

The resumption of palm-oil production on Guadalcanal's northern plains

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Palm-oil operations on the island of Guadalcanal are situated in an area that was a hot spot during the 'tension' years of 1998–2003. An analysis of the industry therefore provides an important case study of post-conflict development, and of how local animosities are tempered, or exacerbated, by new cash-earning opportunities. This paper examines the difference between the arrangements entered into by the Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Ltd (GPPOL) and its 1973–99 predecessor, Solomon Islands Plantations Ltd. It also looks at the impact on the industry of the 1998–99 Isatabu uprising, and the 2004 deal struck between local landowners and GPPOL, at the out-grower scheme, at land tenure arrangements, and at the trust funds established upon recommencement of operations. We analyse the oil-palm operations in the broader context of the socio-economic setting on the northern plains, with particular reference to the way local villagers balance their time between participation in palm oil production and the supply of food to the Honiara market.

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In tandem with the revival of market gardening supplying the Honiara market and other smallholder cash-cropping activities such as copra and cocoa production, the resumption of palm-oil production has led to a significant improvement in living standards on northern Guadalcanal since 2006. With the anticipated decline of the logging industry—which, in 2009, provided about 60 per cent of export income—palm-oil production, goldmining (should that recommence) and tuna fishing are likely to

provide the bulk of Solomon Islands' export income and foreign exchange earnings in the years ahead. Importantly, the palm-oil production and the potential goldmining will be located within a relatively small area of only one of Solomon Islands' six large islands, Guadalcanal. The capital, Honiara, the palm-oil operation and the potentially soon to be reopened Gold Ridge mine form the points of a triangle that will dominate formal sector economic activity in Solomon Islands in the near to medium term.



Located in an area that was troubled by severe civil conflict during 1998–2003, the Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Limited (GPPOL) operation differs in crucial respects from that of its 1976–99 predecessor, Solomon Islands Plantations Limited (SIPL), although the mill size and the area under cultivation remain similar. First, although Isatabu guerrillas evicted more than 20,000 Malaitan settlers from rural Guadalcanal during 1999–2000, none of the attempted peace settlements resolved the vexed issue of land ownership on rural Guadalcanal.¹ The large plantation estates on the northern plains were *de facto* seized back by indigenous owners, but remained *de jure* SIPL-owned fixed-term estates. Resumption of operations depended on revising that arrangement.

Second, the GPPOL ownership structure differs from that of SIPL and the stream of benefits flowing to local communities is considerably greater. Third, GPPOL introduced a nucleus-estate scheme modelled on that pioneered by its parent company in western New Britain (Papua New Guinea), permitting Solomon Islander outgrowers on small blocks to supply fruit to the mills as an alternative to leasing land to the company or working on the core plantation estates.

The new palm-oil operation remains precarious, however, as indicated by arson attacks on the GPPOL administrative building at Tetere in 2006 and 2009 and the company's associated threat to halt operations ('Palm oil company considers leaving Solomon Islands', *Radio New Zealand International*, 29 July 2009). Disputes over land ownership, including some resistance by the Ghaobata House of Chiefs and the declaration of the 2005 Balasuna Guadalcanal Leader's Summit against the resumption of palm-oil production, earlier threatened to prevent any restart of the industry (Nanau 2009). There also exists reluctance by local

landowners to allow workers from Malaita to work on the plantations (Allen, Bourke, Evans, Iramu, Maemouri, Mullen, Pollard, Wairiu, Watoto and Zotalis 2006:42). There has been high employee turnover and some friction between management and the mill workforce. Out-grower participation has proved slow to increase and plans to expand eastwards—bringing under plantation an additional 4,100 hectares—have required difficult negotiations with landowners and the government ('Palm oil planter Kulim to expand operations in PNG, Solomon Islands', *Palm Oil HQ: Market Intelligence & Prices*, 26 May 2009. Available from <http://www.palmoilhq.com/>). Pests and diseases, such as basal stem rot, caused by the wood-rotting fungus *Ganoderma boninense*, have the potential for detrimental effects on yields over the economic lifespan of plantations. Nevertheless, the resumption of the Guadalcanal palm-oil operation entails a revival of the country's 'most successful agricultural industry in terms of efficiency, international competitiveness and foreign exchange generation' (McGregor 2006:25).

This article examines the GPPOL operation on Guadalcanal and its linkages with the broader economy of the northern plains. The first part looks at the history of oil-palm cultivation on Guadalcanal and the impact on the local economy of the 1998–2003 'tensions'. The second part looks at the arrangements made in 2006 when GPPOL restarted operations. The third part examines historical and recent trends in GPPOL palm-oil production.

The northern Guadalcanal plains and the Isatabu uprising

The northeastern plains of Guadalcanal—the largest contiguous area of arable land in the Pacific islands—have played a critical role in the economic and social history of Solomon



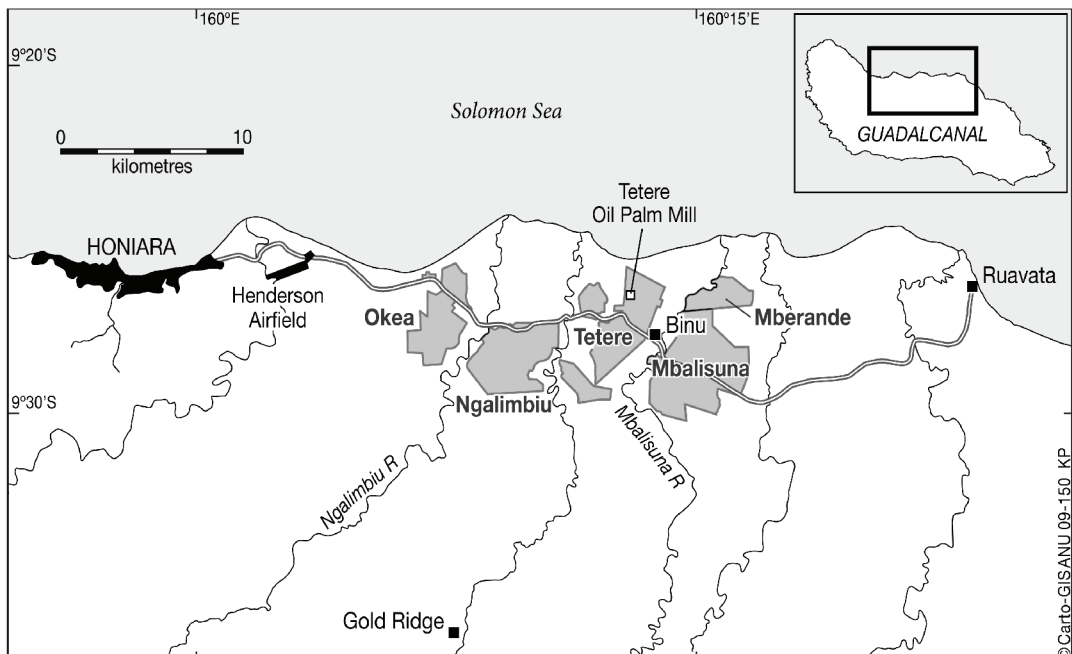
Islands. During the Pacific campaign of World War II, Guadalcanal became a major focus of Allied–Japanese conflict centred on the Henderson Airfield (Map 1) and activity by the Solomon Islands Labour Corps, which brought migrants from other parts of the group to the northern plains. After the war, the capital of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate was shifted from Tulagi, on the neighbouring island of Ngella, to Honiara, on Guadalcanal, largely to take advantage of the infrastructure left by the departing American forces.

British Colonial Development and Welfare Aid during the 1950s and 1960s assisted exploration of the prospects for commercial ventures across the group, including the Tasimboko area—a search encouraged by efforts to establish a sustainable economic basis for independent self-government before decolonisation in

1978. Coconut plantation estates run by Lever Brothers, together with the mill on Russell Island, were linked to operations in the Tenaru area, as well as further east at Ruavata. The northern plains also became a magnet for inter-island migration, particularly from the densely populated and historically underdeveloped island of Malaita, despite the discouragement of long-term settlement by the colonial authorities (Fraenkel 2004: 34–35).

SIPL started operations in 1973 and, after completion of construction of the mill, began exports of palm-oil in 1976.² The company was co-owned by the Solomon Islands government (30 per cent), the Commonwealth Development Corporation (68 per cent) and local landowners (2 per cent). Formerly alienated land that had been converted to government ownership was leased for 75 years to SIPL, with perpetual

Map 1 Guadalcanal plains oil-palm plantations, 2009



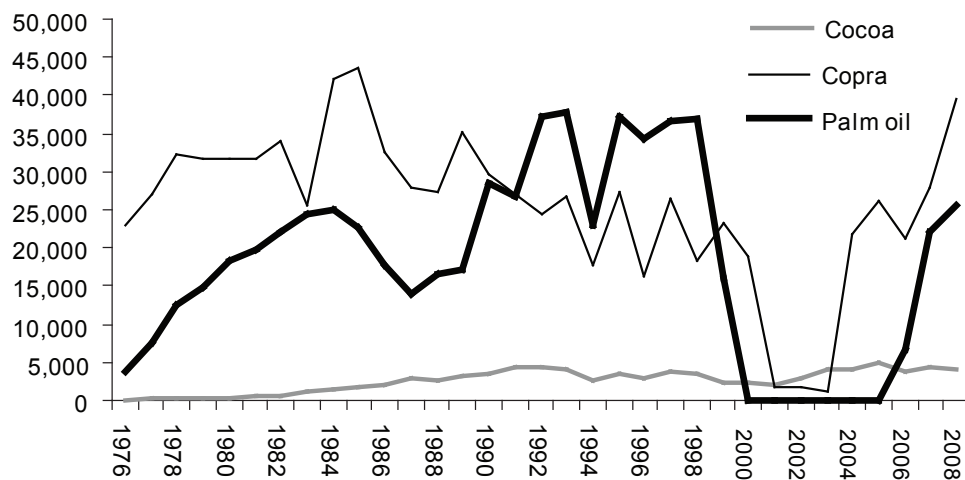


estate title reverting to landowners.³ Palm products, including oil and kernel, made up an average of 11.3 per cent of Solomon Islands' exports between 1976 and 1998, despite a major trough in 1986 when Cyclone Namu struck Guadalcanal's northern plains. Between 1988 and 1998, palm-oil was Solomon Islands' most valuable agricultural export commodity. In 1998, the year before the outbreak of violent conflict on Guadalcanal, the value of palm-oil exports was SI\$94.2 million, compared with SI\$46.8 million for coconut products and SI\$22.8 million for cocoa (Figure 1). By the late 1990s, there were approximately 6,300 ha under oil-palm on estates at Ngalimbiu and Tetere and SIPL employed 1,800 people (*Solomon Star*, 2 August 1999). The composition of the SIPL labour force was 65 per cent from Malaita and 16 per cent from Temotu Province ('Nambawan palm oil bilong Lumi; message

from SIPL to the people of the Solomon Islands', *Solomon Star*, 26 July 1999). Most employees lived on housing estates at Ngalimbiu, Tetere, Berande, Cocoa, Balisuna and Okea. Including dependants, 8–10,000 migrant settlers associated with SIPL activities were living on the northern plains. Even by the late 1970s, former migrant workers were shifting onto customary land under informal arrangements with local landowners, planting food gardens, raising pigs and cash cropping (Kama 1979:152).

Tensions between SIPL-related settlers and indigenes on northern Guadalcanal were among the key catalysts for the Isatabu uprising in 1999. In March 1999, the roadside stoning of a palm-fruit-carrying truck heading for the mill sparked a reaction from the threatened workers, who initially demanded compensation and—when this was not forthcoming—burnt down houses in the village of Binu (Map 1). Days later,

Figure 1 Solomon Islands tree-crop exports, 1976–2008 (tonnes)



Sources: Central Bank of Solomon Islands, various years. *Quarterly Bulletin*, Central Bank of Solomon Islands, Honiara; NCDS database.



there was an arson attempt at the local mill. In May, Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) fighters—often dressed in *kabilato* (loincloths, the traditional dress of the Moro Movement) (Davenport and Çoker 1967:138, Tara 1990)—began evicting settlers across the northern plains, beginning in the east and working westwards towards Honiara. The failure of the Honiara Peace Accord in June demonstrated that Guadalcanal's senior statesmen were unable to control the young IFM militants. In July, SIPL shut down its operations and the remaining workers were evacuated into Honiara (*Solomon Star*, 5 July 1999). In total, there were about 25,000 people evicted from rural Guadalcanal during 1999—some 34 per cent of the pre-crisis provincial population (Fraenkel 2004:55–6). The worst hit areas were in the vicinity of the oil-palm plantations: 66 per cent of the population of East Tasimboko was displaced, 65 per cent of those in West Ghoabata and 58 per cent of those in East Ghoabata—figures that could be taken as rough proxies for the share of settlers among the population on the plains (Schoorl and Friesen 2002:table 5.5, p. 133; Government of Solomon Islands 2000:tables B2.13, B2.09f).⁴

Efforts involving Guale leaders to reopen the SIPL operation in the second half of 1999 failed and local bitterness increased as a result of hostility about punitive police raids to retrieve displaced people's property from around the SIPL facility at Tetere. Oil-palm plantations were extensively damaged, as villagers sought to reappropriate lands for cultivation of garden produce for the Honiara market, and feeder roads became unusable (Nanau 2009:165).

In Honiara, the heavily Malaitan-dominated Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, in a joint operation with an emergent Honiara-based Malaitan militia group, the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF), overthrew the elected government in June 2000. In October,

an attempted peace accord, brokered with Australian assistance, entailed the surrender of some weapons on both sides. In its wake, the conflict continued but in a changed configuration, involving internecine fighting among rival Malaitan militias in Honiara and, most bitterly, between the rural Guadalcanal guerrillas identified with the IFM and those associated with Harold Keke, who refused to sign up to the Townsville Peace Accord. An international peace-monitoring team established a presence on the northern plains, but the security situation remained precarious. Only after the arrival of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in July 2003 were the militants for the most part disarmed, arrested and imprisoned.

Restarting of palm-oil operations

In 2004, the PNG-based company New Britain Palm Oil Limited (NBPOL) obtained agreement from Tasimboko landowners to restart operations on the estates at Tetere, Ngalimbiu and Mbalisuna, and to rehabilitate the former SIPL mill. NBPOL is listed on the London Stock Exchange, with the 51 per cent controlling share having been obtained by the Malaysian state-owned company Kulim (Malaysia) Berhard in 1996 from its predecessor, Harrisons and Crossfield. The NBPOL palm-oil operations in West New Britain Province began in the late 1960s and 1970s, using the nucleus-estate model, entailing a core plantation component around which settlers, mostly from the Sepik region, and local landowners participated in supplying palm fruits to the mill from out-grower blocks (Curry 2003:413). For GPPOL, in contrast, land settlement schemes were out of the question, given the recent history of eviction of Malaitan settlers and continuing hostility to any resumption of inter-island



settlement; however, arrangements were eventually made with the *loka matata* landowner group for a 503 ha segment of the Tetere plantation to be operated as an out-grower block by Binu villagers. A further combined total of 314 ha, entailing mostly smaller blocks scattered around the main plantation estates, has subsequently been included, bringing the out-grower component to 817 ha (Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Limited, Unpublished data on out-grower land area).

GPPOL began operations in 2005 and the mill restarted in mid 2006. Significant areas of oil-palms had been planted in 1997–99. Since oil-palms reach peak yield after six years, the timing of the restarting of operations was fortuitous. During the crisis years, palm fruits were left to rot on the trees, effectively fertilising the palms and keeping nutrients in balance. From 2006, GPPOL restarted fertiliser applications to maintain nutrients at an optimal level. The areas under cocoa that had been converted to oil-palm in 1994 also benefitted from a higher level of nutrients due to the residual impact of higher inputs of fertiliser associated with cocoa cultivation.

A crucial prerequisite before restarting operations was some resolution of the uncertainties surrounding land ownership on the core plantation estates. Under SIPL, plantation land had been leased as 75-year, fixed-term estates from landowners (*Solomon Islands Plantations Ltd versus Manatedetea*, Civil Case [5], 1997, High Court of Solomon Islands), with trustees obtaining rents at SI\$100 per hectare as well as a one-off SI\$500 premium for new areas brought under oil-palm.⁵ Landowners did not want the Solomon Islands government to retain shares in the company.⁶ By agreement between the Solomon Islands government, the Guadalcanal provincial government, SIPL, local landowners and GPPOL, SIPL leases were cancelled and landowners instead

leased blocks to GPPOL.⁷ Leases were on 50-year terms, with a 20-year renewal option. Therefore, an important initial step was to re-establish the trustees, through a series of elections, for the 58 parcels of land covering the Ngalimbiu, Okea, Tetere, Mberande and Mbalisuna plantations. The elections proved an important means of testing local support for the restarting of operations and strengthened local backing for GPPOL.

Under the newly negotiated arrangements, rent was to remain at SI\$100 per annum, together with substantial royalty payments calculated at 10 per cent of the farm-gate price. In addition, landowners received a 20 per cent share of company ownership, compared with the 2 per cent stake under the SIPL arrangements. In line with the memorandum of understanding between the landowners and the provincial and national governments, first priority with regard to employment is to be given to local landowners, then to people from elsewhere in Guadalcanal Province and, finally, to people from other provinces. Of the 2,200 people employed by 2009, the majority were from Guadalcanal, although some were from other provinces—mainly Temotu and Isabel. In addition to workers at the mill who reside at the Tetere housing estate, workers are scattered across residential quarters attached to the main estates and are rostered as harvesters, upkeeping gangs, sprayers, wheelers, loose fruit collectors, road maintenance gangs and compound and rubbish cleaners.

Although the mill was largely destroyed during the tension years, the structure remained intact. Looting was extensive, with the removal of roofing iron and cladding and electrical components, but it proved possible to salvage and recondition one turbine. In the SIPL days, mill productivity had started at about 24 tonnes an hour, but by the late 1990s it had been raised to about 28 tonnes an hour. With an investment of about US\$8



million, the current mill has been brought up to similar speeds. A kernel mill (costing US\$1.5 million), introduced in December 2007, permitted GPPOL to export palm kernel oil—in contrast with the previous situation under SIPL when palm kernel was exported unprocessed. This has also allowed the export of palm kernel expeller, which is a high-protein cattle feed used in feedlots in Australia and New Zealand.

The out-grower scheme

In West New Britain, out-grower blocks contribute close to 30 per cent of the area under oil-palm; there have been efforts to expand this side of the operation on Guadalcanal. Out-grower blocks totalling 817 ha have been established—176 blocks ranging in size from less than a single hectare to 22.2 ha. The average block size is 4.6 ha and on average there are 590 palms per block. The majority of these blocks are part of the Binu out-growers' area, a large contiguous parcel of mature oil-palms now totalling 563 ha.

Initially, the community was divided over the issue of whether to sign its oil-palm land over to the company. After courting another potential commercial operator, however, the *loka mamata* landowners eventually opted to give over a small wedge of oil-palm land to the company (66 ha), while establishing the bulk of the former plantation as out-grower blocks. There are 114 out-grower blocks in the *loka mamata* out-grower area, averaging 4.9 ha in size. Five per cent of the proceeds from palm-oil sales to the company go into a fund managed by the Tetere Outgrowers' Association, which is a registered company. Out-growers can access credit from the association; in order to repay debts, GPPOL deducts money from payments at the source. The association also extends financial assistance

for unanticipated traditional exchange requirements, particularly funerals.

The remaining 314 ha of out-grower blocks are scattered around different parts of the greater GPPOL area, although there are a few larger areas of contiguous blocks—for example, at Kautoga, which was run as a cooperative during the SIPL days and has been revived as a cooperative with EU assistance. The land tenure arrangements for many of these blocks differ significantly from those in the Binu area, as they are usually on customary land that, in some cases, has never been alienated or registered. The company has adapted a procedure developed in West New Britain to facilitate participation in oil-palm cultivation. Prospective out-growers are required to complete a 'smallholder approval form', which asks for confirmation of customary right to use and occupy land for the growing of oil-palm. This form requires the signature of the 'clan chief' and the 'paramount chief', and in cases of dispute entails parties agreeing to resolve these through the Tribal Lands Dispute Resolution Panel.⁸ Where agreement is reached on the participation of new blocks, GPPOL provides interest-free loans to cover start-up costs, as well as seedlings and technical assistance.

The company is in the process of introducing a new system that will record and monitor the tonnages of palm-oil coming from each out-grower block. Data and anecdotal evidence, however, indicate quite significant variation in productivity across the 170 out-grower blocks and from individual blocks over time. This is thought to be related to a number of factors that can be broadly characterised as social relations and labour organisation. For example, it appears that out-growers sometimes weigh their fruit on another block-holder's net because they owe them money or as part of a production drive organised along kinship lines.⁹ It is further thought that some blocks



are 'share-cropped' as extended-family ventures while others are run more as individually owned enterprises, and that this also impacts on the productivity of blocks. The precise nature and extent of these practices warrant further investigation.

Out-growers harvest oil-palm fruit according to a roster that allows each blockholder to sell fruit twice a month and be paid on the fifteenth day of each month for the previous month's sales. Harvesting follows a three-day program. The fruit is harvested on the first day, taken to the roadside for collection on the second and picked up by a company truck on the third. Out-growers commonly engage extended family members and paid labourers to assist with harvesting, and operable wage rates have been an issue of local contention. Off-duty company workers are often employed for this purpose, but a new labour market is more broadly in operation. Decisions about labour allocation are made with consideration given to various price signals—palm-oil, cocoa and fresh produce at the Honiara market—as well to the demands of subsistence and customary activities. The Asian Development Bank-rehabilitated road eastwards from Honiara made the Honiara market more accessible and enhanced the scope for smallholders to earn cash income through market gardening and cocoa and copra production.

Landowners and the plantations

While out-growers receive the full farm-gate price, those landowners who lease land for inclusion in the plantation side of the GPPOL operation obtain 10 per cent of the farm-gate price in royalties. Each of the 58 parcels of registered land leased to the company for its plantation estates is represented by five trustees. These trustees manage the 50 per cent of royalty payments that are paid

directly to the 58 trust boards in proportion to the area of land that is under oil-palm on each parcel. Royalties are paid according to area rather than real production output because otherwise those landowners whose oil-palms had become senile and required replanting in 2005 would have had to have waited several years before receiving any royalty payments. The other 50 per cent of royalties is paid into a fund administered by an investment committee comprising two representatives—a man and a woman—from each of the five main tribes: Ghauvata, Thimbo, Dhogo, Lathi and Nekama. This committee is effectively a subcommittee of the Guadalcanal Landowners' Association, which has 17 members on its executive and is the peak body representing landowners in the greater GPPOL area.¹⁰

In 2008, the company paid a total of SI\$6.9 million in royalties and SI\$769,000 in rent. The landowners' 20 per cent equity in the company is handled by a registered company called the Guadalcanal Plains Resource Development Association Company Limited. The company has five directors—again, representing the five main tribes. Landowners tend to lease larger blocks to the company but retain smaller blocks that are manageable by local communities as out-grower blocks.

Fluctuations in output

In mid 2006, the mill was restarted, supplied by the Tetera and Ngalmibiu plantations. Palms further eastwards, covering the Mbalisuna and Mberande plantations, were mostly senile and these areas were largely replanted. In total, 4,000 ha were rehabilitated and 2,000 ha replanted. Output has increased from all three plantation areas (Figure 2 shows Mbalisuna and Mberande under Mbalisuna and Okea together with Ngalmibiu). The pronounced fluctuations



shown in the data for Ngalimbiu, where the oil-palms are most mature, reflect an annual cycle of production. The low season runs from June or July to October; the crop then increases, hitting its peak in April/May. The slight dip in out-grower production in 2008–09 could be a response to lower international prices, but it is more likely the result of lower fertility as palm fruit is now harvested regularly. The residual nutrient benefit has probably diminished and the high cost of fertiliser can discourage out-growers from carrying out application.

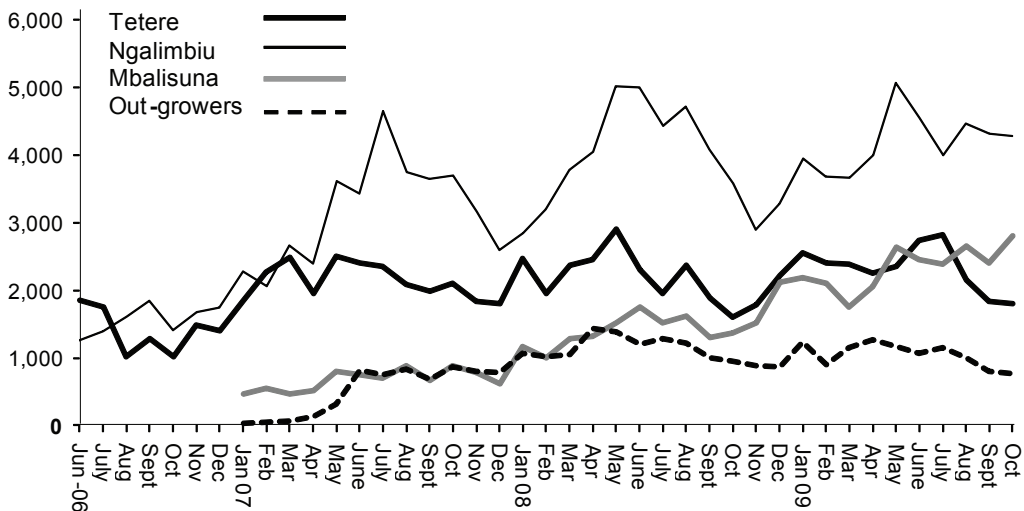
Fluctuations in export earnings have followed price trends determined by big international producers, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, which together account for about 87 per cent of world palm-oil output. Palm-oil tends to track the soya bean oil price, with strong palm-oil prices in years of poor global soya harvests and vice versa.

Falling commodity prices in late 2008, combined with high levels of global stocks, encouraged producers in Indonesia and Malaysia to replant large areas. Governments in both countries encouraged domestic use of palm-oil to generate biofuels in order to diminish stocks. Palm-oil prices steadily increased from late 2006 through to July 2008, followed by a large dip, as with many globally traded commodities, and a subsequent slow recovery from mid 2009.

Conclusion

With 6,000 ha currently under production, the expansion of GPPOL-run plantations is likely to require the bringing under cultivation of plantations further eastwards of the Mberande River, including former plantations at Ruavata and Rere. Eastwards

Figure 2 Guadalcanal Palm Oil Plantations Limited output, June 2006 – October 2009
(no. of fresh fruit bunches)



Source: Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Limited (GPPOL), 2006–10. Company records, Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Limited, Honiara.



expansion will not involve the felling of virgin forest, as has occurred on Vanguna Island, in the Western Province, where the Solomon Islands government in 1999 allowed 10,000 ha of land to be 'cleared' (that is, logged) for an oil-palm plantation that never eventuated (See Kinch, Mesia et al, 'Socioeconomic baseline study: Eastern Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands, IWP-Pacific Technical Report (International Waters Project) no. 35, http://www.sprep.org/att/publication/000536_IWP_PTR35.pdf). Land being registered in the Auluta Basin area has been earmarked for oil-palm plantation ('Government urged to fast track palm oil project', *Solomon Times*, 14 August 2008; Cook and Kofana 2008), but the appropriateness of that area for the industry has been questioned. So far, the managed-estate areas at GPPOL have been only on registered land. Expansion eastwards will necessarily involve the mobilisation of customary land and out-grower areas, as the proportion of the total area under oil-palm is likely to increase. To the east, also, the alternative of supplying market produce to the Honiara market is less attractive owing to the greater distances involved and, correspondingly, leasing land or engaging as out-growers supplying the mill become more attractive options. Development of a further 1,500 ha would require an increase in mill capacity, probably entailing the construction of a second mill.

This examination of the GPPOL nucleus-estate operation has identified a number of key areas for further research. We are particularly interested in the way local participation in the out-grower and plantation oil-palm operations is influenced by the alternative of obtaining cash incomes through marketing garden produce from an area that has historically been the 'bread basket' for the capital, Honiara, and through other smallholder cash-cropping activities, particularly cocoa production.¹¹

Although productivity might be higher on the plantations, as is frequently the case, out-growers balance their participation in palm-oil with subsistence and cash-cropping and with the requirements of the indigenous gift-exchange economy.¹² The location of the operation in an area still troubled by a legacy of conflict also offers a case study of development in a post-conflict setting. The expansion of the operation has required an interesting range of arrangements for the mobilisation of customary land and the management of trusts and current revenues arising from rents and royalties accruing to landowning groups.

Notes

- ¹ See, for example, Honiara Peace Accord, 28 June 1999 (available from http://www.pacii.org/pits/en/treaty_database/1999/6.html); Townsville Peace Agreement, 15 October 2000 (available from http://www.commerce.gov.sb/Gov/Peace_Agreement.htm). The history of land transactions on Guadalcanal is currently the subject of a commission of inquiry.
- ² Trial plantings began in 1971.
- ³ The Mberande plantation was compulsorily acquired by the government from landowners and leased to SIPL (Peter Larmour, Personal communication, 17 December 2009).
- ⁴ A very small, but nonetheless significant, number of settlers, normally intermarried, remained on rural Guadalcanal throughout the tensions era.
- ⁵ For these arrangements, see Kabutaulaka (2000). SIPL rents were SI\$65 a hectare but rose to SI\$100 in the 1990s.
- ⁶ SIPL had been 30 per cent owned by the government, 2 per cent by local landowners and 68 per cent by the Commonwealth Development Corporation.
- ⁷ Some GPPOL land remains as fixed-term estates—for example, parts of Tetere, including the administrative buildings and the local school.
- ⁸ These panels do not currently exist. The draft legislation to establish them, the Tribal Lands



Dispute Resolution Bill, was released for public consultation in 2008. This consultation is continuing, with no set date for completion. Under the draft legislation, a series of Tribal Land Dispute Resolution Panels would be established, not a single panel as implied on the 'smallholder approval form' (Daniel Evans, Personal communication, 21 January 2010).

⁹ Curry (2003) documented similar practices in the case of out-grower schemes in West New Britain.

¹⁰ The breakdown of the membership of the Guadalcanal Landowners' Association executive across the five tribes is commensurate with the size of the tribes and the amount of land that each has leased to the company. Ghaobata tribe has seven members on the executive, Thimbo has three, Dhogo has three, Lathi has two and Nekama has two. Each tribe elects their representatives. There are currently only two women on the executive.

¹¹ For earlier studies, see Lasaga (1969) and Bathgate (1978).

¹² This finding resembles that in Curry (2003); however, the proximity of the capital, Honiara, and in particular, the Honiara market, also generates a significant alternative outlet for garden produce.

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