project through the Inter-ministerial Joint Team (IJT), which is comprised of the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Secretary of State for Environment, the Secretary of State for Security and the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL). The IJT also conducted socialization projects, which included identifying land, plantations, plants, sacred places, sacred lagoons and cemeteries in early 2013.

The purpose of this study is not to challenge the government’s plan, but analyze, from a security sector perspective, both the benefits and risks that the implementation of the SSB poses to the stability of Timor-Leste. This report also makes several recommendations to the government.

II. Methodology

For the purpose of this study, Fundasaun Mahein (FM) interviewed the communities affected by the Suai Supply Base. These interviews took the form of conversations with youth from Camanasa, traditional elders from Camanasa, and local authorities from Matai, Belakesak, Labarai and Camanasa. In addition, FM conducted a direct observation of the SSB installation site in Camanasa, and also analyzed previous reports

¹Dias, Juvinal (2013). The Impact of Tasi-Mane on TL’s Economy. Discussion between La’o Hamutuk and the team of Fundasaun Mahein

² La’o Hamutuk, (2013, May 3). Suai Supply Base: Part of the Tasi-Mane Petroleum Infrastructure Project. <http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/13SSBte.htm>

³ La’o Hamutuk, (2013, May 3). Suai Supply Base: Part of the Tasi-Mane Petroleum Infrastructure Project. <http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/13SSBte.htm>

on the implementation of this project published by the government and Civil Society Organizations such as the La'o Hamutuk.

III. Opportunities and Community Expectation for the SSB

The government's plan for the Suai Supply Base Project includes the construction of a warehouse and supply base, a crocodile preservation site, an airport, and the creation of New Suai.⁴ In addition, there are separate plans for the construction of a highway or around 150 kilometers that will connect Suai, Betano and Beacu-Viqueque districts.⁵

The government expects to reap long term rewards from the SSP project through increased employment opportunities, training and education, the generation of new business activities and opportunities in the area, an influx of investment from other sectors, and the promotion of local products. It is hoped that all of these factors will combine to foster rapid economic growth that will make Suai the business mecca of the Southern Coast.⁶

The SSB project is expected to create employment opportunities for at least 300 people during the construction and 250 people during operation. At least 40% of the construction phase of this project will be implemented by local and national contractors, and it is expected that 1,000-1,500 Timorese nationals will be indirectly employed as a result of this project through the influx of businesses in the accommodation, restaurant, transportation, and tourism sectors.⁷

To date, the government has spent \$3.4 million in 2010 in awarding a contract to the Eastlog company to conduct a feasibility study and preliminary design (*Front-End Engineering Design - FEED*) for the Suai Supply Base. On the 2nd of September 2011, the Council of Ministers approved Resolution 26/2011, which stated that the estimated cost for the conclusion of the first phase of the Suai Supply Base will be between \$273 and \$347 million dollars. The government spent an additional \$11 million during 2012. In the 2013 State General Budget – SGB, the National Parliament approved a budget with an allocation of \$781 million for the SSB project.⁸

A report published by the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) La'o Hamutuk challenges the government policy on the SSB project, which has spent an enormous amount of money by prioritizing the petroleum industry rather than other sustainable industries such as agriculture or small-scale industries.⁹ In addition, the La'o Hamutuk

⁴ La'o Hamutuk, (2013, May 3). Suai Supply Base: Part of the Tasi-Mane Petroleum Infrastructure Project. <http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/13SSBte.htm>

⁵ La'o Hamutuk, (2013, May 3). Suai Supply Base: Part of the Tasi-Mane Petroleum Infrastructure Project. <http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/13SSBte.htm#What>

⁶ Timor Gap. (2012, October 25) Brief Information on the Suai Supply Base Project. PowerPoint Presentation.p11-12

⁷ Timor Gap. (2012, October 25). Brief Information on Suai Supply Base Project <http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/2012/SSBIntro25Oct2012.pdf>

⁸ La'o Hamutuk. (2013, May 03). Suai Supply Base Part of the Tasi-Mane Petroleum Infrastructure Project. <http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/13SSBte.htm>

⁹ La'o Hamutuk. (2013, April 19). Tasi-Mane Oil Infrastructure Project.

report posits that the government is having difficulties addressing the unemployment rate in Timor-Leste as it has been increasing annually.¹⁰ Each year there are around 15,000 people searching for jobs in Timor-Leste.¹¹ The Secretary of State for Vocational Training and Employment – SEFOPE, Ilidio Ximenes, acknowledges that the unemployment rate is increasing annually. The unemployment rate for this past year was 15%, which is an increase from last year's 12%.¹²

IV. Community Expectations

a. Compensation

The expectation of the community regarding the Suai Supply Base Project is that the government will give compensation for their lands, rice fields, farms, plantations, and crops. It is also expected that the government will compensate the community for the loss of sacred places the community has offered for the implementation of this national project.¹³ The traditional elders and the communities affected by the national project have requested that the government of Timor-Leste – particularly the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources – award enough compensation to guarantee the livelihood of the community for the future.¹⁴

“We have surrendered our assets to the government, including the plants we grow in our farm”, said Jorge Alves.¹⁵

The government has promised to grant two different forms of compensation to communities affected by the SSB project: direct compensation and indirect compensation.¹⁶ “Direct” compensation will come in the form of direct payment from the government to land owners for their plantations and crops after the project begins and their land has been excavated.¹⁷ The community has demanded that the government make a compensation payment of \$50.00 for each plantation or crop harvest.¹⁸

<http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/11TasiManeTe.htm>

¹⁰ La’o Hamutuk. (2012, July 13). *Plunged deeper into the Oil Mud*: <http://laohamutuk.blogspot.com/2012/07/hoban-klean-liu-iha-tahu-mina-rai.html>

¹¹ Dias, Juvinal. (2013, April). *The Impact of Tasi-Mane on TL’s economy*. Fulan Naroman Discussion.

¹² Dare Matias, Santino. (2013, April 15). *TL unemployment rate increased to 15%, skills are the obstacles facing the Timorese*. Media Radio Liberdade

¹³ Bere, Donatus. *Traditional Elder of Village Camanasa*. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

¹⁴ Tom. (2013, April 12). *Supply Base: People of Camanasa Gained 10 Percents*. Newspaper Timor Post.

¹⁵ Tom. (2013, April 12). *Supply Base: People of Camanasa Gained 10 Percents*. Newspaper Timor Post.

¹⁶ However the Government does not provide clear explanation regarding when to pay the compensation and how is the process for paying the compensation? There is no a clear contract agreement between the Government and the Community of Camanasa regarding the compensation and other future benefits from the SSB project.

¹⁷ Alves, Jorge. *Traditional Elder of Village Camanasa*. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

¹⁸ Alves, Jorge. *Traditional Elder of Village Camanasa*. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

Fundasaun Mahein's monitoring has revealed that the government still has not provided a clear explanation on the conditions for "Direct" compensation. For example, how much reimbursement will be provided for each crop or plantation? Additionally, when will the government begin paying compensations?¹⁹

Another community concern focuses on the "indirect" compensations. The contract between the government and the community stipulates that the Camanasa community will receive 10% in "indirect" compensation from the SSB project for a duration of 150 years. The government has also promised to establish an association to manage the 10% earnings for the purpose of the development of the village of Camanasa.²⁰

While this contractual stipulation is a first step, the government has yet to provide details on how and when the "indirect" payments will be made to the community. In the face of this uncertainty, members of the affected communities have demanded that the government provide the "indirect" 10% compensation in the form of a monthly \$1,000 payment to each household throughout the 150 year period.²¹

In addition, they argue that the government should consider them as civil servants as soon as the excavation work starts. If the government does not heed community demands for monthly subsidies in the amount of \$1,000 (including other deserved benefits), then they will boycott their land, despite the fact that it has been officially over to the government.²²

The government should conduct another round of socialization in order to give more detailed information about how and when the "indirect" compensations will be paid when the community officially hands their land over to the government in April of this year.²³ The Constitution guarantees that the requisitioning and expropriation of property for public purposes shall only take place following fair compensation in accordance with the law.²⁴

b. Job Creation

The affected communities who have offered their land and assets to the government eagerly expect employment. The demand of the affected communities and the traditional elders is that the government should give first priority to their family members to be employed when the SSB and the New Suai projects are initiated. In addition, the

¹⁹ Fundasaun Mahein have tried to confirm with the Government regarding the information on the compensation and have sent a letter to the Ministry of Oil and Natural Resources but there has not been any confirmation until the time of publication of this report.

²⁰ Tom. (2013, April 12). Supply Base: People of Camanasa Gained 10 Percents. Publication on Newspaper Timor Post.

²¹ Moniz, Afonso. Traditional Elder of Village Camanasa. (2013, May 02). Interview in person

²² Bere, Donatus. Traditional Elder of Village Camanasa. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

²³ Nax. (2013, April 12). Suai Handed Over 1113 Hecters of Land for the Supply Base. Newspaper Diariu Nasional.p1.

²⁴ Constitution of the RDTL: Article 54 Item 3

government is obliged to consider them as civil servants as soon as the land begins to be flattened.²⁵

The recruitment for workers should not only include the community from Camanasa, but should also prioritize the Suai people who are studying abroad, prior to recruiting workers from other districts.²⁶ The government has agreed to the demands of the community and has facilitated English courses. Engineering courses will also be implemented targeting youth from Camanasa, to equip them with sufficient skills before the national project is implemented.²⁷

The rate of unemployment in Timor-Leste is increasing every year,²⁸ and it is noted that there are currently at least 15,000 young people in search of jobs.²⁹ According to a researcher from La'o Hamutuk, Juvinal Dias, the SSB project will not solve the unemployment problem in Timor-Leste nor provide jobs to all the people of Suai, but will give lots of benefits to foreigners. In addition, since the SSB is a national project, all the Timorese people have the right to be employed. Therefore, if there is discrimination, it will lead to conflict between Timorese people in the future.³⁰

c. New Suai³¹

The new town, which will be named "New Suai", is ideal for housing dwellings for the affected communities. These communities come from the four villages of Camanasa, Matai, Labarai and Belakesak.³² According to the design, the luxurious New Suai dwelling will occupy an area of 213 hectares. The design for New Suai outlines huge villas, which will be located in the hamlet of Dais, in the villages of Labarai and Matai.³³

²⁵ Amaral, Clementino. Traditional Elder of Village Camanasa. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

²⁶ La'o Hamutuk, (2012, May 3). Suai Supply Base Part of the Tasi-Mane Petroleum Infrastructure Project: La'o Hamutuk Report <http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/13SSBte.htm#What>

²⁷ Explanation of the Traditional Elder of Camanasa to the Fundasaun Mahein team during the monitoring in Suai, May 2013.

²⁸ Matias Dare, Santino. (2013, April 15). TL unemployment rate increased to 15%, skills are the obstacles facing the Timorese: <http://radioliberaldadedili.com/notisia/983-nemeru-dezempregu-tl-sae-ba-15-skill-sai-obstaklu-ba-timo-oan>

²⁹ Dias, Juvinal. Researcher from La'o Hamutuk. (2013, April). The Impact of Tasi-Mane on TL's economy. Discussion with Fundasaun Mahein team

³⁰ Dias, Juvinal. (2013, March). The Impact of Tasi-Mane on TL's economy. Fulan Naroman Discussion.

³¹ or the sake of obtaining balanced information from the Government side regarding who entitled to inhabit the New Suai dwellings, Fundasaun Mahein has sent a letter to the Minister of Oil and Natural Resources, Alfredo Pires on (12/08), however there is no confirmation until the time of publication of this report. FM has tried several times through a staff, Palmira via telephone number 3339178.

³² The Fundasaun Mahein team interviewed the community leaders from four villages (Camanasa, Labarai, Matai and Belakesak) and they demanded that all the affected community deserved to inhabit the New Suai dwellings.

³³ La'o Hamutuk. (2012, October 25). Brief Information on the Suai Supply Base Project: <http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/2012/SSBIntro25Oct2012.pdf>

The New Suai Design



Source: Lao Hamutuk

The local authorities and the traditional elders of the four villages (Camanasa, Matai, Labarai and Belakesak) expect that the entire community will relocate to New Suai.³⁴ However the government itself has not provided a clear explanation to the affected communities, during the socialization process, regarding who will occupy the new city. The government has only said that New Suai will be inhabited by humans, not animals.³⁵

According to the reports from La'o Hamutuk it was reported that the New Suai dwellings are actually to be built for the workers, however the government has continually held back information about whether the dwellings are intended for local workers or foreign workers.³⁶ The Minister of Oil and Natural Resources, who represents the government during the socialization period, does not show a serious concern in providing adequate information to the community in relation to their life in the future, especially the community affected by this mega project.³⁷

V. The Impacts of the SSB project

a. Productive Land (Agricultural)

Fundasaun Mahein's monitoring indicates that the SSB project will be located on agricultural land that has been used by people for farming and rice fields. Reports published by La'o Hamutuk have questioned the location of the SSB project as it affects agricultural land, acreage for grazing, and land for growing crops. In addition, the location is an area where fishermen moor their boats, as well as a place where community members produce salt for a living.³⁸

³⁴ The Community Leaders, Village chiefs or Matai, Labarai and Belakesak whose members of the community are affected by the SSB project insisted that all members of the community wanted to reside in the New Suai city.

³⁵ Bere, Donatus. Traditional Elder of the village of Camanasa. (2013, May 01). Interview in Person.

³⁶ La'o Hamutuk. (2012, May 03). Suai Supply Base Part of the Tasi-Mane Petroleum Infrastructure Project. <http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/13SSBte.htm#land>

³⁷ Fundasaun Mahein Source-person (2013, July 20). Interview in Person.

³⁸ La'o Hamutuk. (2013, May 03). Suai Supply Base: Part of the Tasi-Mane Petroleum Infrastructure Project; <http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/13SSBte.htm#community>

As shown in the SSB project map, the project will occupy an area of productive land of 1,113 hectares in the village of Camanasa, which is divided into four plots; 125 acres for the Supply Base, 781.57 hectares for the Oil and Gas Industrial area, 81.43 acres reserved for Crocodile Preservation site and 213 hectares for the construction of the New Suai dwellings located in the hamlet of Dais, and the villages of Labarai and Matai.³⁹

Many of the community members are concerned about their rice fields and farms and also about the sacred place that will be removed and will consequently threaten people's lives. The community has handed over their land and, as a result, they have trouble in finding new land for farms and rice fields in the future.⁴⁰ The facts show that there are about 726 Households in the Village of Camanasa and the majority of them are subsistence farmers and fishermen.⁴¹

This will have a negative impact on the community in terms of economic, environmental and cultural repercussions. Though the community is in support of the government's plan to make development, they should not become victims of the development policy.⁴²

b. Rice fields and farms

One of the effects of the SSB project is that the community will lose their rice fields and farms. The information Fundasaun Mahein obtained during monitoring indicates that the majority of the communities affected by the SSB project are subsistence farmers and fishermen, as are the affected communities within the New Suai project area.⁴³

Data from the Inter-Ministerial Team has identified the types of crops owned by the affected communities within the SSB area based on two categories as described in detail in the table below:

³⁹ Timor Gap. (2012, October 25). Land Program for the Suai Supply Base Project (SSB) & New Suai. Power point.p14.

⁴⁰ Amaral, Clementino. Traditional Elder of Camanasa. (2013, May 02). Interview in person.

⁴¹ Statistic Data from the 2010 Census. Information can be accessed on this link;
<http://artekulturakamanasa.blogspot.com/2011/10/preokupasaun-komunidade-kamanasa-ba.html>

⁴² Alves, Jorge. Traditional Elder of Camanasa. (2013, May 02). Interview in person.

⁴³ Moniz, Afonso, Alves Jorge. Traditional Elders of Village Camanasa.(2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

Type of Fruit (Fruit)

No.	Type of Fruiculture	Unit	Quantity
1	Papaya	tree	5,080
2	Banana	Klobor	4,961
3	Orange	tree	457
4	Lemon	tree	152
5	Pineapple	tree	8,231
6	Guava	tree	302
7	Jackfruit	tree	260
8	Chestnut tree	tree	100
9	Mango	tree	795
10	Carambole	tree	28
11	Durian	tree	0
12	Jambu be'e	tree	53
13	Custard apple	tree	0
14	Avocado	tree	0
15	Breadfruit	tree	0
16	Pomegrade	tree	160
17	Guava	tree	196
18	Rose-apple	tree	49

Type of Foods (Foods & Vegetables)

No.	Type of Foods	Unit	Quantity
1	Maize	Bags	34,531
2	Rice	Bags	5,650
3	Casava	tree	15,259
4	Sweet yam	tree	14,763
5	Potato	tube	19,440
6	Sweet potato	tree	4,845
7	Taro	tree	10,139
8	Mung beans	Bags	1,117
9	Soybean	Bags	25,250
10	Peanut	Bags	29,421
11	Beads	Bags	471
12	Tuber	tree	2,197
13	Mound	tree	185

No.	Type of Horticulture	Unit	Quantity
1	Vegetable	tube	2,763
2	Eggplant	tree	6,401
3	Chilli	tree	5,769
4	Tomato	tree	4,007
5	Bitter melon	tree	161
6	Pumpkin	tree	190
7	Ginger	tree	44
8	Basil	tree	48
9	Onion	tree	40
10	Beans	tree	0
11	Flower	tree	77

Source: Inter-ministerial Joint Team 2012

The table above shows that the community will lose their daily source of revenue, which is generated from selling fruits, vegetables, rice, maize and other crops.⁴⁴

The government needs to create a policy that can guarantee long-term economic sustainability for the community. If not, the people will experience a food crisis in the future. A food crisis would pose a threat to people's lives and could also have an impact on political stability as well as national security.⁴⁵

c. Plantations and Crops

The SSB project will also have an impact on community-owned plantations and crops. Fundasaun Mahein's monitoring indicates that the SSB project area of 1,113 acres includes not only rice fields and farms, but also many plantations and crops of high economic value in sustaining the life of the community. These include teak trees, coconuts, candlenut trees, cashews and other crops that serve as a vital source of income for community members.⁴⁶

The plantations and crops that will be affected by the SSB project are listed in the table below. This data was obtained and collected in 2012 by the Inter-ministerial Joint Team.

⁴⁴ Moniz, Afonso. Traditional Elder of Village Camanasa. (2013, May 01). Interview in Person

⁴⁵ Fundasaun Mahein. (2013, May 08). The Threat Today and on the Future Generation: Environmental Perspective Implies on the National Security. The Voice of Mahein No.51.pdf.

⁴⁶ Base on the monitoring by Fundasaun Mahein team in the SSB area in the hamlet of Sanfuk, Camanasa there are lots of teak trees and in the hamlet of Loho-Rai Duku, Matai (the airport site) there are lots of coconuts and teak trees.

Type of Forest

No.	Type of Forest	Unit	Quantity
1	Teak tree	tree	68,069
1.A	Small teak tree	tree	32,889
1.B	Teak tree <15 cmD	tree	16,876
1.C	Teak tree >15 cmD	tree	18,304
2	Mahoney		32
2.A	Small Mahoney	tree	0
2.B	Mahoney <15 cmD	tree	32
2.C	Mahoney >15 cmD	tree	0
3	Gamelina		1,690
3.A	Gamelina ki'ik	tree	506
3.B	Gamelina <15 cmD	tree	471
3.C	Gamelina >15 cmD	tree	713
4	Candlenut tree		436
4.A	Small candlenut tree	tree	81
4.B	Candlenut tree <15 cmD	tree	242
4.C	Candlenut tree >15 cmD	tree	113

Type of Plantation

No.	Type of Plants	Unit	Quantity
1	Coconut	tree	4,454
1.A	Not fruiting	tree	1,688
1.B	Been fruitful	tree	2,766
2	Cashew	tree	2,897
2.A	Not fruiting	tree	10
2.B	Been fruitful	tree	2,887
3	Candle nut tree	tree	1,106
4	Cakao	tree	16
5	Sugar-cane	Trellis	310
6	Betelnut	tree	1,908
7	Betel-pepper	tree	1,189

Source: Data from Inter-ministerial Joint Team 2012

The communities affected are concerned about their plantations and plants which they rely on. La'o Hamutuk reported that, in the future, it will be difficult for the community to find pillars and palm-leaves if they want to build and repair traditional sacred houses, because the community would already have handed over its land to the government for the SSB plant.⁴⁷

Therefore, the community has requested the the government pay compensation based on the size of the trees (big and small trees) and the amount of production lost. In addition, the government shall also compensate the palm-trees grown in their rice fields and farms. In response however, the Inter-ministerial Joint Team comprised of the Ministry of Oil and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has stated that the latter compensation will not be paid because palm-trees grow naturally and have no economic value.⁴⁸

d. Place To Breed Animals

According to the data collected by the Inter-ministerial Joint Team, at least 125 livestock enclosures will be affected. The animals affected include buffalo, cows, horses, goats,

⁴⁷ La'o Hamutuk. (2013, May 03). Suai Supply Base Part of the Tasi-Mane Petroleum Infrastructure Project. <http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/13SSBte.htm#community>

⁴⁸ FM Source-person. Affected Community from the village of Camanasa. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person

sheep, and pigs within the SSB and New Suai area.

Type of Livestock

Area/Type of Data	Cow	Pig	Horse	Goat	Balada Nai'in	Affected Animal Enclosures
SSB	2,484	535	30	103	287	125
New Suai	223	210	7	21	46	
Total	2,707	745	37	124	333	125

Source: Data from Inter-ministerial Joint Team 2012

The chart above indicates that there are a number of animal enclosures/stalls that will potentially be destroyed under the SSB and New Suai project. Livestock owners have expressed their grievances, as the implementation of the SSB project will have a greatly negative impact on their animals.⁴⁹

One concrete example of this is the Wedare lake, which is still being used as a water source to fulfill the needs of community in the hamlet of Sanfuk. It will be closed because it has been identified by the government for a crocodile conservation and breeding site. However, the concern is that some members of the community as well as the traditional elders of Camanasa were never made aware of the plans for the crocodile conservation site.⁵⁰

Additionally, cattle in the Village of Matai, particularly in the hamlet of Loho-Rai (which falls within the airport area) are also impacted by the SSB project. Some members of the community have brought their cattle to the highland (old village) where the conditions are difficult due to the lack of food and water sources.⁵¹ According to Fundasaun Mahein, this can hurt the health of the cattle, even to the point of death, rendering villagers incapable of using cattle to work on the rice fields that are vital to their livelihoods.

e. Cemeteries and Sacred Lagoons

Some of the important sites that will be affected by the SSB project include Hali Lulik in Camanasa, Old Village of Camanasa, Old Village of Sanfuk⁵², Sanfuk Cemetery (around 320 graves), Dais Cemetery with (around 460 graves), Old Cemetery of Du'ut Loloba with (around 21 graves), Old Cemetery of Sanfuk⁵³ as well as the sacred lagoons such as We-dare, We Mohut, Wehasan Mali Loek, Seuk-Lae Lagoon, Siku At Lagoon and

⁴⁹ Amaral, Clementino. Cattle owner from the hamlet of Sanfuk. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

⁵⁰ Amaral, Clementino. Cattle owner from the hamlet of Sanfuk. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

⁵¹ Safera, Vicente. Village Chief of Matai. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

⁵² Timor Gap. (2012, October 25). Land Program for the Suai Supply Base Project (SSB) & New Suai. Power Point. p23.

⁵³ Timor Gap. (2012, October 25). Land Program for the Suai Supply Base Project (SSB) & New Suai. Power Point. p24.

many more.⁵⁴

According to Timorese culture “Lulik” is sacred, therefore its destruction would pose a threat to human life.⁵⁵ It is therefore necessary to first hold a traditional ceremony in order to avoid any negative impact on the community. Otherwise, the “Lulik” will cause calamity such as diseases or natural disasters which will affect people's lives.⁵⁶

VI. Future Threats Caused by the SSB Project

a. Potential Land Conflicts

Implementation of the SSB project could exasperate existing land tensions and greatly increase the potential for inter-community conflict. Moreover, land disputes between the communities of Dais and Sanfuk have a history of leading to conflict. Tension between the two communities began during Indonesian occupation and remains unresolved to this day.⁵⁷ Further heightening tensions, the community of Camanasa has insisted that the community's of Dais and Olbelis are not entitled to get compensation for their land, because they only began occupying the land during the Indonesian occupation.⁵⁸ The community in Dais continues to fight and oppose the traditional elders of Camanasa and demand their rights for compensation for their land on the grounds that they have occupied the land for over 30 years, since Indonesian rule.⁵⁹

The Timorese Constitution guarantees that every citizen has the right to own private property (land) as well as the right to live anywhere within the territory of Timor-Leste.⁶⁰ Yet the problem is that, in Timor-Leste, there has not been a clearly defined legal framework regarding the ownership of land. This gap in legislation could allow conflicts to develop between communities that could ultimately undermine national stability.⁶¹

Since the majority of the people from Dais are involved in Martial Arts groups, they often create conflicts and often block the road to search for people from Camanasa travelling to the capital, Dili.⁶²

⁵⁴ Timor Gap. (2012, October 25). Land Program for the Suai Supply Base Project (SSB) & New Suai. Power Point. p26.

⁵⁵ Moniz, Afonso. Traditional Elder of Village Camanasa. (2013, May 01). Interview in person.

⁵⁶ Trindade, Jose. (2011). Lulik: The Timorese Fundamental Value.

http://www.tlstudies.org/pdfs/TLSA%20Conf%202011/chp_02.pdf

⁵⁷ Alves, Jorge. Traditional Elder of Village Camanasa. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

⁵⁸ Alves, Jorge. Traditional Elder of Village Camanasa. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

⁵⁹ FM Source-person. Komunidade Dais. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

⁶⁰ Constitution of the RDTL: Article 54 Item 4 and Article 58.

⁶¹ Fundasaun Mahein. (2013, April 17). Endless Land Dispute: From the Security Perspective.

The Voice of Mahein No. 48.pdf.

⁶² Fundasaun Mahein source-person. (2013, May). Interview in Person.

Some Camanasa community members accuse the government of manipulation because it promised that it would involve all levels of the community during the land handover agreement, but in reality the government only invited the traditional elders, who are not transparent with the community. Furthermore, neither the community nor the traditional elders received a copy of the affidavit, the statements of land transfer, or the compensation agreement between the government and the community.⁶³

b. Potential Employment Threats

The issue of employment also has the potential to lead to conflict between the people of Suai and Camanasa in the future. During monitoring conducted by Fundasaun Mahein, it was found that, according to the government's plan, the majority of the people from Suai will be employed at the SSB project. However, people from the village of Camanasa have declared that they are more entitled and should be given priority to work because they have handed over their land and assets.⁶⁴ Youth from other villages in Covalima disagree with the demands made by Camanasa on the grounds that the SSB project is a national project, and thus residents from any districts have a right to be employed.⁶⁵

"In relation to the Oil Project in our area, the government has promised that we would be hired at first, but in reality workers are being recruited from Camanasa and other villages as well" said a youth from Depos (in Suai).⁶⁶

Residents of Dais disagree with Camanasa's demand that the government prioritize employment for Camanasa residents, on the grounds that people from Dais are also affected by the SSB project.⁶⁷

Fundasaun Mahein believes that the tension between districts over employment rights as mentioned above has the strong potential to create tension when the SSB project is implemented. This issue is especially sensitive given the annually increasing unemployment rate in Timor-Leste, where there are approximately 15,000 youth searching for jobs.⁶⁸ To mitigate this tension, the government should create a comprehensive recruitment mechanism that will not discriminate against workers from other districts or villages.

c. Potential conflict in New Suai

Another development that could potentially lead to conflict between communities is the new city dwelling project of "New Suai". Fundasaun Mahein's monitoring found that affected communities from four villages have a strong desire to live in the New Suai

⁶³ Fundasaun Mahein collected the information from the community in Camanasa during the monitoring, where some young people questioned the issue and consider that the Government is manipulating the process of hand over of land because the relevant documents (contract) as well as the statement of the community regarding the compensation which was signed between the traditional elders and the Government was not returned to them as a proof.

⁶⁴ Alves, Jorge, Bere, Donatus. Traditional Elders of Camanasa. (2013, May 01). Interview in Person.

⁶⁵ Youth of Olbelis and Suai Villa. (2013, April 30). Interview in Person

⁶⁶ Youth of Depos. (2013, April 30). Interview in Person.

⁶⁷ Gusmão, Agostinho. Community from Hamlet Dais. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

⁶⁸ Dias, Juvinal. (2013, April). The Impact of Tasi-Mane on TL's economy. Fulan Naroman Discussion.

dwellings.⁶⁹ To date, however, the government has not provided a detailed explanation to the community about who will be entitled to stay in the new town. During socialization held by the Inter-ministerial Joint Team, the community has regularly asked for clarification regarding New Suai, yet the government only diplomatically states that New Suai dwellings will be occupied by humans, not animals.⁷⁰

Based on monitoring conducted by Fundasaun Mahein, it was found that there is potential for conflict because affected communities from four villages are vying for New Suai. All community members yearn to stay in the luxurious city. Communities affected by the New Suai project, and the Dais hamlet in particular, do not want to allow people from other villages to live in the New Suai dwellings.⁷¹ The government refusal to provide a clear explanation about who is entitled to occupy the New Suai dwellings only makes the situation worse. FM interviewed the Village Chief of Labarai, who confirmed that he has no clue about who will occupy the New Suai dwellings, whether it be affected communities or foreigners.⁷²

Community ambitions to occupy the New Suai dwellings show that it has high potential to trigger conflict in the future. Fundasaun Mahein is very much concerned that the government only showed an intriguing design to the community to convince the community to transfer their land, while not taking the necessary steps to be transparent about the process or respond to the community's concerns.

d. Environmental Threats to the Community, and Domestic and Wild Animals

The environmental issue also poses a serious threat to the life of the community, and domestic and wild animals in the future. Historically the widespread poverty in Timor-Leste has been caused in part by environmental degradation.⁷³ Fundasaun Haburas has questioned the issue of environmental threats caused by the SSB project, and has requested that the government conduct a comprehensive study to ensure that the community's agricultural production is not negatively affected.⁷⁴ In addition, a report released by La'o Hamutuk has urged the government to redo the study on the environmental aspects of the SSB project, as the Australian Engineering Company *WorleyParsons*, which was contracted by the government in 2011 to carry out such a study, was not able to conduct an accurate study due to time constraints and a lack of information about the SSB project.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Village Chiefs of Camanasa, Matai, Labarai and Belakesak. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

⁷⁰ Bere, Donatus. Traditional Elder of Camanasa. (2013, May 01). Interview in Person.

⁷¹ Local authorities from Dais. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

⁷² Moniz, Agapito. Village Chief of Labarai. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

⁷³ Fundasaun Mahein. (2013, May 08). The Threat Today and on the Future Generation: Environmental Perspective Implies on the National Security. The Voice of Mahein No.51.pdf.

⁷⁴ R-1. (2012, September 17). \$15 Millions have been spent on the Tasi-Mane Project. Newspaper Bussiness Timor

⁷⁵ La'o Hamutuk. (2013, May 03). Suai Supply Base Part of the Tasi-Mane Petroleum Infrastructure Project. <http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/TasiMane/13SSBte.htm#EIAdocs>

The current area covered by the SSB project will damage the community's soil fertility, plantations, crops, well, and their livestock as well as wild animals. If measures are not taken to protect the area, it will fall victim to drought, dry trees, scarcity of vegetation for animals, and infertile soil.⁷⁶

If conservation measures are not undertaken, animals will have limited grass to feed on and water to drink. Especially affected will be buffalo and cows which consume water from the We-dare, We Mohut, Wehasan Mali Loek, Seuk-Lae, and Sikun lagoons, as well as many other lagoons affected by the SSB project.⁷⁷ In addition, wild birds such as cockatoos, crows, lorikeet, and bats will lose their habitats because the big trees that have given them shelter will be logged.⁷⁸ Fundasaun Mahein requests that the government conduct an intensified study on the environmental impacts prior to implementing the Tasi-Mane Project, particularly the supply base-SSB.⁷⁹

Section F of the constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (RDTL) guarantees the government's commitment to protect the environment and to preserve natural resources.⁸⁰ These clauses are articulated in article 61 on the environmental rights and article 139 on the natural resources.⁸¹ Environment conservation is important for the success of farmers, who rely on the land to develop their crops and their livelihood.⁸²

e. Cultural Threats to the Community

Most Timorese inherit strong cultural and traditional values concerning sacred places such as sacred land, sacred trees, sacred water, traditional sacred houses and other places.⁸³ Fundasaun Mahein's monitoring reveals that the SSB and New Suai project will affect sacred locations, including sacred land, sacred lagoons and a number of public cemeteries within the area of Camanasa and Dais. The community is concerned about how the government will pay tribute for their sacred areas that they have traditionally glorified and

⁷⁶ Salsinha, Domingos. (2010, December 04). NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION. <http://aplimentec-ong.blogspot.com/2010/12/manajementu-no-protesaun-rekursu.html>

⁷⁷ Timor Gap. (2012, October 25). The Land Program Released for the Suai Supply Base Project (SSB) & New Suai. Power Point.p26

⁷⁸ Timor Gap. (2012, Land Program for the Suai Supply Base Project (SSB) & New Suai. Power Point.p28.

⁷⁹ Jenova. (2012, September 22). The Environment in the Tasi-Mane Project Cannot Minimize the Agriculture Production. Online Media www.partidocnrt.com

⁸⁰ Constitution of the RDTL: Article 6 section f.

⁸¹ Fundasaun Haburas. (2009, July 23). Denounce the Publication on the "The Adverse Effects of the Construction of the Power Plant in Hera-Dili District on Public Health and Environmental Degradation: <http://haburas.org/Denunsia%20kona%20ba%20Oli%20Pezado.pdf>

⁸² Fundasaun Mahein. (2013, May 08). The Threat Today and on the Future Generation: Environmental Perspective Implies on the National Security. The Voice of Mahein No.51.pdf. p9.

⁸³ Trindade, Jose. (2011). Lulik: Timorese Fundamental Value. http://www.tlstudies.org/pdfs/TLSA%20Conf%202011/chp_02.pdf

worshipped.⁸⁴

A concrete example of one of these sacred locations is the sacred lagoon (We dare), which the government has identified for a crocodile preservation site. An issue of concern is that arose during FM's monitoring was that the community (including some traditional elders) was not informed about the government's plan to create the crocodile preservation site.⁸⁵

According to Timorese beliefs, anyone who is in conflict with the "Lulik" will be cursed. This curse is not only on the individual in conflict with the Lulik, but can also affect their parents, siblings, or other members of the family, including the general community.⁸⁶ The Constitution guarantees everyone the right to cultural enjoyment and creativity and the duty to preserve protect and value cultural heritage.⁸⁷

The traditional elders from Village Camanasa say that there are crocodiles in the sacred lagoons within the SSB area. According to customary practices, a cultural ceremony must be conducted before building walls around sacred lagoons. If this is not done, the lives of community members will be threatened.⁸⁸ Fundasaun Mahein requests that the Secretary of State for Culture examine the issue of cultural threats to find the best solution so that communities will not be negatively affected in the future.

VII. Conclusion

The National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) set up by the government to build infrastructure in the Southern Coast is a dream for national economic development. In particular, the Suai Supply Base (the mega project located in the Village of Camanasa) in Covalima district, seems to be moving forward with promise as the community has handed over their land to the government for the project.

The people of Timor-Leste, and the Camanasa-Suai community in particular, have great hopes for the Suai Supply Base project. However, despite the great hopes of the community, the SSB project poses some threats, which may negatively impact national security once the project is implemented. These risks include the fact that the community is not yet well-informed about their compensation rights or process, the persistence of unresolved land disputes, and the social, cultural and environmental threats to the community in the future as a result of the SSB project.

Finding comprehensive solutions to these challenges requires a contribution from various

⁸⁴ Amaral, Clementino. Traditional Elder of Camanasa. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

⁸⁵ Moniz, Afonso. Traditional Elder of Camanasa. (2013, May 01). Interview in Person.

⁸⁶ Trindade, Jose. (2011). Lulik: Timorese Fundamental Value:
http://www.tlstudies.org/pdfs/TLSA%20Conf%202011/chp_02.pdf

⁸⁷ Constitution of the RDTL: Article 59 Section 5.

⁸⁸ Alves, Jorge. Grandson of Dom Camanasa. (2013, May 02). Interview in Person.

groups across the country to ensure that Timorese do not become victims of the developmental policies of the government.

VIII. Recommendation

1. Recommend to the government to speed up the drafting of the Land Law for submission to the National Parliament for approval in order to clarify land ownership legislation. The government should also continue the mediation process for the land disputes between Dais and Sanfuk which have yet to be resolved to avoid future tension or conflict between the communities.
2. Recommend to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources and the Secretary of State for the Environment to establish legislation to govern companies who will implement the SSB project. This legislation should guarantee that the values of environmental conservation will be upheld and that the project will not negatively impact the environment or the lives of community members.
3. Recommend to the Secretary of State for Culture to guarantee the maintenance of the cultural values of the people of Timor-Leste, and particularly for the community of Camanasa by establishing adequate safeguards to protect the cultural values and lifestyles of the community.
4. Recommend to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources (including the Timor Gap) to grant adequate compensation to community members who have offered their land and assets. The government should also provide a clear explanation of the “indirect” compensations, as well as other benefits that will be provided, in order to prevent tension and conflict in the future.

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