



Investing in rural people

Republic of Fiji

Country Strategy Note: 2025-2026

Main report and appendices

Contents

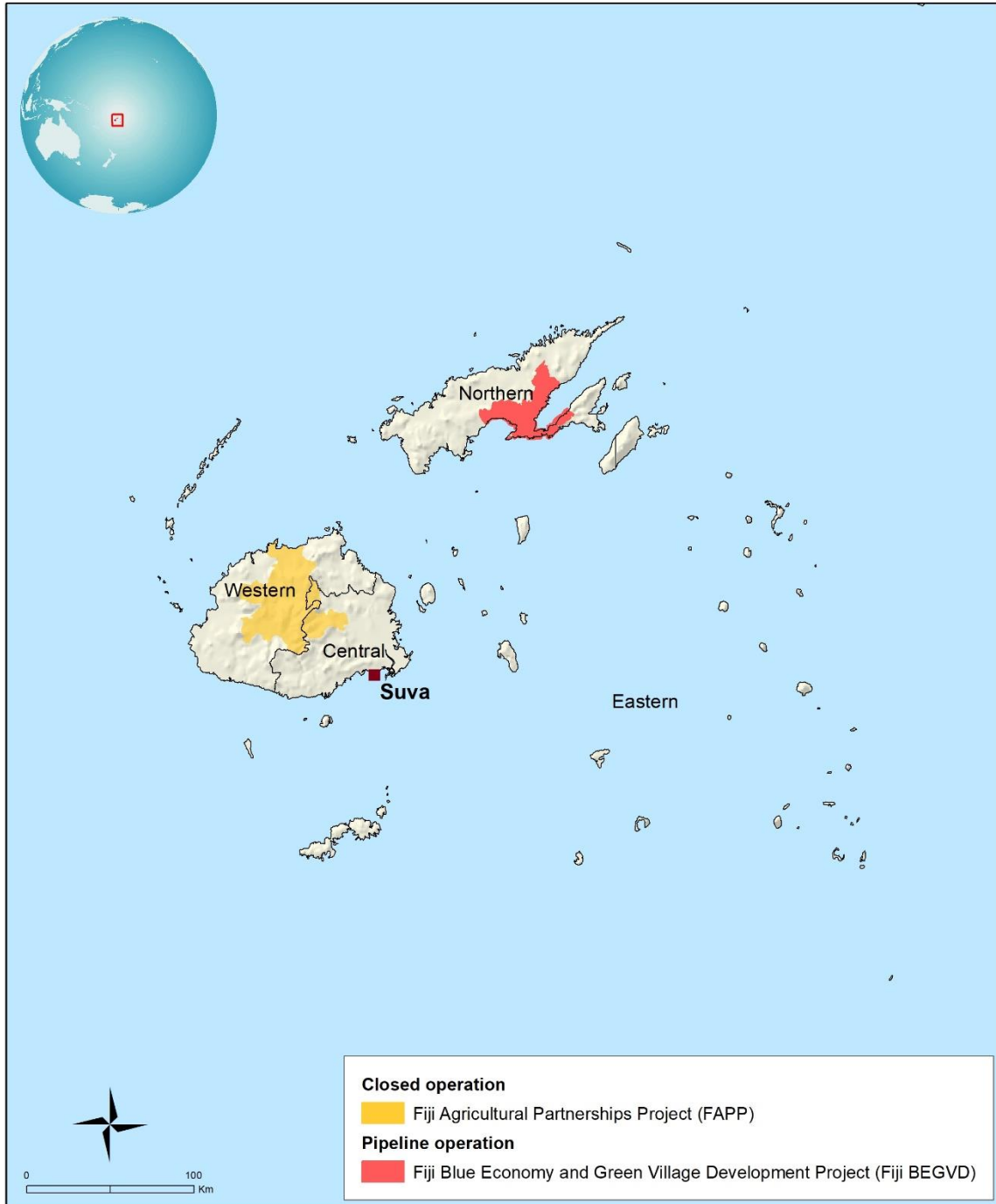
Abbreviations and acronyms	iii
Map of IFAD-funded operations in the country	v
I. Country diagnosis	1
II. Rationale and time frame	3
III. Strategic objectives	5
IV. Indicative IFAD engagement	6
V. Risk Management Framework	7
Appendix 1: Results Management Framework	9
Appendix 2: SECAP Background Study	11
Appendix 3: Integrated Country Risk Matrix	28
Appendix 4: Project Concept Note:	31

Abbreviations and acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APFP	Asian Pacific Farmers' Programme
COSOP	Country Strategic Opportunities Paper
CSN	Country Strategic Note
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisations
FAPP	Fiji Agriculture Partnerships Project
FO4ACP	Farmer Organizations for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Programme
FOs	Farmer Organisations
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
GAFSP	Global Agricultural and Food Security Programme
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDSSCF	Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IGAs	Income generation activities
JPRWEE	Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards Rural Women Economic Empowerment
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MOAW	Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways
MOECC	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
MORMD	Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development
NAP	National Adaptation Plan Framework of Fiji
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NFNC	National Food and Nutrition Centre
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NRM	Natural Resources Management
PCN	Project Concept Note
PCO	Pacific Country Office
PFO	Pacific Islands Farmer Organisations Network (previously PIFON)
PFSP	Private Sector Financing Programme
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PIF	Project Identification Form (for GEF proposal)
PIRAS	Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility
R2R	Ridge to Reef
RBAs	Rome-Based Agencies
RESOP	Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme
RPSF	Rural Poor Stimulus Facility
SDGs	Strategic Development Goals
SECAP	Social, Environmental, and Climate Assessment
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
SO	Strategic Objective
SPC	Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

SSTC	South-South Triangulation Cooperation
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNSDCF	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WFP	World Food Programme

Map of IFAD-funded operations in the country



The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.

Map compiled by IFAD | 09-01-2025

I. Country diagnosis

Overview: Fiji is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) in the South Pacific, covering 18,272 km² across more than 330 islands, with about 110 of these inhabited. Its diverse landscapes, including tropical forests, mountains, coastlines, and coral reefs, support rich biodiversity and a thriving tourism industry. The nation's population of 963,000 is made up of indigenous Fijians (iTaukei), Indo-Fijians, and other minorities, mainly residing on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Approximately 40 percent of the population lives in rural areas, a decline from over 50 percent in 2020, which is relatively lower compared to other Pacific Island countries (PICs).

Economic Performance: Fiji experienced steady growth with an average annual GDP increase of 2.2 percent between 2000 and 2019. However, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a sharp decline, with GDP contracting by 20 percent in 2020-2021 due to tourism shutdowns and other containment measures. The current Gross National Income (GNI) per capita is about USD 5,600, classifying Fiji as an upper middle-income country.

Indebtedness: As of October 2023, government debt reached 76 percent of GDP, up by 5.6 percent from the previous year. Persistent fiscal deficits have led to increased debt levels, and both the IMF and World Bank have expressed concerns about debt management.

Poverty: Despite relatively high average incomes, poverty in Fiji remains significant, with 29.9% of the population below the basic needs poverty line, rising to 41.4% in rural areas. Contributing factors include limited access to services, high transport costs, vulnerability to natural disasters, and reliance on foreign aid and remittances.

The Agricultural Sector: Since 2000, agriculture, forestry, and fishing have contributed 10-12% to Fiji's GDP, with the sector's share rising to over 15% during the COVID pandemic as people returned to subsistence farming. Agriculture employs about 30% of the workforce, particularly in rural areas where 40% of the population resides. The sector includes both subsistence and commercial farming, with 70,991 agricultural households identified in the 2020 census. Approximately 40% of households engage in commercial farming (including sugar), while 60% focus on subsistence farming. Key products include sugarcane, root crops, fruit, vegetables, coconuts, ginger, rice, kava, livestock, and fish.

Food and Nutrition Security: Food availability in Fiji is generally stable, but natural disasters can cause temporary shortages. The country faces a double burden of malnutrition, with high rates of obesity and non-communicable diseases, alongside micronutrient deficiencies. Many Fijians have inadequate diets, with access to nutritious food often dependent on income. Vulnerable groups, such as women and children, may face food insecurity, exacerbated by reliance on cheap imported foods and the decline of traditional diets. Additionally, local crops are diverted for export, raising prices for urban populations.¹

Land Ownership: The 2020 Fiji Agriculture Census recorded 70,991 agricultural households and 195,000 hectares of farmland, averaging 2.7 hectares per household. Over half (54.1%) of Fiji's land is mataqali land under customary tenure, with 23.7% leased for sugarcane. Other land types include freehold (13.9%), State land (6.0%), and informal arrangements (2.1%). Most agricultural households (65%) have less than one hectare. While customary land tenure supports subsistence farming, it hinders the shift to commercial farming or using land as collateral.

Gender and Social Inclusion: Fijian women face significant gender inequality, affecting their education, income, and health. In 2024, Fiji ranked 126th out of 146 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index. Only 39% of women aged 15 and over are economically active, and despite making up one-third of the agricultural workforce, land ownership is hindered by male-dominated inheritance practices. A 13% gender gap in financial inclusion exists, due to low financial literacy. Women are more vulnerable to violence, harassment, and climate change impacts. However, women have higher literacy rates, with a 97% high school completion rate compared to 79% for men.

Youth face a number of social inclusion challenges. In 2023, youth unemployment (ages 14-24) was 15.2%, compared to 4.3% for adults. The 2020 Agriculture Census found 33% of farmers were under 35, but many young people, especially females, work as unpaid family labour. Only 4.4% of young women consider farming their main occupation. Rural youth face limited access to education,

¹ Future Directions International (2019). Strategic Analysis Paper: Fiji: Poor Nutrition and Agricultural Decline has Caused Food Security Slump

healthcare, employment, and services, and are excluded from training, have restricted access to land and markets, and lack credit.

Climate Change: Fiji has a tropical marine climate, influenced by the South Pacific Convergence Zone and El Niño, making it highly disaster-prone. Key hazards include cyclones, storm surges, droughts, and flooding. Trends show rising temperatures, ocean acidification, and more intense weather events. By 2030, Fiji is expected to experience a 1.8°C temperature increase, rising sea levels, and stronger cyclones².

Environment: Fiji's environment faces challenges such as land degradation, coastal flooding, unsustainable resource harvesting, and urbanization. Agriculture, forestry, and mining contribute to soil erosion, water contamination, and pollution. Deforestation, unsustainable farming, and mangrove destruction worsen land degradation. Steep areas suffer from erosion, and continuous cropping leads to soil depletion, causing significant biodiversity loss.³

Institutional Framework: The Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways (MOAW) oversees agriculture, with key divisions in crop research and extension, collaborating with partners and NGOs. The National Food and Nutrition Centre (NFNC) under the Ministry of Health focuses on food and nutrition security. Other key institutions include the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) and the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development (MORMD), which houses the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO).

Strategic and Policy Framework

Fiji National Development Plan 2025-2029 & Vision 2050 focus on empowering the people of Fiji, prioritizing their needs in national development. The plan emphasizes economic resilience, people empowerment, and good governance, with a focus on sustainable recovery, climate change mitigation, and data-driven decisions. Key priorities include fostering macroeconomic stability, strengthening international relations, and promoting sustainable resource management and economic diversification.

Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways (MAW) **Strategic Development Plan (2024-2028)** aims to build a resilient, competitive, and inclusive agriculture sector, with five priorities: ensuring food and nutrition security, improving livelihoods of farming households, enhancing community resilience through sustainable resource management, increasing commercial agriculture, and improving Ministry performance and service delivery.

National Climate Change Policy (2018-2030) promotes climate-resilient development, focusing on agricultural adaptation through data, climate-smart practices, and sustainable resource management. It aims to reduce climate risks, encourage sustainable production, and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 through renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture, and nature-based solutions.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025 aims to conserve and sustainably use Fiji's biodiversity across terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems. Priorities include capacity building, establishing protected areas, species management, controlling invasive species, and creating enabling environments for biodiversity conservation.

Gender Policy in Agriculture addresses gender disparities in agriculture, promoting gender mainstreaming to improve food security, sustainable livelihoods, and climate resilience. Key objectives include ensuring equal access to resources, information, and decision-making, and integrating gender perspectives into relevant government policies and ministries.

Youth in Agriculture Policy aims to empower youth to engage in all areas of agriculture, strengthening food security, commercial agriculture, and climate resilience. Its objectives are to improve access to resources and financial services, enhance education and skills, support innovation, and promote sustainability and resilience in the agricultural sector.

Food and Nutrition Security Policy, pending Cabinet endorsement, aims to ensure all Fijians have access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food. Its key actions include building resilient food systems, investing in nutrition-sensitive value chains, and enhancing social protection programs to improve food security and nutrition.

² [Climate Change Update for the Pacific – RCCAP – Regional Climate Consortium for Asia and the Pacific](#)

³ Government of Fiji, Department of Environment. 2007. Implementation Framework 2010–2014 for the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2007

II. Rationale and time frame

IFAD in Fiji

The **Fiji Agriculture Partnerships Project** (FAPP), IFAD's first investment in Fiji, aimed to reduce hardship in rural communities by promoting sustainable farming. Approved in 2015 and completed in 2019, it included components for agribusiness development, SME mentoring, and community-based environmental management. However, the project failed to meet its objectives, with only 17% of IFAD funding disbursed. Challenges such as recruitment delays, lack of political support, and an overly ambitious timeline led to its failure. The Project Completion Report rated it unsatisfactory, highlighting overestimated capacities, inexperience, and insufficient government ownership.

Fiji participates in several regional programs relevant to the interim CSN, focusing on the role of NGOs, CSOs, and farmer organizations (FOs) in reaching remote rural communities:

- The **Asia Pacific Farmers' Program** (APFP), a USD 33.7 million initiative, works with farmers' organizations to improve livelihoods and food security in 29 Asian countries. Fiji's share is USD 0.32 million.
- **Farmer Organisations for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Programme** (FO4ACP), an EU-funded initiative administered by IFAD, supports FOs in the Pacific, with EUR 1.8 million allocated to Fiji. It has expanded the reach of the Fiji-based Pacific Islands Farmer Organisations Network (PFO).
- **Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility** (PIRAS), a COVID-19 response program, promotes food self-reliance, improved nutrition, and sustainable agricultural livelihoods in six Pacific countries. Fiji's component, USD 0.925 million, concludes in February 2024.
- The **Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment** (JP RWEE), a global initiative, enhances rural women's rights, livelihoods, and resilience. In Fiji, the program receives USD 0.4 million and is set to run until May 2027, with goals including improved food security, economic autonomy, and gender-responsive policies.

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned from FAPP and regional programs have informed Fiji's country program, incorporating broader insights from IFAD's work in other Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Key lessons include:

- The **importance of partnerships**: Governments in PICs have limited capacity for decentralized rural development. Successful projects often rely on partnerships with NGOs, FOs, and private sector players, as seen in Tonga, Kiribati, and the Solomon Islands.
- A **decentralized approach**, especially in remote and outer island areas, is highly effective for supporting smallholder farmers through partnerships with NGOs, CSOs, FOs, and the private sector.
- A **pluralistic extension service** delivery model—leveraging NGOs, FOs, the private sector, and government—is essential to provide relevant and accessible services, particularly in remote areas.
- Bottom-up, **community-driven planning and development** are key to community empowerment and fostering institutional changes in service provision.
- **Targeting** in rapid crisis response programs, like PIRAS, face difficulties in identification of the most vulnerable communities with limited time for engagement.
- **Strengthening subsistence food production** is crucial for food security and climate resilience, while also developing **commercial farming** opportunities, especially for youth.
- **Stepwise engagement**: Successful projects often begin with progressive farmers, demonstrating positive outcomes to encourage broader community participation, including risk-averse farmers.
- **Natural disasters**: Country programs should be flexible enough to adapt resources for disaster recovery and rebuilding, as natural disasters often disrupt or delay project activities.

Although IFAD has not previously implemented GEF-financed initiatives in Fiji, lessons from the Ridge to Reef (R2R) initiative have been valuable. R2R demonstrated the effectiveness of integrated

approaches to managing land, water, forests, biodiversity, and coastal resources, addressing multiple issues. It highlighted the importance of community involvement in planning and implementation for better acceptance and sustainability.

Rationale for IFAD Engagement in Fiji

Fiji, the largest member country in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) by population, hosts IFAD's Pacific Country Office, which supports all 13 PIC member states. Despite this, Fiji has played a relatively minor role in IFAD's growing portfolio in the region, with only one investment project and participation in several smaller regional grant programs. Most of these activities have been concentrated on the main island of Viti Levu, where approximately 70% of the population resides.

The new government, in office since December 2022, has developed the **Agricultural Strategic Development Plan (2024-2028)** and requested IFAD's support for agricultural development and rural poverty reduction, particularly in Vanua Levu. IFAD will allocate USD 5.3 million from its IFAD13 PBAS, with the Government contributing USD 8.2 million from the GEF8 STAR allocation for the Fiji Blue Economy and Green Community Development (BE GREEN) Project. This will be IFAD's first managed GEF project in the Pacific, building on previous GEF and IFAD experiences.

This is Fiji's first Country Strategy Note (CSN), outlining an interim strategy for up to two years. It serves as a framework for launching the BE-GREEN initiative and positioning IFAD as a key partner in the implementation of the new Agricultural Strategic Development Plan. Concurrently, IFAD is developing the Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme (RESOP), which will provide a unified approach to IFAD's operations across all Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Preparation of the RESOP began in May 2024 and is expected to be finalized by early 2025, following a review of IFAD's SIDS strategy. Once the RESOP is completed and approved it will subsume the Fiji CSN and those of the other PIC member states.

Policy Alignment

The CSN is fully aligned with Fiji's national and sectoral policy framework. Since the CSN will transition into the RESOP it is also important that it aligns with regional development strategies as well as IFAD's corporate policy settings:

- The **2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent** is the Pacific Islands Forum's primary development framework, aiming for a resilient, inclusive, and prosperous Pacific. It focuses on political leadership, people-centered development, peace, economic growth, climate resilience, environmental sustainability, and enhanced technology and connectivity.
- The **UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-27)** commits the UN and Pacific Leaders to sustainable development, aligned with the 2050 Strategy. It focuses on empowering people, ensuring equitable access to services, promoting decent work and shared prosperity, and fostering responsive governance, gender equality, and human rights.
- The CSN will contribute to the achievement of several **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, such as: SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 13 (climate action), among others.
- The **Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS)⁴** outlines priorities for Small Island Developing States, focusing on economic resilience, climate action and finance, biodiversity, sustainable ocean resource use, disaster risk management, and building safe, healthy societies.
- The CSN fully aligns with **IFAD's Strategic Framework (2016-2025)**, focusing on increasing rural people's productivity, market participation, and environmental sustainability. It adheres to IFAD's principles, emphasizing innovation, learning, scaling up, gender transformation, climate finance, and building adaptive capacity.
- The CSN aligns with **IFAD's Strategy for Engagement in SIDS (2022-27)**, focusing on sustainable food systems, rural employment, and strengthening resilience to climate change. The strategy emphasizes adaptive programming, resource mobilization, in-country presence, and strengthened partnerships for rural development.

⁴ ABAS replaces the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014-24).

- The CSN will also contribute to achieve the updated **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** target by focusing on climate smart agriculture, livestock, and aquaculture initiatives.

IFAD's Comparative Advantage in the Fiji

Over the past decade, IFAD has become the leading development partner in the Pacific agricultural sector, with a portfolio surpassing that of DFAT, the World Bank, and ADB combined. It has transitioned from a single Rome-based Country Director to a fully operational Pacific Country Office (PCO) in Suva, Fiji, supporting an expanding project portfolio. IFAD is currently involved in projects across 11 Pacific Island Countries and regional initiatives. The PCO is well-positioned to support the revitalization of IFAD's activities in Fiji.

IFAD's approach to partnerships with SIDS acknowledges their unique vulnerabilities, including social, economic, environmental, and food security challenges, which are also present in Fiji. As countries like Fiji transition to higher income levels, rural communities often face persistent poverty, inequality, and vulnerability. IFAD focuses on sustainable food production, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the blue economy to enhance food system resilience and improve the livelihoods of vulnerable communities.

IFAD's Pacific Islands Partnership Approach (2015) is highly relevant to Fiji in the post-COVID era. It focuses on enabling rural communities, especially in remote areas, to sustainably produce, consume, and market local foods, while increasing rural incomes through farm and non-farm opportunities. IFAD's strength lies in promoting pro-poor rural transformation and supporting vulnerable populations in transitioning to farming as a business, in contrast to other donors like the World Bank, DFAT, and MFAT, which focus on commercial agriculture.

III. Strategic objectives

The **goal** of the CSN is to contribute to Fiji's rural poverty reduction, improve food and nutrition security and improve the residence of rural livelihoods through effective and responsible management of natural resources. The **Development Objective** is to accelerate progress towards inclusive and sustainable rural transformation with improved access to economic opportunities and reduced vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters. These are in full alignment with IFAD's SIDS Strategy, especially in enabling sustainable and market-led agriculture for rural men and women, expanding economic opportunities, and strengthening resilience to climate change and other shocks. The CSN will pursue two Strategic Objectives (SOs).

SO1: Improved food and nutrition security through increasing sustainable production of healthy/nutritious foods, complemented by awareness-raising and education about the linkages between nutrition and health. Rural households in Fiji spend a large portion of their income on imported, low-nutrient foods, leading to poor health outcomes such as obesity, hypertension, and diabetes, while reducing their ability to afford essentials like housing, health, and education.

SO1 aims to reduce reliance on food imports, particularly in areas like livestock products and fresh produce, which can be supplied locally to support both local markets and tourism. While Fiji cannot produce all imports, there are opportunities for import substitution in certain sectors.

Additionally, improving the food system's resilience is crucial, with strategies to address climate change, natural disasters, and economic shocks. This includes promoting climate-smart, sustainable farming practices like agroforestry, conservation agriculture, and integrated pest management to enhance environmental and food security.

SO2: Improved rural livelihoods focusing on the 40% of rural households living in poverty, alongside efforts to enhance food and nutrition security. The key objective is to transition subsistence farming households to semi-commercial status, enabling them to be food self-sufficient and produce surplus for sale or engage in cash crop and livestock production. The strategy includes accelerating the commercialization of domestic agri-food markets, promoting import substitution, and improving export commodity marketing through partnerships between farmers and agribusiness enterprises.

The transition to farming as a business will include measures to adopt climate-resilient practices, improve production quality, and strengthen market connections, particularly with the tourism sector. Emerging semi-commercial farmers will need better access to resources, training, and financial services. Additionally, non-agricultural income-generating activities will be supported to further enhance rural livelihoods.

Community engagement will be a key element in both SOs, as experience in Fiji and the Pacific Islands shows it is crucial for transitioning to sustainable, market-oriented farming. Initiatives like PIRAS and FO4ACP highlight the effectiveness of NGOs, CSOs, and FOs in gender-inclusive community engagement. Strong kinship ties and collaboration between traditional leadership and FOs are vital, and efforts to build household capacities should empower communities to actively participate. Local government and FOs offer valuable entry points for engagement.

The **targeting** strategy will adopt an inclusive approach that acknowledges the unique characteristics of iTaukei rural communities and Fiji's multicultural context. It aligns with the government's request to support indigenous communities in the Northern Division. The strategy will focus on low-income areas while ensuring vulnerable households are included, without excluding wealthier ones. Gender-inclusive and household-based approaches will promote women's participation with community support and offer opportunities for youth careers in agriculture.

Capacity building activities initiated under FAPP need to be resumed to support both SOs during the life of the CSN and beyond. This applies particularly to MOAW extension services which have been eroded over a long period. Capacity building for FOs is also an effective means of improving outreach to rural households, especially those with an interest in commercialisation. This will be facilitated through PFO, which is also supported by IFAD under the regional programme, FO4ACP.

Natural Disasters and Other Shocks. Fiji faces a high risk of natural disasters, such as tropical cyclones, tsunamis, droughts, and exotic pests, along with shocks like pandemics. The country strategy includes disaster preparedness and recovery mechanisms. While IFAD does not provide emergency relief, it can quickly shift from development to recovery mode after a disaster and resume development once normalcy returns. This can be achieved by incorporating a disaster recovery component in project designs with a zero-budget allocation, allowing for resource reallocation when necessary.

The country strategy follows IFAD's Policy on Crisis Prevention and Recovery (2006) and focuses on five key elements: (1) swiftly shifting from development to recovery mode and back when appropriate; (2) ensuring short-term responses do not harm long-term development; (3) leveraging existing public, private, and local organizations; (4) taking proactive steps to prepare for and mitigate disaster impacts; and (5) collaborating with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and other recovery agencies.

Country Programme Management. The IFAD Country Director will oversee the implementation of the country strategy and its transition to the regional strategy. The immediate focus is on completing the design of BE GREEN and finalizing financing arrangements, with consultations involving key government agencies, CSOs, and development partners. Strong implementation support will be essential during BE GREEN's startup to prevent delays seen under FAPP. The launch of the Strategic Development Plan for agriculture and the government's request for renewed engagement with IFAD create a favourable environment for policy dialogue.

Partnerships: IFAD will strengthen its partnership with the Government of Fiji to achieve shared goals, while exploring opportunities with development partners in agriculture and rural development. Collaboration will continue under "One UN" for awareness, capacity building, and innovation, alongside Rome-Based Agencies (FAO and WFP) on nutrition, sustainable agriculture, and good practices. The program will also engage with bilateral donors, NGOs, and the private sector to enhance collaboration where relevant.

IV. Indicative IFAD engagement

Investment Activities

The CSN strategy includes both ongoing and planned activities, with a focus on launching the BE GREEN initiative in Vanua Levu. BE GREEN, costing an estimated USD 24.26 million over six years (2025-2031), aims to achieve the CSN's strategic objectives. The financing consists of an IFAD loan of USD 5.3 million from the IFAD 13 PBAS allocation, a GEF 8 STAR grant of USD 8.2 million, additional donor grant of USD 3.0 million, government contribution of USD1.17 million, and beneficiaries' contribution of USD 0.15 million. The private sector is also expected to contribute a total of USD1.71 million. BE-GREEN is being designed with a financing gap of USD4.7m

Ongoing Investment Activities include participation in regional and multi-country programmes funded by IFAD and supplementary funds including: (i) the Asia Pacific Farmers' Program (APFP); (ii) Farmer Organisations for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Programme (FO4ACP) – with possible financing for a new phase from the EU; and (iii) the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE).

Non-Investment Activities

Strategic Partnerships: IFAD will prioritize strategic partnerships to support Fiji's rural poor, focusing on collaboration with the Government of Fiji and other development partners. These partnerships will aim to achieve national and sectoral goals, especially in nutrition-sensitive agriculture, while targeting women, youth, and vulnerable groups. IFAD will work with Fiji Government agencies, technical and financial partners, RBAs, bilateral donors, NGOs, regional organizations like SPC, and international institutions such as the World Bank and ADB.

Resource Mobilisation. IFAD will assist Fiji in mobilizing resources for agricultural development, leveraging its experience in project design and financing. Besides its partnership with GEF, IFAD is ready to collaborate with climate finance agencies like the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, and Special Climate Change Fund. It also administers funds from bilateral donors such as Australia, Korea, Japan, China, USAID, and the EU. IFAD has helped several Pacific Island countries access grants from the Global Agricultural and Food Security Programme and may explore Fiji's remittance inflows through its Financing Facility for Remittances.

Knowledge Management and Communication. IFAD will assist the Fiji Government in generating and applying knowledge for sustainable rural and agricultural development, aligned with the Agriculture Strategic Development Plan. It will integrate knowledge management in all activities to promote learning, to promote learning, document innovations, and share successful models. IFAD will support knowledge sharing to inform policies and investments, providing targeted technical assistance for priority issues.

Private Sector Engagement. IFAD's Private Sector Operational Strategy for 2025-2030 focuses on enhancing development impact by promoting inclusive and sustainable private sector growth in rural areas and food systems. Successful private sector engagements in IFAD's Pacific Island countries, such as Tonga, Samoa, and the Solomon Islands, offer models for replication in Fiji. The BE GREEN initiative plans to create partnerships between farmer associations, agribusinesses, and tourism operators to strengthen value chains linked to smallholder farmers.

South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC). Pacific Island Countries (PICs) understand the challenges of agricultural development, facing issues like remoteness, food insecurity, and vulnerability. Despite their rich experience, isolation and recent travel restrictions hinder mutual learning. Fiji, as the hub of IFAD's PIC network in Suva, can play a key role in strengthening SSTC in the region. Through SSTC, Fiji can learn from other PICs, enhance organizational capacities, and contribute to regional knowledge sharing.

Policy Dialogue: IFAD will play a central role in policy dialogue with key government ministries, farmer networks, the private sector, development partners, and NGOs on issues like agriculture, climate resilience, and social protection. It is an active member of the Fiji Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster, which coordinates efforts to ensure food and nutrition security, particularly during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Innovation: IFAD will implement innovative strategies to address poverty and disadvantage in remote areas of Fiji, in line with its innovation policy. The BE-GREEN initiative will introduce approaches such as community-based models, linking smallholder agriculture to tourism, integrated island-wide natural resource management, and transitioning from sugar monoculture to diversified, regenerative agro-ecosystems.

V. Risk Management Framework

The Integrated Country Risk Matrix in Appendix 3 provides a comprehensive analysis of risks surrounding the CSN, and proposed risk management measures. The following summarises the most important of the risks that may influence the achievement of the strategic objectives.

Risk	Rating	Mitigation Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited Government commitment and capacity to implement internationally financed projects targeting disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include capacity-building support measures in project design and costings. Engage partners (NGOs, CSOs, FOs, private sector) to leverage capabilities and share implementation responsibilities. Simplify and streamline project design and management arrangements in accordance with implementation capacity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement and financial management capacity limitations cause excessive implementation delays. 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a rolling 18-month procurement plan and pipeline to ensure that procurement lead-times are adequately considered. Provide procurement and financial management capacity building and technical assistance where needed. Ensure that financial management systems and procedures are well defined in PIMs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smallholders' vulnerability to natural disasters, climate change and economic shocks. 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects and programmes should allow flexibility to switch to disaster recovery/rebuilding mode in the event of such shocks. Incorporate disaster preparedness into project activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiscal constraints mean that Government agencies are unable to provide counterpart funding as planned. 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that Government counterpart funding commitments are realistic and deliverable. Avoid investments that commit Government to un-affordable operation and maintenance costs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private sector is reluctant to engage target communities in agricultural value chains. 	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen incentives for private sector engagement through financing mechanisms. Strengthen FOs to engage in commercial activities.

Appendix 1: Results Management Framework

As suggested by reviewer, all indicators have been changed to align with IFAD Core Indicators.

Country Strategy Alignment	Related UNSDCF/SDG Outcomes	IFAD's SOs	Key CSN Results			
			Strategic Objectives	Activities	Indicators	
					Outcome	Output
<p>National Development Plan 2025-29 and Vision 2050 – Three pillars: (i) economic resilience; (ii) people empowerment; and (iii) good governance. Six guiding principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inclusive and participatory approach. • Sustainable economic recovery. • Good governance • Mitigating the impacts of climate change and protecting the environment. • Informed by evaluation and data. • Leaving no one behind. <p>Agriculture Strategic Plan 2024-28 – Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and nutrition security. • Improved livelihoods of farming households. • Community resilience, sustainable resource management and CSA. • Increased commercial agriculture. 	<p>Pacific UNSDCF 2023-27: Covers 14 PICs, including Fiji:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People empowered and resilient to shocks and disasters. • More equitable access to services, food security/nutrition and social protection. • Decent work and livelihood opportunities and shared prosperity. • Responsive governance, gender equality, justice and human rights. • People empowered and resilient to shocks and disasters. • More equitable access to services, food security/nutrition and social protection. • Decent work and livelihood opportunities and shared prosperity. • Responsive governance, gender equality, justice and human rights. 	<p>Strategy for Engagement in SIDS (2022-27): Aligned with IFAD's Strategic Framework (2016-25).</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable, nutrition-sensitive and inclusive food systems. • Increase rural non-farm employment and the development of MSMEs. • Strengthen resilience of rural households and agricultural production systems to environmental and climate change. <p>Operating modalities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptive programming approach moving from a country to regional focus. • Enhanced resource mobilisation to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SO1: Improved food and nutrition security through increasing sustainable production of healthy/nutritious foods. • SO2: Improved rural livelihoods with a focus on the approximately 40 percent of rural households living in poverty. 	<p>Investment Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and launch of BE GREEN in Vanua Levu with funding from IFAD 13 PBAS allocation (USD 5.3 million) and GEF 8 STAR allocation (USD 8.2 million). • Ongoing participation in regional and multi-country programmes funded by IFAD and supplementary funds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asia Pacific Farmers' Program (APFP). ○ Farmer Organisations for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Programme (FO4ACP). ○ Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE). <p>Non-Investment Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No/percentage of women reporting Minimum Dietary Diversity. • No of households with improved nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No of households provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition. • No of households supported to sustainably manage natural resources and climate-related risks. • Rural producers accessing production inputs and/or technological packages. • Persons trained in production practices and/or technologies.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved Ministry performance and service delivery. <p>NAP for Climate Resilience (2018):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lists 160 adaptation measures including 23 for food and nutrition security. Envisages “a climate-resilient development pathway which enables Fiji to anticipate, reduce, and manage environmental and climate risks”. Includes actions to support sustainable food production and re-orientate the agricultural system to support food production without degrading resources. <p>Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target 5: Adopt Climate Smart Agriculture practices. Target 7: Develop simplified and standardised early warning and monitoring systems and prioritise nature-based solutions. Target 10: Conserve natural environment and biodiversity wealth enabling sustainable long-term provision of ecosystem services. 	<p>Sustainable Development Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDG 1 no poverty SDG 2 zero hunger SDG 5 gender equality SDG 8 decent work and economic growth SDG 11 sustainable cities and communities SDG 13 climate action 	<p>support investment in rural areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved in-country presence and policy engagement. Strengthened partnerships and enhanced coordination. <p>IFAD in the Pacific (2015) – Strategic Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural people in remote areas and outer islands produce, consume and market more local foods in environmentally sustainable ways. Rural people earn more from farm activities, non-farm activities and employment. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closer engagement in the Fiji through the Suva Office. Policy dialogue with government and development partners. Ongoing collaboration and harmonisation with FAO and WFP in Fiji. Innovation, learning, impact assessment and knowledge management. Engagement of Fiji in SSCT activities within the region. <i>Ad hoc</i> support for disaster recovery and re-building activities. Resource mobilisation including engagement with new technical and financial partners. Targeted technical assistance to address priority issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of supported rural enterprises reporting an increase in profit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural enterprises accessing business development services. Persons trained in income-generating activities or business management.
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households reporting improved physical access to markets, processing and storage facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market, processing or storage facilities constructed or rehabilitated. Persons in rural areas accessing financial services (savings, credit, insurance, remittances, etc.)

Appendix 2: SECAP Background Study

Introduction

This SECAP Background Study was developed to inform and strategically orient the Fiji Country Strategy Note (CSN) for 2024-2025 on the social, environmental and climate change aspects relating to IFAD's priorities. The study was carried out following the requirements set by IFAD's Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Country Strategies⁵ (requiring "basic" SECAP Background Studies for Country Strategy Notes). It is based on the 2021 edition of IFAD's Social, Environment and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP)⁶. The emphasis is on identifying trends, risks, and opportunities on thematic and subsector issues that are aligned with IFAD's current and planned project portfolio. This SECAP is solely based on a desk review of relevant literature.

Part 1 – Situational analysis and main challenges

1.1 Socio-economic situation and underlying causes

Fiji's population is currently estimated to be about 940,000⁷ and is projected to exceed 1.1 million by 2034. It is a young nation, with around 62 percent of the population below the age of 34.⁸ Indigenous Fijians (iTaukei), many of whom have mixed Melanesian and Polynesian ancestry, make up about 54 percent of the population. About 38 percent of the population are Indo-Fijians, descendants of indentured labourers who were brought from India to work in sugarcane plantations established by the British colonizers. Many of their descendants have become involved in agriculture and have become economically powerful. Inequalities, and deep-rooted divisions exist between Fiji's diverse ethnic groups, in particular the iTaukei and Indo-Fijian populations, and military coups have ensued.⁹ Smaller ethnic groups include Banabans, Rotumans, Chinese, Melanesians and other Pacific islanders. To a great extent these smaller ethnic minorities are politically, socially, and economically invisible and excluded.¹⁰

The agricultural sector, which is crucial for income generation and food security, contributes substantially to Fiji's economy. In 2022, 9.2 percent of Fiji's GDP was comprised from the primary industries of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.¹¹ Agricultural exports¹² accounted for 60.1 percent of total domestic exports in 2020. While this represented a decrease of 7.8 percent across the whole primary industry sector export earnings from crops and livestock increased by 7.1 percent.¹³ The agriculture sector has traditionally been the backbone of Fiji's economy as it supports the livelihoods of over a quarter of Fiji's population, and for more than 83 percent of Fiji's rural population is the main source of work.¹⁴ According to the most recent Fiji Agricultural Census there were 70,991 agricultural

⁵ See <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/39560257>

⁶ See <https://www.ifad.org/en/-/social-environmental-and-climate-assessment-procedures>

⁷ <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/fiji-population/>

⁸ Ministry of Economy. Republic of Fiji. 2017. 5-year and 20-year National Development Plan, November 2017, section 2.1

<https://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/15b0ba03-825e-47f7-bf69-094ad33004dd/5-Year-20-Year-NATIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-PLAN.aspx>

⁹ Naidu, V *et al.* Minority Rights Group International. 2013. *Fiji: The Challenges and Opportunities of Diversity*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236154486_Fiji_The_Challenges_and_Opportunities_of_Diversity

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ World Bank <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/fiji-agricultural-commodities#:~:text=The%20agriculture%20sector%20has%20traditionally,percent%20of%20Fiji's%20rural%20population.>

¹² This refers to HS Code 1- 24 of the Harmonized System in the Custom Tariff Classification which includes crop,

livestock, fish and fish products, forestry products, sugar, mineral water, beverages and other food items

¹³ Ministry of Agriculture. 2020. 2020 Key Statistics on Fiji Agriculture Sector

<https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/stats/2020KEYSTATISTICS.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/fiji-agricultural-commodities#:~:text=The%20agriculture%20sector%20has%20traditionally,percent%20of%20Fiji's%20rural%20population.>

households (88.1 percent are male-headed, and 11.9 percent are female-headed), of which 83,395 people confirmed crop farming and raising livestock as their primary or secondary occupation (85.6 percent are male and 14.4 percent female), and 57.3 percent of farmers are aged 40 or above.¹⁵ Of the total farmer households, 93 percent were classified as subsistence with two percent commercial and five percent semi-commercial.¹⁶

Fiji faces the key developmental challenges of poverty, societal divisions and marginalization, vulnerability to economic and environmental shocks, exploitation of natural resources, together with past challenges associated with the military coups that have occurred. Climate change, unhealthy diets contributing to high incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), poor infrastructure, and access to clean water and sanitation are also critical factors. Current challenges faced by the agriculture sector include dependency on imported produce to meet the needs of the tourism sector, in conjunction with natural disasters, poor infrastructure, and high input costs.

In 2020 Fiji experienced the combined shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic and tropical cyclones Harold and Yasa. The pandemic had a big impact on Fiji's economy with its high dependence on tourism and about a third of the workforce losing their jobs. As a result, GDP contracted by about 20 percent.¹⁷ The capacity of the agriculture sector to absorb the pandemic shock was significantly affected by the two tropical cyclones. However, the overall effect of COVID-19 was an increase in the number of households involved in either subsistence or commercial agriculture activities. This was supported by the COVID-19 response package which was initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and aimed at assisting households throughout Fiji to support food security and income generation.

The Fiji word for land is *vanua*. However, *vanua* means much more than simply land. It encompasses not only the physical land but everything that is associated with the land including mountains, forest, rivers, sea, and the people who live there together with their social structures and customs.¹⁸ Land owned by iTaukei makes up 87 percent of all land in Fiji, with the remainder made up of freehold and state land.¹⁹ The division of land occurred in the 19th century, with settler immigrants negotiating purchase of just over 149,000 hectares of the most valuable land.²⁰ The iTaukei land can only be owned by iTaukei, as determined under the *iTaukei Land Act 1905*. The iTaukei Land Trust Board holds the rights to all iTaukei land, with consent of the board required for any leasing of iTaukei land. Leasing can only occur if the land is not occupied or required for use by the iTaukei owners.²¹ Leasing of land has been the only means for the majority of Indo-Fijians to be farmers, with periods of cooperation and times of friction with the indigenous (iTaukei) landowners. Many long-term leases came up for renewal between 1997 and 2007, with issues related to increased rent, non-renewal of leases, and evictions of tenant farmers.²²

The local tourism industry has been identified as being one of the biggest opportunities for expansion in the agriculture sector with focus on high quality fresh produce. Key issues identified that prevent the tourism industry from purchasing more local product include: inconsistent supply; seasonality of produce; poor quality, particularly with meat and dairy products; lack of food safety standards; and poor

¹⁵ Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways. 2020. *Fiji Agriculture Census 2020: Key Findings*.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/census/2020FACINFOGRAPHICSOFMAJORFINDINGS.pdf>

¹⁶ Ministry of Agriculture. 2020. 2020 Key Statistics on Fiji Agriculture Sector

<https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/stats/2020KEYSTATISTICS.pdf>

¹⁷ World Bank Group. 2021. Country Partnership Framework for Republic of Fiji 2021-2024.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/pacificislands/brief/world-bank-groups-new-country-partnership-framework-for-fiji-2021-2024>

¹⁸ Tuwere, I.S. 202?. Land: An Indigenous Fijian Perspective. https://www.methodist.org.nz/assets/Mission-Resourcing/Fijian-Lang-Resources/land_in_fijian_perspective.pdf

¹⁹ <https://www.haniffuitoga.com.fj/single-post/itaukei-land-regime-in-fiji>

²⁰ Tuwere, I.S. 202?. Land: An Indigenous Fijian Perspective. https://www.methodist.org.nz/assets/Mission-Resourcing/Fijian-Lang-Resources/land_in_fijian_perspective.pdf

²¹ <https://www.haniffuitoga.com.fj/single-post/itaukei-land-regime-in-fiji>

²² Naidu, V *et.al.* Minority Rights Group International. 2013. *Fiji: The Challenges and Opportunities of Diversity*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236154486_Fiji_The_Challenges_and_Opportunities_of_Diversity

networks linking producers to the hotels.²³ During the pandemic, the export demand for fresh/chilled produce increased with key export crops including kava, taro, turmeric and ginger.²⁴

Food insecurity is evident from the 2020 agriculture census which identified that 32.2 percent of households sometimes ran out of food, and four percent often ran out of food. Poor nutrition outcomes are evident in both urban and rural populations and are largely a consequence of increased consumption of both imported and local processed foods. These foods are generally high in carbohydrates, fats, sugar and salt. Over the last 60 years, traditional food systems have deteriorated due to rapid urbanisation and globalisation.²⁵ At the same time there has been reduced production and consumption of traditional food crops. Diets are low in fruits, vegetables, and animal products high in essential micro and macronutrients. The main consequences of poor nutrition are increasing trends of overweight/obesity across all age groups, sub-optimal dietary diversity for children and women 15-49 years of age and non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Despite the opportunities for agricultural development, Fiji continues to face significant challenges. The current government policy focus is on transitioning subsistence farmers to commercial agriculture along with pursuing export markets. At the same time rural poverty is increasing and although agricultural markets are promoted as a means for upliftment there are far-reaching financial risks involved and rural communities are sceptical. Machinery deficits create extra burdens particularly for women, who are already charged with extensive caring obligations. Participation in commercial agriculture is further limited by lack of water infrastructure and equipment, together with limited and costly transport.²⁶ Extreme weather events, such as tropical cyclones and drought, exacerbate these challenges with climate change increasingly having an impact.

Indigenous Peoples. Fiji has ratified the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2023, as a complement to its commitment to ILO Convention 169, ratified in 1998. In March 2024 the Great Council of Chiefs endorsed a draft action plan on the UNDRIP. UNDRIP sets standards for the recognition, protection, and promotion of Indigenous Peoples' rights, including the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), which is also a key principle of engagement in the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples. The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs is responsible for the preservation of Fijian culture and the economic and social development of indigenous Fijians.

Gender. While Fiji has made a number of international commitments to gender equality there continues to be entrenched gender inequality in the country.²⁷ This is reflected in its ranking of 107 out of 146 countries according to the 2022 gender gap report.²⁸ In the context of the workforce the participation rate among females is approximately half that of males, with a participation rate of 38.1 percent among females and 75.4 percent among males in 2022.²⁹ This participation rate has remained roughly the same since over the last 34 years. Women also spend nearly three times more than men on unpaid domestic and care work, with just over 15 percent of their day spent on such activities. Fiji is ranked 99 out of 146 in terms of the number of women in parliament with about 20 percent of seats in the national parliament held by women in 2022.

Fiji, together with the whole Pacific Island region, has one of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world, with up to 68 percent of Pacific Island women reporting physical or sexual violence by a

²³ Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways. 2024. Strategic Development Plan 2024-2028.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/SDP%20Booklet%20Final%202024.pdf>

²⁴ Ministry of Agriculture. 2020. *2020 Key Statistics on Fiji Agriculture Sector*.

²⁵ Hughes R.G., Lawrence M.A. 2005. Globalization, food and health in Pacific Island countries. *Asia Pac. J. Clin. Nutr.* <https://apjcn.nhri.org.tw/server/apjcn/14/4/298.pdf>

²⁶ Singh-Peterson and Iranacolaivalu. 2018. *Barriers to market for subsistence farmers in Fiji – A gendered perspective*.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0743016717305508>

²⁷ Gigov, T. 2023. Tackling gender inequality in Fiji: Business responsibilities and opportunities.

https://www.ihrb.org/uploads/general-uploads/Tackling_Gender_Inequality_in_Fiji.pdf

²⁸ <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2022/>

²⁹ World Bank Gender Data Portal. <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/countries/fiji/>

partner in their lifetime.³⁰ Within Fiji 52 percent of women aged 15-49 have experienced intimate partner violence. Workplace discrimination and harassment of women is common.³¹ Violent discipline against children aged 1-14 years is very high, with 80.5 percent documented as experiencing physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by their caregivers.³²

At present agricultural productivity and efficiency are limited due to gender inequality. Women who head their households and farm in their own right have a very different experience of agriculture to women from households headed by men. The importance of achieving gender equality in agriculture is recognized as an important step for the sector towards achieving food security, sustaining livelihoods, and supporting economic growth.³³ Because it leverages both women and men's knowledge and hard work towards better results, achieving more gender equitable outcomes in agriculture also clearly increases the success of both agricultural productivity and climate and disaster resilience. By assessing the social status of both women and men and recognising the role of men in resolving gender inequality, importance can be placed on working together for social cohesion and the empowerment of women.

Key areas that perpetuate gender inequality include education and skill development training, access to finance and land ownership. Female farmers are substantially behind male farmers in terms of education. Figures show female farmers barely attend any trainings for technical agriculture education related to their primary or secondary occupation. All the key agriculture services reveal gender gaps, including finance where only 12.7 percent of the borrowers are women. This number changes with the size of the farm, with a greater likelihood that the women are borrowers if the farm is smaller. This could suggest that more women are determining outcomes for smaller subsistence focused holdings rather than commercial agriculture. The limited reach of support for female-headed farm households may be a contributing factor to reduced market opportunities. Men have much greater access to machinery and have ownership of bank accounts and mobile phones. Limited or no internet access limits women's access to agricultural services, price information, bank and training resources.

Land is predominantly in male hands, with 67.5 percent of land owned by male-headed households, and only 9.8 percent owned by female-headed households. In general, there are fewer female owners of larger land areas, with 26.5 percent of all landless households being female headed. It is likely that female-headed households are at greater risk of food insecurity because of this gender gap in land ownership and access to sufficient land to meet their subsistence needs as well as providing the opportunity for income generation.³⁴

A valuable approach for supporting gender equality in semi-subsistence farming families is the Family Farm Teams (FFT) approach, initially developed and trialed in Papua New Guinea and now being applied throughout the Pacific, including in Fiji.³⁵ This program "focuses on building on the individual and family agricultural and cultural strengths to enable families to work in an equitable and effective way to develop their family farm."

Youth. The Fiji National Youth Policy 2023 – 2027³⁶ serves as a blueprint and directional guide for Government ministries and departments. This Policy defines 'youth' as persons aged between 15-35

³⁰ Gigov, T. 2023. Tackling gender inequality in Fiji: Business responsibilities and opportunities.

https://www.ihrb.org/uploads/general-uploads/Tackling_Gender_Inequality_in_Fiji.pdf

³¹ Ibid

³² Bureau of Statistics. 2021. *Fiji Fact Sheet Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2021 (Preliminary Results)*.

https://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/images/documents/Fiji_MICS_2021/Fiji_MICS_2021_Fact_Sheet_-_Preliminary_Report.pdf

³³ Ministry of Agriculture. 2022. *Policy for Gender in Agriculture in Fiji 2022 – 2027*.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/policies.php>

³⁴ Ministry of Agriculture. 2020. 2020 Fiji Agriculture Census, *Volume III: Gender Analysis Report*.

https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/census/VOLUMEIII_GENDERREPORT.pdf

³⁵ <https://www.canberra.edu.au/research/faculty-research-centres/csc/livelihoods-and-learning-for-sustainable-communities/family-farms-teams-program>

³⁶ Ministry of Youth and Sports. 2023. *The Fiji National Youth Policy 2023 – 2027*.

<https://www.youth.gov.fj/publications/moys-policies>

years. Fiji has a large and growing youth population, comprising 34 percent of the population in 2017.³⁷ Those aged 15 to 44 years predominate in the urban population.³⁸ This ‘youth bulge’ is occurring throughout the Pacific, driven by high population growth, and is particularly acute in Melanesian states.³⁹ The prevention of youth marginalization and disillusionment and harnessing their potential is vital to future social stability, economic prosperity and political security.

A considerable number of young people in the Pacific are involved in informal, seasonal, or temporary work which does not provide openings for them to upskill.⁴⁰ Further, the informal sector lacks legislative and union protection, and conditions can be substandard. Youth migrating to urban areas is an issue and has created higher unemployment there along with deficits of rural workers for agriculture and food production.⁴¹ Disease, poverty, and lifestyle factors amongst youth also contribute to reduced agricultural input e.g. typhoid, tuberculosis, vector-borne diseases, poor diet, limited physical activity, and alcohol and tobacco use.⁴² This, in turn, leads to food security issues.

Persons with Disabilities. 13.7 per cent of Fijians (113,595 people over the age of 3 years), as documented in the 2017 census, have at least one “functioning challenge” or disability.⁴³ In 2010 Fiji became a signatory to the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Constitution upholds the right to basic services for persons with disabilities. It is worth noting that women and young people with disabilities living in Fiji face weighty barriers that impede their comprehensive participation in society on an equal basis with others. They are denied from fully realizing their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and their rights to legal capacity, and to be safe from gender-based violence (GBV). Barriers also include legal and political, social and attitudinal, geographical, information and communication.

Health and Nutrition. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are the biggest health issue in Fiji with cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke being the main causes of death. Due to chronic diseases life expectancy appears to have been stagnant since the early 1990s.⁴⁴ “The three risk factors that account for the most disease burden in Fiji are high body-mass index, dietary risks, and high fasting plasma glucose” (Global Burden of Disease factsheet).⁴⁵ Compared to other Pacific islands food availability in Fiji is generally good yet the country faces a double burden of over and undernutrition. Nearly a third of adult Fijians are affected by obesity and NCD rates are similarly high. Concurrently, micronutrient deficiencies are not unusual and nutrient intake is below the recommended levels across all age groups. Increasing dependence on cheaper processed imported foods, in conjunction with a decreased intake of traditional food (in particular traditional varieties of starchy crops and green leafy vegetables) has contributed to Fiji’s poor nutrition standing. Nutritionally deficient foods are cheaper and with many traditional foods grown exclusively for export, which has increased prices, they are less affordable for Fijians.⁴⁶ A pilot study with indigenous food-producing households in rural Fiji found that

³⁷ Ministry of Economy. Republic of Fiji. 2017. 5-year and 20-year National Development Plan, November 2017, section 2.1

³⁸ Fiji Bureau of Statistics. 2017. *Population and Housing Census, Release 1: Age, sex, geography and economic activity*, 5 January 2018. <https://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/index.php/census-2017/census-2017-release-1>

³⁹ Wilson, C. 2020. Demanding the Future: Navigating the Pacific’s Youth Bulge.

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/demanding-future-navigating-pacific-s-youth-bulge>

⁴⁰ Investing in Youth Policy, Sharing good practices to advance policy development for young people in the Asia-Pacific region, 2011. https://yptoolbox.unescapsdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Investing_In_Youth_Policy.pdf

⁴¹ ILO, Youth employment brief: Pacific Island Countries 2013

⁴² Ministry of Youth and Sports. 2023. *The Fiji National Youth Policy 2023 – 2027*.

⁴³ 2017 Population and Housing Census Pt. 1, *supra* note 18, at 13.

<https://spccfpstore1.blob.core.windows.net/digitallibrary-docs/files/15/1592831742c99180fb51d4fa9d21ee98.pdf>

⁴⁴ Carter, K. *et al.* 2011. Mortality trends in Fiji. *Aust. N. Z. J. Public Health* **35**, 412-420, doi:10.1111/j.1753-6405.2011.00740.x

⁴⁵ Lozano, R. *et al.* 2012. Global and regional mortality from 235 causes of death for 20 age groups in 1990 and 2010: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010. *The Lancet* **380**, 2095-2128, doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)61728-0.

⁴⁶ Sleet, P. 2019. *Fiji: Poor Nutrition and Agricultural Decline has Caused Food Security Slump*, Future Directions International. Strategic Analysis Paper.

<https://apo.org.au/node/253476#:~:text=Fiji%3A%20poor%20nutrition%20and%20agricultural%20decline%20has>

higher dietary diversity was linked to higher farmer diversity and more household occupants. A trend towards a less nutritious 'modern' diet was noted with a need to support farm diversity and consumption of more traditional diets that are high in vegetables, fruit, and lean protein and low in sugar and processed foods.⁴⁷

1.2 Environment and climate context, trends and implications

Environmental context. "Fiji is a large archipelago with diverse landscapes and climate. More than 300 islands are scattered over 1.3 million square kilometres (km²) of ocean. The islands are characterized by diverse ecosystems including significant areas of natural forest, freshwater, and coastal and marine life."⁴⁸ The mountainous islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu comprise 87% of the total land area, these islands supporting the majority of the population. The islands encompass diverse ecosystems, significant areas of natural forest, and a wide range of coastal and marine environments, ranging from extensive areas of mangroves to various coral formations. Available land for development is limited due to mountainous terrain which is subject to earthquakes and landslides, the need for intensive land management or unsuitability. Over 60 percent of the land area is suited to some form of agriculture, however only 29 percent is suitable for arable farming.⁴⁹ The arable land is on the larger islands, with 19 percent of the land area having arable soils capable of supporting intensive agriculture, with a further 10.5 percent capable of being productive with only minor improvements.⁵⁰

Main environmental challenges. Degradation of land resources, elevated risk of flooding and inundation to coastal settlements as a consequence of climate change, unsustainable harvesting of marine resources, and the impacts of urbanization all contribute to Fiji's environmental challenges. Some activities in support of economic and social development have created disturbance, and in some cases, destruction of the natural environment.⁵¹ Agriculture, forestry, or mining activities connected with land utilisation practices has increased risks associated with high soil erosion, river and stream contamination, sedimentation, pollution, and flooding in low coastal and coral reef areas. In some cases, irreversible loss of biodiversity has resulted.⁵² Agricultural damage from the impacts of tropical cyclones is another factor that can have significant consequences for the environment, livelihoods, and economy.

Land and soil degradation. Land and soil degradation are key issues in Fiji, arising from deforestation, steep slopes, unsustainable farming practices and reclamation of mangrove swamps. In steep land areas high rainfall results in high soil erosion rates leading to impacts that extend from ridge to reef. The cultivation of steep land for subsistence food production has arisen from competition for land, arising from expansion of cash cropping and grazing on flatter lands. Continual cropping of both steep and flat land areas with no, or minimal, fallow periods contributes to soil carbon loss and soil degradation. In support of more informed land use, a land use capability classification system for Fiji was developed in the late 1970s based on the New Zealand land use capability system.⁵³ More recently the land use classification data together with soils descriptions, crop suitability information, and other resources have been made available through the Pacific Soils Portal.⁵⁴

[%20caused%20food%20security%20slump,-13%20Aug%202019&text=Food%20availability%20in%20Fiji%20is,over%2D%20and%20under%2Dnutrition.](#)

⁴⁷ O'Meara L, Williams SL, Hickes D, Brown P. Predictors of Dietary Diversity of Indigenous Food-Producing Households in Rural Fiji. *Nutrients*. 2019 Jul 17;11(7):1629. doi: 10.3390/nu11071629. PMID: 31319537; PMCID: PMC6683282.

⁴⁸ Asian Development Bank. *Country Partnership Strategy: Fiji, 2014–2018*, Environment Assessment Summary. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cps-fij-2014-2018-ena.pdf>

⁴⁹ <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cps-fij-2014-2018-ena.pdf>

⁵⁰ IUCN. 1992. *The National State of the Environment Report*. Prepared by IUCN - The World Conservation Union for the National Environment Management Project, as part of technical assistance provided by the Asian Development Bank to the Government of Fiji. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/6654>

⁵¹ Asian Development Bank. *Country Partnership Strategy: Fiji, 2014–2018*. <https://www.adb.org/documents/fiji-country-partnership-strategy-2014-2018>

⁵² Government of Fiji, Department of Environment. 2007. *Implementation Framework 2010–2014 for the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2007*. Fiji.

⁵³ https://pafpnet.spc.int/pafpnet/attachments/article/183/Land%20Use%20Capability%20Guideline_web.pdf

⁵⁴ <https://fiji-ppsp.landcareresearch.co.nz/>

Climate and climate change. Fiji has a tropical climate which is strongly influenced by the positioning of the South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ) and by the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO). There is a clear and ongoing warming of the climate in Fiji. Since the 1850-1900 period there has been a 1°C warming, with notably accelerated warming since 2000 due to warm years since that time. There are no clear trends identified from analysis of historical rainfall data due in part to the high climate variability in Fiji.

Updated climate change scenarios show similar temperature increases to 2030 regardless of the greenhouse gas emissions scenario, but potentially temperature increases up to 1.6°C by the 2050s under a high emissions scenario.⁵⁵ Changes in temperature will be more-or-less uniform across Fiji. Future changes in both annual and seasonal rainfall will be strongly influenced by how the South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ) is affected by climate change over time. Different storylines have been prepared which cover low and high emissions scenarios with both warmer and drier and warmer and wetter conditions. These scenarios show rainfall increases up to ten percent by the 2050s, and rainfall decreases as high as 20 percent.

On the main island of Viti Levu there is a significant contrast in rainfall between the Central and Western Divisions, with the Western Division historically more prone to drought than the Central Division. Droughts are particularly severe during El Niño events, affecting food production in the Sigatoka Valley and Nadi area. Both sides of Viti Levu can be impacted by extreme rainfall events, whether through tropical lows that can be more prevalent during La Niña events or as a result of tropical cyclones. In general, this contrast between the east and west of Viti Levu will likely continue with climate change but, as identified above, conditions from year to year and over time will be strongly influenced by the positioning of the SPCZ.

New evidence confirms previous findings that the number of tropical cyclones will likely decrease with climate change. However, tropical cyclones are likely to increase in intensity (increased windspeed) accompanied by increased rainfall rates (medium to high confidence for both) and increased coastal storm surges due to sea level rise (high confidence). Updated sea level projections by the IPCC are based on evidence of a greater contribution from the Antarctic ice sheet by the end of this century than previously identified.⁵⁶

A drought analysis was included in a previous climate change report for Fiji⁵⁷ but concluded that there was low confidence in projections of drought frequency and duration due to low confidence with rainfall projections and no consensus about changes with the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO). It is reasonable to assume, however, that with increased temperatures droughts will have the potential to be more severe when they occur. This is more likely to occur with northward movement of the SPCZ. Similarly, with the available evidence suggesting heavier rainfall events it is reasonable to assume that extreme rainfall and associated flooding could become more severe during La Niña events.

With the above uncertainties in mind, it is not possible to give certainty on the impacts of climate change on food systems in Fiji. What is evident is that farmers will need to be prepared to deal with increased variability with climate together with increased frequency and intensity of extreme events. This will require an integrated approach to development of climate resilient food systems. The need for such an approach is increasingly recognised by NGOs working with subsistence and semi-commercial farmers and agencies and programmes working with commercial farmers (such as PHAMA Plus⁵⁸). A recent training module developed for Fiji and Pacific Island farmers provides a valuable summary of possible

⁵⁵ CSIRO and SPREP (2021). 'NextGen' Projections for the Western Tropical Pacific: Current and Future Climate for Fiji. Final report to the Australia-Pacific Climate Partnership for the Next Generation Climate Projections for the Western Tropical Pacific project. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), CSIRO Technical Report, Melbourne, Australia. <https://doi.org/10.25919/5gh8-qt86>

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ CSIRO, Australian Bureau of Meteorology and SPREP (2015). Climate in the Pacific: a regional summary of new science and management tools, Pacific- Australia Climate Change Science and Adaptation Planning (PACCSAP) Program Summary Report. Melbourne, Australia, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

⁵⁸ DT Global Australia PTY Limited. 2023. PHAMA Plus Environment, Climate and Resilience Strategy.

impacts on key crops.)⁵⁹. The most vulnerable crops are locally grown rice and swamp taro. Highly vulnerable crops include sweet potato, taro, yams and banana. In general, pest and disease problems are likely to increase with all of these crops. No impacts on wild yams are expected. The least vulnerable crops identified are cassava, cocoyam, breadfruit and Aibika (Island cabbage/bele).

Trends and priorities identified in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). As a mitigation target, between 2021 and 2030 Fiji aims to reduce 30 percent of BAU CO₂ emissions from the energy sector. Adaptation targets include embracing sustainable Climate Smart Agriculture practices, evolve early warning and monitoring systems, implement nature-based solutions to buffer floods and cyclones, relocate highly vulnerable communities, and build a strong healthcare system following foundational principles for climate-resilience and environmentally sustainable health care facilities. Additional adaptation targets are ecosystem preservation for biodiversity and natural environment conservation, and the planting of 30 million trees by 2035. To ensure national food security, and to diversify the dependence on the sector by promoting sustainable livelihood opportunities, Fiji has pledged to strengthen the resilience of its agriculture sector.⁶⁰

Part 2. Institutions and legal framework

2.1 Institutions

The key government institution is the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways (MOAW). Two important divisions are the Crop Research Division and the Crop Extension Division. These two divisions work in tandem and with partner agencies including donors and NGOs and are based in a number of decentralised locations in Fiji. Another relevant government agency is the National Food and Nutrition Centre (NFNC) which falls under the Ministry of Health and Medical Services. The NFNC is a national resource centre for food and nutrition security. Its four areas of responsibility are monitoring, advice, coordination, and education. MOAW also works closely with other relevant ministries, including climate change, and the Ministry of Women and the Ministry of Youth and Sport, with the latter two making significant contributions to the respective Gender in Agriculture and Youth in Agriculture policies.

The Pacific Island Farmer Organisation Network (PFO) is an important farmer focused organisation which already has a strong working relationship with IFAD. PFO is promoting a shift away from a centralised, top-down, research model towards a de-centralised farmer to farmer participatory approach. Objectives for PFO include supporting greater participation in commercial agriculture, promoting environmental sustainability, and giving farmers a greater voice. The future vision is for farmers and rural communities to be equipped to address the challenges of climate change, food security and other threats, with support that is rooted in traditional knowledge and a passion for innovation.

Nature's Way Cooperative⁶¹ is a private sector initiative based near Nadi airport on Viti Levu. At present its primary focus is on quarantine treatment of produce for export, working on behalf of Fiji's fruit growers and exporters. However, Nature's Way is interested to extend its activities to cover the whole value chain, from producer to export, with a strong focus on community engagement and climate resilient agriculture.

An important research and development agency is SPC, which is involved in a wide range of agriculture sector projects, SPC are involved in a number of initiatives of relevance to a climate-resilient food systems focus. An important one is the SPC genetic resource conservation work (CePaCT) with related work on capturing varieties with climate resilience traits (Pacific Seeds for Life (PS4L)).

Two key NGOs are ADRA and Live and Learn. Both NGOs work closely with MOAW and other government ministries, most often at the local level with MOAW extension staff, as well as with donor

⁵⁹ McGregor, Andrew and Taylor, Mary. 2022. Module 1: Introduction to the impact of climate change on agriculture in Fiji and the Pacific Islands. https://pacificfarmers.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Module-1-Intro-to-the-impact-of-climate-change-on-agric-in-Fiji-and-the-Pacific_250822.pdf

⁶⁰ Government of Fiji. 2020. Republic of Fiji's Updated NDC 2020. <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/Republic%20of%20Fiji%27s%20Updated%20NDC%2020201.pdf>

⁶¹ <https://nwcfini.com/background/>

agencies who fund their work. ADRA has both a subsistence and semi-commercial agriculture focus with current projects covering both areas in different parts of Fiji. Live and Learn NGO were originally focused on WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) and governance, working with schools and communities. They have now transitioned to working with remote and vulnerable communities covering a number of thematic areas, including climate change and disaster risk reduction, and food security and livelihoods. Another relevant NGO, focused in community development is Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF) was founded in 1978 and is one of Fiji's longest established non-government organisations (NGOs) working on community development projects across rural, remote and maritime areas in Fiji. PCDF is a long-term partner supporting IFAD engagement with Indigenous Peoples in the Pacific, including through the organisation of the regional meetings of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD.

2.2 Policy and regulatory frameworks

The **overarching national planning** for Fiji is the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics (formerly the Ministry of Economy). The current plan is the 5-Year and 20-Year National Development Plan: Transforming Fiji⁶² which is intended to guide all sector plans. The twenty-year development plan 2017-2036 has two prongs: inclusive socio-economic development and transformational strategic thrusts. Included under socio-economic development is a focus on food and nutrition security which will be achieved by increased productive, greater farm efficiency and productivity, more effective distribution systems, new technology and mechanization, promotion of organic farming together with promotion of traditional and niche crops, and development of climate resilient and environmentally sustainable production systems.

For **agriculture**, the main planning document is the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways 5-year strategic development plan. The most recent plan is for the period 2024-2028.⁶³ As noted above, this and other sector plans sit within the national planning framework established through the Ministry of Finance. The plan aims to build a "A resilient, competitive, innovative and inclusive agriculture and sector." The plan has five strategic priorities: improved food and nutrition security; improved livelihoods of farming households; improved community resilience and adoption of sustainable resource management and climate smart agriculture; increased commercial agriculture; improved MOAW performance and service delivery.

For **climate change**, the vision that guided the National Adaptation Plan⁶⁴ development "is a climate-resilient development pathway which enables Fiji to anticipate, reduce, and manage environmental and climate risks caused by climate variability and change to support a vibrant society and prosperous economy." The plan follows an ecosystem-based and gender-based approach. Adaptation measures identified for agriculture are focused on enhanced data and information, research, disaster preparedness, promotion and integration of climate smart agriculture, sustainable soil and water management, strengthening the resilience of farmers and farming families, and development of appropriate education, awareness and extension programmes. Both Fiji's national climate change policy and national adaptation plan are currently out of date with inquiries required as to plans for an updated policy and plan.

For **gender**, the policy for gender in agriculture⁶⁵ is a key document with a vision to address the gender gap for Agriculture in Fiji. The overall goal is to "institutionalise a gender mainstreaming strategy and realise better food and nutrition security, sustainable livelihoods, climate and disaster resilience and successful commercial agriculture for women and men in Fiji." The policy has four objectives: equality of access to economic resources required for productive and resilient agriculture and markets; equality of access to information, technology and training for secure livelihoods and healthy diets; equality of

⁶² Ministry of Economy. 2017. 5-Year and 20-Year National Development Plan: Transforming Fiji. <https://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/15b0ba03-825e-47f7-bf69-094ad33004dd/5-Year-20-Year-NATIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-PLAN.aspx>

⁶³ Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways. 2024. Strategic Development Plan 2024-2028. <https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/SDP%20Booklet%20Final%202024.pdf>

⁶⁴ Government of the Republic of Fiji. 2018. Republic of Fiji National Adaptation Plan: A pathway towards climate resilience. https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NAPC/Documents/Parties/National%20Adaptation%20Plan_Fiji.pdf

⁶⁵ Ministry for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment. 2022. Policy for Gender in Agriculture in Fiji (2022-2027). <https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/policies/Gender%20Booklet%202022%20Final.pdf>

representation and participation in decision-making for informed planning and resourcing; effective mainstreaming of gender perspectives through strengthen capacities in agriculture ministries.

For **youth**, there is a youth in agriculture policy⁶⁶ with a vision for young people to be empowered for active participation across all aspects of the agri-food system. Its goal is “to actively promote youth engagement across the agri-food system to strengthen food and nutrition security, commercial agriculture, sustainable livelihoods and climate and disaster resilience.” The policy has four objectives: increasing access to productive resources, financial services and markets; enhancing knowledge, education and skills; supporting innovation and transition to commercial agriculture; strengthening sustainability and climate/disaster resilience.

For **nutrition** a new Fiji policy on food and nutrition security (FPFNS) has been completed and is currently awaiting clearance from the Ministry of Economy before it is submitted for Cabinet endorsement.⁶⁷ This policy is a joint policy between the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MOHMS) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways (MOAW), facilitated through the National Food and Nutrition Centre (NFCN). The strategic goal of the FPFNS is “to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of safe and nutritious food for every Fijian, sufficient to meet their dietary needs, cultural and food preferences for an active and lasting healthy life.” The policy contains ten strategic action areas, including: the enhancement and promotion of sustainable, diversified, and resilient food systems; the promotion of investment in nutrition-sensitive value chains; support for the enhancement of social protection programmes through the inclusion of complimentary food security and nutrition interventions.

2.3 Programmes and partnerships

The following is principally drawn from a Pacific Agriculture Mapping Exercise⁶⁸, completed for the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in November 2022. For the agriculture sector there are currently five large bilateral projects in Fiji worth a total of US\$33.5 million, along with 22 large multi-lateral projects that include a Fiji component. The bilateral projects include US\$20 million from the EU for implementation of the Ministry of Agriculture Strategic Development Plan. Three important multi-lateral projects are PHAMA Plus, SPCs genetic resource conservation work, and core funding from IFAD for the PFON which is based in Fiji. The PHAMA Plus program is a significant multi-country project funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). PHAMA Plus has recently developed an Environment, Climate and Resilience Strategy and are working towards implementing this. They are looking at targeting smaller farmers who are focused on doing well, with a focus on both increasing climate resilience of farming systems and increasing exports.

As noted in section 2.1 two key NGOs are ADRA and Live and Learn. ADRA are currently involved in climate smart agriculture projects in Vanua Levu and the eastern maritime islands. One of their concerns is that a lot of their projects are driven by the agenda of their donors with a lot of indigenous knowledge that isn't captured from communities. Live and Learn are currently involved in the Atoll Food Futures project, funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The priority focus of the Live and Learn food security programme is three meals on the table. In an environment where there is often unproductive competition between NGOs for donor funds there is an opportunity for more strategic and sustainable partnerships between donors and NGOs.

Part 3 - Strategic recommendations

3.1 Lessons learnt

The material in this section is drawn from previous lessons learnt from IFADs work in the Pacific.

⁶⁶ Ministry for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment. 2022. Youth in Agriculture Policy 2022-2027. <https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/policies.php>

⁶⁷ <https://www.nutrition.gov.fj/guidingdoc.php>

⁶⁸ Kenny, Gavin. 2022. Pacific Agriculture Mapping Exercise. Prepared for Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Community engagement and empowerment. The IFAD experience in Tonga, which was extended to Kiribati, is that bottom-up, community-driven planning and development processes are instrumental to community empowerment and ownership. At the same time such an approach can result in institutional changes to service provision and development interventions. Active community participation requires identification and ownership of the whole process, and results in people being in the frontline. Importantly, a community driven approach takes time.

Subsistence and commercial farming. The majority of farming households in Fiji, as with elsewhere in the Pacific Islands, are focused on subsistence food production. The IFAD experience in the Pacific is that this needs to be sustained and strengthened for enhanced food security, climate resilience and nutrition benefits while at the same time supporting the development of commercial opportunities for farmers. The latter is particularly important in making agriculture attractive to youth.

Step-wise involvement of the risk-averse farmers. In general, successful projects with farmers, IFAD or others, have first targeted more progressive farmers. They were thus able to show, to the whole community, the outcomes from project support and thereby encouraged broader participation. More risk-averse farmers can be targeted as early as the second year, having gained broader interest from those able to take up the proposed technologies and activities.

Extension support. Support for a pluralistic extension service delivery modality (through NGOs, the private sector, and Government) is a necessary step towards the provision of more relevant, responsive, accessible, and accountable services to communities, especially those living in remote locations where public extension finds it challenging and difficult to operate. Similarly, provision of support packages, subject to farmers meeting certain conditions (such as only providing micro-finance services to farmers who graduate from farmer field schools) enhances effectiveness, and increases farmers' ownership and pro-activeness, as well as benefiting sustainability.

Promoting partnerships. The partnerships dimension is a key ingredient for successful smallholder agriculture. Partnerships include those between the exporters/processors/buyers and farmers/farmer groups as well as with those actors and financial institutions, with regional technical assistance grants, and between IFAD, development agencies and NGOs.

Natural Disasters. There is a significant probability country programmes will be affected by natural disasters, at some point in the implementation cycle. These can vary from a short disruption to project implementation to total suspension of operations for an extended period, for example after a Category 5 tropical cyclone or a major volcanic eruption. Such events have to be expected in the Pacific, and country programmes and project designs should allow for IFAD support to be re-deployed to disaster recovery following such events.

3.2 Strategic orientation

The **goal** of the CSN is to contribute to Fiji's rural poverty reduction, improve food and nutrition security and improve the residence of rural livelihoods through effective and responsible management of natural resources. The **Development Objective** is to accelerate progress towards inclusive and sustainable rural transformation with improved access to economic opportunities and reduced vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters. The two Strategic Objectives (SOs) are:

- **SO1: Improved food and nutrition security** through increasing sustainable production of healthy/nutritious foods.
- **SO2: Improved rural livelihoods** with a focus on the approximately 40 percent of rural households living in poverty – to be undertaken in parallel with measures to improve their food and nutrition security under SO1.

Consistent themes in the relevant policy and regulatory frameworks (Section 2.2), which cover national planning, agriculture, climate change, engagement with Indigenous Peoples, gender, youth, and nutrition, include: food and nutrition security; climate resilient agriculture; nutrition-sensitive value chains; sustainable livelihoods; and increased commercial agriculture. There is therefore strong alignment between the overall goal and development objective of the CSN and identified government priorities from the relevant policies and plans.

3.3 Strategic actions and targeting

A key lesson that the CSN needs to take on board is the critical importance of community engagement and ownership. The core issues of climate change and associated environmental and social challenges, food and nutrition security, gender equality and youth engagement, will not be addressed without an approach that is genuinely focused on building community ownership. With this in mind the following strategic actions are recommended:

- a) A participatory engagement process is required that is not simply focused on promoting a market-led approach to agriculture as articulated in the two Strategic Objectives from the draft CSN.⁶⁹ Depending on the target area(s) and communities there needs to be a principal focus on identifying and addressing their social, environmental and economic needs and priorities within an agricultural context; through stakeholder consultation, including through the process of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) when engaging with iTaukei.
- b) A circular, climate resilience, approach is strongly recommended drawing on the climate resilience diagram and table in Attachment 1.⁷⁰
- c) Promoting healthy diets through adoption of nutrition-sensitive value chains and increased consumption of indigenous nutritious foods.
- d) A critical component particularly with indigenous Fijian communities, is to work from their traditional knowledge base, including their food systems. This is an often-missed component to many donor projects.
- e) The collation of relevant baseline environmental data, such as soils, water resources (quantity and quality), local biodiversity and other relevant data, is essential. For example, valuable data for Fiji are available through the Pacific Soils Portal⁷¹. With declining yields from depleted soils, a foundation understanding of the soil situation is essential, combined with increased attention to biological/organic soil inputs.

⁶⁹ Approaches such as the Family Farm Teams Program⁶⁹ developed by University of Canberra are recommended. This program offers a gender equitable approach that is now being applied around the Pacific. <https://www.canberra.edu.au/research/faculty-research-centres/csc/livelihoods-and-learning-for-sustainable-communities/family-farms-teams-program>

⁷⁰ See circular diagram (page 43) in Kenny, Gavin. 2022. Pacific Agriculture Mapping Exercise. Prepared for Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

⁷¹ <https://fiji-psp.landcareresearch.co.nz/>

References:

- Asian Development Bank. *Country Partnership Strategy: Fiji, 2014–2018*.
<https://www.adb.org/documents/fiji-country-partnership-strategy-2014-2018>
- Asian Development Bank. *Country Partnership Strategy: Fiji, 2014–2018*, Environment Assessment Summary. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cps-fij-2014-2018-ena.pdf>
- Fiji Bureau of Statistics. 2017. *Population and Housing Census, Release 1: Age, sex, geography and economic activity, 5 January 2018*. <https://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/index.php/census-2017/census-2017-release-1>
- Bureau of Statistics. 2021. *Fiji Fact Sheet Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2021 (Preliminary Results)*.
https://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/images/documents/Fiji_MICS_2021/Fiji_MICS_2021_Fact_Sheet_-_Preliminary_Report.pdf
- Carter, K. *et al.* 2011. Mortality trends in Fiji. *Aust. N. Z. J. Public Health* **35**, 412-420, doi:10.1111/j.1753-6405.2011.00740.x
- CSIRO, Australian Bureau of Meteorology and SPREP (2015). *Climate in the Pacific: a regional summary of new science and management tools*, Pacific- Australia Climate Change Science and Adaptation Planning (PACCSAP) Program Summary Report. Melbourne, Australia, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.
- CSIRO and SPREP (2021). 'NextGen' Projections for the Western Tropical Pacific: Current and Future Climate for Fiji. Final report to the Australia-Pacific Climate Partnership for the Next Generation Climate Projections for the Western Tropical Pacific project. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), CSIRO Technical Report, Melbourne, Australia.
<https://doi.org/10.25919/5gh8-qt86>
- Department of Environment, Government of Fiji. 2007. *Implementation Framework 2010–2014 for the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2007*. Fiji.
- DT Global Australia PTY Limited. 2023. *PHAMA Plus Environment, Climate and Resilience Strategy*
- Gigov, T. 2023. *Tackling gender inequality in Fiji: Business responsibilities and opportunities*.
https://www.ihrb.org/uploads/general-uploads/Tackling_Gender_Inequality_in_Fiji.pdf
- Government of the Republic of Fiji. 2018. *Republic of Fiji National Adaptation Plan: A pathway towards climate resilience*.
https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NAPC/Documents/Parties/National%20Adaptation%20Plan_Fiji.pdf
- Government of the Republic of Fiji. 2020. *Republic of Fiji's Updated NDC 2020*.
<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/Republic%20of%20Fiji%27s%20Updated%20NDC%2020201.pdf>
- Hughes R.G., Lawrence M.A. 2005. Globalization, food and health in Pacific Island countries. *Asia Pac. J. Clin. Nutr.* <https://apjcn.nhri.org.tw/server/apjcn/14/4/298.pdf>
- IUCN. 1992. *The National State of the Environment Report*. Prepared by IUCN - The World Conservation Union for the National Environment Management Project, as part of technical assistance provided by the Asian Development Bank to the Government of Fiji.
<https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/6654>

Kenny, Gavin. 2022. Pacific Agriculture Mapping Exercise. Prepared for Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Lozano, R. *et al.* 2012. Global and regional mortality from 235 causes of death for 20 age groups in 1990 and 2010: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010. *The Lancet* **380**, 2095-2128, doi:[http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(12\)61728-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)61728-0).

McGregor, Andrew and Taylor, Mary. 2022. Module 1: Introduction to the impact of climate change on agriculture in Fiji and the Pacific Islands. https://pacificfarmers.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Module-1-Intro-to-the-impact-of-climate-change-on-agric-in-Fiji-and-the-Pacific_250822.pdf

Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways. 2024. Strategic Development Plan 2024-2028. <https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/SDP%20Booklet%20Final%202024.pdf>

Ministry of Agriculture. 2022. *Youth in Agriculture Policy 2022 – 2027*. <https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/policies.php>

Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways. 2022. *Policy for Gender in Agriculture in Fiji 2022 – 2027*. <https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/policies/Gender%20Booklet%202022%20Final.pdf>

Ministry of Agriculture. 2020. 2020 Fiji Agriculture Census, *Volume III: Gender Analysis Report*. https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/census/VOLUMEIII_GENDERREPORT.pdf

Ministry of Agriculture. 2020. *2020 Key Statistics on Fiji Agriculture Sector*. <https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/stats/2020KEYSTATISTICS.pdf>

Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways. 2020. *Fiji Agriculture Census 2020: Key Findings*. <https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/census/2020FACINFOGRAPHICSOFFMAJORFINDINGS.pdf>

Ministry of Agriculture. 2014. *Fiji 2020 Agricultural Sector Policy Agenda “Modernising Agriculture”* <https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/policies.php>

Ministry of Economy. 2017. 5-Year & 20-Year National Development Plan. *Transforming Fiji*. <https://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/15b0ba03-825e-47f7-bf69-094ad33004dd/5-Year-20-Year-NATIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-PLAN.aspx>

Ministry of Health and Medical Services. 2014. *Non-Communicable Diseases Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019*.

Ministry of Youth and Sports. 2023. *Fiji National Youth Policy 2023 – 2027*. <https://www.youth.gov.fj/publications/moys-policies>

Naidu, V *et al.* Minority Rights Group International. 2013. *Fiji: The Challenges and Opportunities of Diversity*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236154486_Fiji_The_Challenges_and_Opportunities_of_Diversity

O'Meara L, Williams SL, Hickes D, Brown P. Predictors of Dietary Diversity of Indigenous Food-Producing Households in Rural Fiji. *Nutrients*. 2019 Jul 17;11(7):1629. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu11071629>. PMID: 31319537; PMCID: PMC6683282.

Singh-Peterson and Iranacolaivalu. 2018. *Barriers to market for subsistence farmers in Fiji – A gendered perspective*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0743016717305508>

Sleet, P. 2019. *Fiji: Poor Nutrition and Agricultural Decline has Caused Food Security Slump*, Future Directions International. Strategic Analysis Paper. <https://apo.org.au/node/253476#:~:text=Fiji%3A%20poor%20nutrition%20and%20agricultural%20decline%20has%20caused%20food%20security%20slump,->

[13%20Aug%202019&text=Food%20availability%20in%20Fiji%20is,over%2D%20and%20under%2Dn%20nutrition.](#)

The World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and International Fund for Agricultural Development. 2009. *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*

Tuwere, I.S. 2002?. Land: An Indigenous Fijian Perspective.
https://www.methodist.org.nz/assets/Mission-Resourcing/Fijian-Lang-Resources/land_in_fijian_perspective.pdf

United Nations Population Fund, Women Enabled International, Pacific Disability Forum. *Women and young people with disabilities in Fiji: Needs assessment of sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, and access to essential services* (2022).

World Bank Gender Data Portal. 23 February 2024. <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/countries/fiji/>

World Bank Group. 2021. Country Partnership Framework for Republic of Fiji 2021-2024.
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/pacificislands/brief/world-bank-groups-new-country-partnership-framework-for-fiji-2021-2024>

.Wilson, C. 2020. Demanding the Future: Navigating the Pacific's Youth Bulge.
<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/demanding-future-navigating-pacific-s-youth-bulge>

Attachment 1

The following material provides a template for assessing the climate resilience of the planned project. The diagram (Figure A1) is a refinement of a diagram developed through previous work. The version presented here is based on a review of 87 Pacific Island agriculture projects⁷² and provides a representation of an ideal climate resilience project design based on all of these projects. Relevant climate smart agriculture (CSA) categories are presented in the inner wheel around the climate resilience hub. The outer wheel highlights areas of focus that support and enhance the CSA activities.

The table (Table A1) is designed as a working draft checklist which aligns relevant practices from Figure A1 with examples of climate smart/resilient agriculture practices. The blank column provides space for identification of project adaptation practices which are aligned with the first two columns. The intention is to develop a clearer understanding of the relevant areas of project activity, and the extent to which the project is supporting the development of climate resilient smallholder farming systems. It is important to note that simply identifying a few relevant practices doesn't in itself constitute climate resilience. Individual practices, such as development and planting/grafting of new varieties that are more climate resilient, will contribute to climate resilience. However, on their own they won't lead to a climate resilient production system.

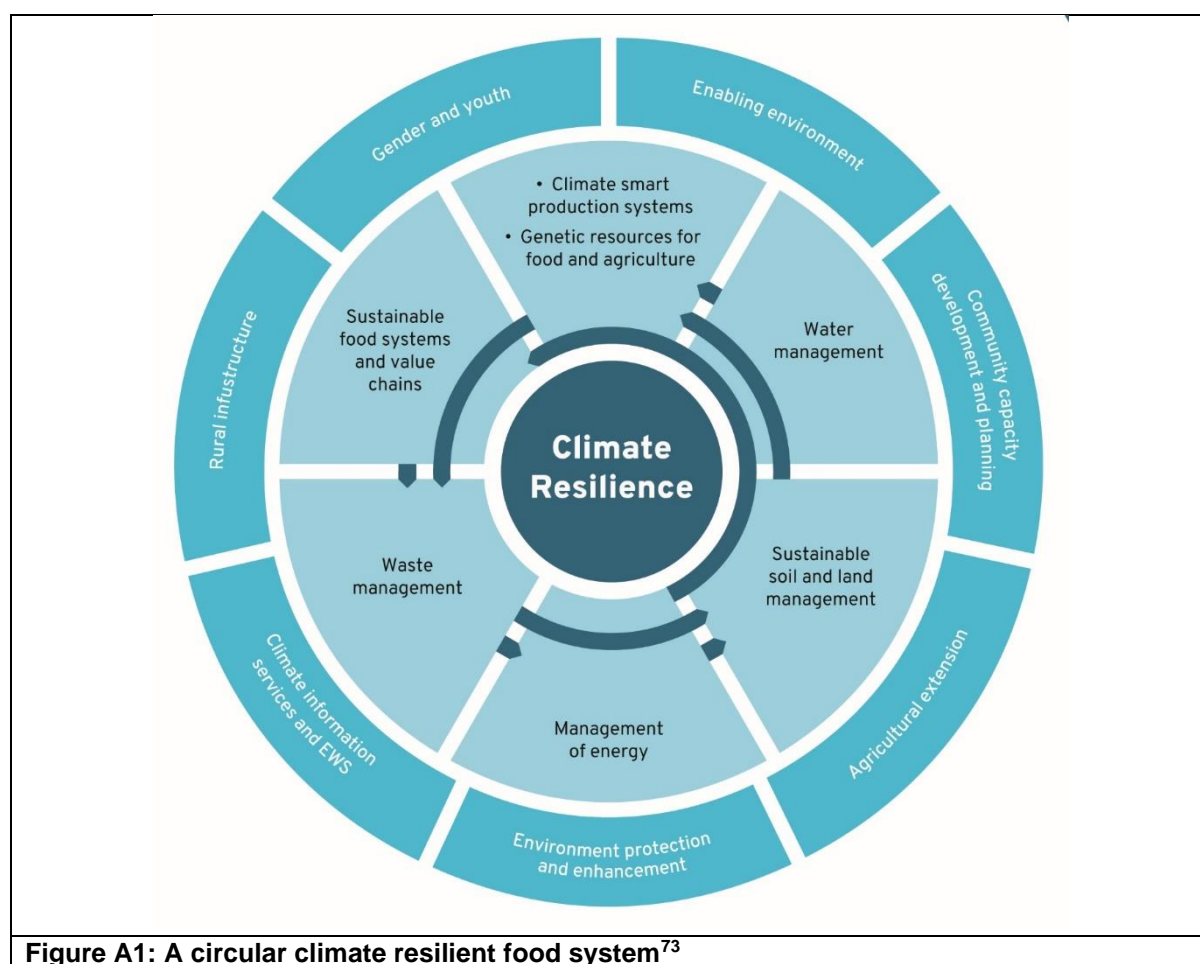


Figure A1: A circular climate resilient food system⁷³

⁷² Kenny, Gavin. 2022. Pacific Agriculture Mapping Exercise. Report to the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

⁷³ Ibid

Table A1: Alignment of Relevant Practices from Figure A1 With Project Adaptation Practices

Relevant practices	Examples
Climate Smart Agriculture	
Sustainable soil and land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil conservation practices and cover cropping. • Integrated nutrient management. • Use of compost, vermicast and worm juice as organic soil inputs.
Water management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient water use. • Wastewater management.
Climate smart production systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agroforestry. • Intercropping. • Integrated weed management. • Integrated pest management. • Household food production for food security.
Genetic resources for food and agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovation/rehabilitation and the use of climate resilient varieties.
Sustainable food systems and value chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On farm processing and storage of household food crops. • On farm processing of cash crops.
Waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On farm production of organic inputs (composting and vermiculture).
Wider Considerations	
Gender and youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring women are fully participating in decisions regarding both food security and cash crops. • Targeted activities for women and youth.
Enabling environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of relevant policies and plans.
Community capacity development and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participatory community planning approach aimed at strengthening climate resilience.
Agricultural extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmer field schools.
Environmental protection and enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape actions focused on biodiversity enhancement and protection.
Climate information services and EWS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmer friendly weather and seasonal climate bulletins
Rural infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved rural roads

;

Appendix 3: Integrated Country Risk Matrix

Risk Type	Inherent Risk	Residual Risks	Mitigation Measures
Country Context: The risks to the achievement of CSN strategic objectives stemming from Fiji's country context.			
Political commitment Political developments result in delays and/or in a reversal of decisions and commitments - including approval and implementation of laws and regulations, and timely counterpart funding.	Low	Low	The Government has requested IFAD support for investment in BE GREEN and is committed to its success. Capacity-building support measures are needed in some areas to improve implementation performance.
Governance Governance breakdowns (political checks and balances; public auditing systems; transparent information on government rules, regulations and decisions; fraud and corruption; transparency of allocation of resources for rural development.	Medium	Low	Project implementation and financing arrangements to detail mandatory procedures for financial management, procurement and reporting.
Macroeconomic Macroeconomic policies (monetary, fiscal, debt management/sustainability, trade) are fragile, unsustainable, and/or vulnerable to domestic or external shocks thus resulting in high inflation, low foreign exchange reserves, large fiscal deficits and debt distress.	High	Medium	IMF maintains dialogue with Fiji on monetary, fiscal and debt management to insure against external shocks and debt service distress.
Fragility and Security Risk that Fiji is vulnerable to natural and man-made shocks, including civil unrest, conflict, and/or weak governance structures and institutions.	Low	Low	Fiji recently underwent a smooth and peaceful change of elected government. Allow flexibility to switch to disaster recovery/rebuilding mode in the event of shocks.
Sector Strategies and Policies: The risks to the achievement of CSN strategic objectives stemming from Fiji's sector-level strategies and policies.			
Policy alignment Risk that Fiji's strategies and policies governing the rural and agricultural sector are not sufficiently pro-poor and/or aligned to IFAD's priorities (e.g. on land, environment, climate, gender, indigenous peoples, nutrition, youth, private sector engagement).	Medium	Low	IFAD will engage in policy dialogue with the Government and other development partners to ensure alignment between IFAD priorities and Government policies, employing evidence-based policy development and implementation.
Policy development and implementation Risk that the Fiji's strategies and policies governing the rural and agricultural sector lack a sound evidence base, are not representative of rural peoples' organisation's views, are not adequately resourced or supported by legal/regulatory frameworks, and/or are unsustainable.	Medium	Low	
Environmental, social and climate context			
Agricultural productivity Risk that social, environmental and/or climate conditions and events may have adverse effects on food and nutrition security, agricultural productivity, access to markets, and/or the incidence of pests and diseases.	High	Medium	IFAD will ensure that project interventions contain adequate measures to respond/adapt to adverse social, environmental or climate conditions.

Risk Type	Inherent Risk	Residual Risks	Mitigation Measures
Social and Environmental Risks Risk that activities aimed to the achievement of strategic objectives may cause threats to biodiversity, cultural heritage, indigenous peoples, labour standards and working conditions, community health and safety, and/or lead to increased pollution, inefficient use of resources, and/or physical and economic resettlement.	High	Medium	IFAD will ensure that project interventions are the subject of SECAP analysis and incorporate appropriate safeguards to minimise the risk of unintended negative outcomes.
Financial management: The risk that CSN activities are not carried out in accordance with IFAD's financial regulations and that funding is not used for the intended purpose.			
Organisation and staffing Risk that the level of development of the accountancy profession in Fiji is low and so causing a short supply of professionally-qualified and well-trained personnel that can be engaged during project implementation.	Medium	Low	The accountancy profession is well developed in Fiji, but mostly in business and private practice. Ensure that employment conditions are competitive to attract suitably qualified accountants to project teams.
Budgeting Risk that national budget approval cycle is inefficient, affecting prompt availability of resources to externally funded projects.	Medium	Low	Ensure that annual workplans and budgets are prepared on time and submitted to IFAD and Government for approval.
Funds flow/disbursement arrangements Risk that funds from multiple financiers disburse with delay due to cumbersome treasury arrangements or are diverted to finance fiscal deficit or economic shocks.	High	Medium	Ensure that designated account and project account are replenished on a frequent and timely manner to avoid cash flow disruptions.
Country internal controls Risk that country systems, such as internal audit, are not adequate and may not provide appropriate control over IFAD resources.	Low	Low	Government financial management systems have reviewed by ADB, EU and World bank and found to be satisfactory. IFAD should review before making a new funding commitment.
Accounting and financial reporting Risk that country accounting and reporting systems are not adequate, leading to inaccurate or non-timely submission of financial information.	Low	Low	
External audit Risk that the supreme audit institution is not independent, capacitated or able to perform and submit the audit of IFAD-financed operations in a timely manner.	Low	Low	Fiji's Government Auditor and private audit firms have the capacity to deliver the required independent audits.
Procurement issues Risk that procurement activities financed from IFAD's resource, are not carried out in accordance with Fiji's procurement regulations, to the extent that they are not consistent with IFAD's procurement guidelines.	High	Medium	Public procurement procedures are well aligned with international standards.
Legal, regulatory and policy framework Assess the legal, regulatory and policy framework for public procurement to identify the rules and procedures governing public procurement and how they compare to international standards.	High	Medium	However, the Ministry of Agriculture's lack of experience in implementing IFAD-financed projects, suggests a high risk of procurement irregularities and/or delays. IFAD will provide technical support and training during project startup to minimise these risks.
Institutional framework and management capacity Assesses how the procurement system is operating in practice, through the institutions and management systems the public sector. This evaluates how effective the procurement system is in discharging the obligations prescribed in the law: (i) whether it is adequately	High	Medium	

Risk Type	Inherent Risk	Residual Risks	Mitigation Measures
linked to Fiji's public finance management system; (ii) whether institutions are in place in charge of necessary functions; and (iii) whether the managerial and technical capacities are adequate to undertake efficient and transparent public procurement.			Maintain a rolling 18-month procurement plan to minimise the risk of procurement delays.
Public procurement operations and market practices Assess the operational efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of the procurement system at the level of the implementing entity. Consider how the procurement system operates and performs in practice.	High	Medium	Ensure that financial management and procurement procedures are well defined in PIMs.
Accountability, integrity and transparency of the public procurement system Consider the conditions necessary for a system to operate with appropriate controls in accordance with the legal and regulatory framework, and that has measures to address the potential for corruption.	High	Medium	

Appendix 4: Project Concept Note:

Fiji Blue Economy and Green Village Development Project (BE GREEN)

Chapter 1: Context

1.1 Project in brief

The Fiji Blue Economy and Green Village Development Project (BE-GREEN) is proposed to be implemented in Fiji's second largest island of Vanua Levu, with USD 5.3 million financing from IFAD13 PBAS allocation and USD 8.2 million financing from GEF8 STAR Allocation. The project goal is to support the sustainable growth and resilience of Fiji's rural economy through improved catchments and ecosystem as well as enhanced agricultural climate-smart responsiveness and competitiveness for rural men and women. The proposed project also critically aims to address loss of biodiversity and ecosystem deterioration stemming from unsustainable practices and over-exploitation of forest, mineral and marine resources linking to both green and blue economic parameters. The development objectives are (1) to increase farmers' incomes and access to services and opportunities through connectivity to market-led and green productivity growth, diversification and marketing while building resilience to climate change; and (2) to protect globally significant biodiversity and safeguard ecosystem services through participatory integrated approaches that generate co-benefits of strengthened livelihoods, food security, nutrition and climate resilience for local communities within coastal and upland peripheries.

Harnessing the power of collaboration, these investments will drive an integrated island management approach in Fiji, tailored specifically to the unique challenges faced by small island large ocean developing states. The innovative strategy emphasizes bottom-up, people-centred partnerships among multiple sectors and stakeholders, while carefully considering ecosystem linkages and emerging threats. Target beneficiaries will be subsistence and semi-subsistence farmers, the majority belonging to indigenous peoples (iTaukei) living in the selected villages of six districts in the province of Cakaudrove, while the GEF investment will address land degradation and biodiversity conservation on the island. BE-GREEN will reach an estimated total of 3,000 rural households and will prioritize women and youth (15-35 year-olds) engaging them in improved biodiversity conservation and enhanced carbon sequestration through restoration of agricultural, forest and mangrove areas; broader adoption of diversified climate-smart agriculture including agroforestry systems; construction of durable linkages between agriculture, the blue economy and ecotourism sectors; and strengthened capacities of rural farmers and those involved in the marine economy. The GEF financing will complement IFAD investments with the number of beneficiaries to be finalized during the design mission.

1.2 Strategic Alignment

SDGs alignment. BE-GREEN is expected to contribute to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including: SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 14 (life below water), and SDG 15 (life on land). It will also make contributions towards the Global Biodiversity Framework and its 2030 Global Targets.

Alignment with IFAD strategies and policies. BE-GREEN responds to IFAD12 and IFAD13 priorities and is aligned with IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025 namely: (i) Increase poor rural people's productive capacities, (ii) Increase poor rural people's benefits from market participation and, (iii) Strengthen the environmental sustainability and climate resilience of poor rural people's economic activities.

The project will operationalise key elements of IFAD's Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) Strategy including nutrition-sensitive and inclusive food systems and strengthening the resilience of households and production systems to environmental and climate change. This recognises Fiji's unique challenges and vulnerabilities to climate change and external shocks.

Alignment with government development strategies and policies. The project is aligned to and supports the implementation of key government policies and plans including the National Adaptation Plan Framework, the Fiji 2020 Agriculture Sector Policy Agenda, the Green Growth Framework, and the Ministry of Agriculture's Strategic Development Plan 2024-2028. These policies and plans focus on building community resilience, generating higher and sustainable returns from the agriculture sector, improving community livelihoods, food and nutrition security and poverty alleviation.

BE-GREEN will also align with Fiji National Sustainable Tourism Framework (2024-2033), which promotes the linkage between agriculture and tourism, and more locally the Savusavu Blue Town Model,[1] which aims to tie marine conservation to economic opportunities, along with a pioneering role in developing the circular blue economy. The blue economy is referred to in Fiji's National Climate Finance Strategy 2022 as the "use of ocean resources – such as fisheries and coastal ecosystems including mangroves, sea grass, and coral reefs – to support ecosystem health and improved livelihoods".

1.3 Portfolio

Fiji hosts IFAD's Pacific Country Office covering 13-member states in the region. The last IFAD investment project in Fiji closed in 2020. There are four ongoing global initiatives and regional programmes which benefit Fiji that will be incorporated into the project design namely:

- Asian Pacific Farmers' Programme (APFP), Total, US\$ 33.7 m, of which allocation for Pacific region including Fiji, US\$ 0.32 mil.
- Farmers' Organisations for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Programme (FO4ACP). Total, EUR 5 mil is total funding for the Pacific, of which Fiji allocation: EUR 1.8 mil.
- Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility (PIRAS), Total: US\$ 8.2 mil of which Fiji allocation, US\$ 0.92 mil. and UN
- Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards Rural Women Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE), Total, US\$ 5 m; of which Fiji allocation: US\$ 0.4 m.

The APFP and FO4ACP are global initiatives that build the capacity of FOs while PIRAS and JP RWEE are regional programmes focused on supporting the livelihoods of rural communities, PIRAS targeting vulnerable populations and JP RWEE targeting rural women. All programmes are implemented by NGOs or FOs on Fiji's main island of Viti Levu.

BE-GREEN is envisaged to capitalize on IFAD's and other's learnings in relation to working with FOs, community engagement, managing climate variabilities and uncertainties in the country, and effective working arrangements with government agencies. IFAD's existing partnership with PFO), will be leveraged to support local NGOs and FOs in Vanua Levu helping to strengthen their systems and capacity to ensure delivery of services.

BE-GREEN will also seek to leverage additional investments planned for Vanua Levu, i.e. the Vanua Levu Tourism Development Programme which is funded by the World Bank. the project focus on building connectivity across the island with the World Bank's investment also focusing on tourism and related SME development.

BE-GREEN will be the first IFAD managed GEF project not only in Fiji but in the Pacific region. It will be built on the lessons learnt from the previous and ongoing GEF projects in the country, and also developed from IFAD experiences in GEF co- financed projects globally. The level and nature of integration with the GEF investment will be carefully thought through during the design phase.

The Government is keen to pursue the path of blue and green economic development. This project will seek to demonstrate how sustainable and resilient livelihoods can be generated by rural communities through market-led interventions and economic opportunities to enhance environmental biodiversity, improve land and coastal management, and strengthen resilience.

1.4 Rationale

The agriculture and tourism sectors have been the leading drivers of Fiji's economy and among the key pillars of green growth frameworks for the country. Agriculture is key to the prosperity of rural people and to the country as the sector supports the livelihoods of 27 percent of Fiji's population and is the main source of work for more than 83 percent of Fiji's rural population [2]. Yet unsustainable agriculture practices have led to land degradation, loss of valuable biodiversity, deterioration of coastal and land ecosystems and reduction of carbon stocks. Increasing climatic variability heightens the risk profile of existing production systems. Low productivity, uncertain market access, including access to finance, all threaten the future of agri-food security in the country. At the same time, the tourism industry which contributes about 40% (both directly and indirectly) to Fiji's GDP has emerged as one of the key sectors and a significant contributor to economic growth. Among Pacific Islands, Fiji attracts more than 40% of all international arrivals to the region. Direct tourism has added an estimated USD 1,499.3 m. to the Fijian economy in 2023 and requires sound management, including sustainable use of Fiji's valuable and sensitive biodiversity and natural resources. Further the World Bank analysis suggests that an increase in tourism sector GDP is associated with reductions in poverty [3].

There are also under-developed economic linkages between the agriculture sector and the tourism sector. A 2018 study [4] by the International Finance Corporation identified that the tourism sector sourced only 48% of their fresh produce needs locally. The report further identified specific fresh produce items for potential import replacement by local producers, reducing the sector's and country's heavy dependence on imported food supply. Inconsistent supply, seasonality of produce available locally, poor quality of products, lack of food safety standards, and lack of networking between hotels, local producers and suppliers were the identified constraints to reduce dependency on imports.

Tourism, a crucial economic sector, especially in Vanua Levu, offers formal employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, particularly for women. Notwithstanding the wealth of terrestrial and marine assets that underpin its tourism appeal and are the foundation for its supply of formally developed tourism products, Vanua Levu Island has received fewer investments in tourism, compared to the main island. The intersection of the agriculture sector and the rich natural environment (marine and land) in Vanua Levu has high potential for economic opportunities in the agri-tourism, eco-tourism and marine sector.[5] A study conducted by the IFC, identified scuba diving and soft adventure/nature-based tourism, and the associated investment needs (improved facilities, conservation, mid-range accommodation and accessibility) as high potential and priority investments. With additional parallel investments in connectivity and natural resources, Vanua Levu is poised to participate in Fiji's tourism's growth and benefits.

IFAD has recognised and regional comparative advantages for pro-poor and inclusive rural development, targeting of the vulnerable and disadvantaged people, sustainable O&M and community-governed mechanisms, climate-smart and value chain- led agricultural development, and capacity building of smallholder farmers and their organizations including cooperatives, rural economic entities, and other agro-business entities under various public-private partnership models. Further, IFAD has a growing technical expertise in harmonizing integration of natural resource management (NRM) with resilient productive capacities.

It is in this context and in recognition of IFAD's comparative advantage and relevant experience, that the Government requested IFAD to continue to support its agriculture transformation and natural resource management development agenda through participatory integrated approaches that generate multiple co-benefits of strengthened livelihoods, food security, nutrition and climate resilience for local communities while protecting the biodiversity and ecosystems of Fiji.

BE-GREEN will be designed to offer its target groups and their communities, options to enhance household income, while improving resource management, and thus lowering risk, through supporting resilient and sustainable production, conservation and restoration. BE-GREEN responds to: (i) Resilience to economic and climatic shocks, (ii) Climate-smart and diversified agricultural diversification including integrated farming both in uplands and coastal areas, (iii) Capacity building in production, post-harvest management for both producers and service support, (iv) Market linkage and value chain development (marine and land based), (v) Public-private producer partnership with MSMEs and

commercial farms, vi) Sustainable land management, (vii) Access to finance, and (viii) Building productive assets.

Chapter 2: Project/Programme Description

2.1 Theory of Change

Agriculture plays a significant role in rural development in Fiji, as it is a key sector for improving food and nutrition security, enhancing livelihoods, promoting inclusive rural transformation and adopting sustainable practices. However, agriculture is not only one of the most important drivers of growth in rural development in Fiji, but also a key determinant in rural poverty reduction, food security and nutrition.

Subsistence farming plays an important role in the agriculture sector, which accounts for 80 percent of the food supply and 93 percent of the farming households. In promoting climate smart agriculture practices and technologies, BE-GREEN can also learn from traditional agriculture which has the advantages of being resilient to climate-related shocks and provides a safety net against loss of income from other sources [6]. However, inequitable opportunities for women, youth and socially marginalized groups in the rural communities, leads to lack of resilience of income, poor nutrition and youth out migration.

Several interconnected root causes are driving increased threats to island ecosystems and livelihoods in Fiji. Inadequate land and resource management, exemplified by land and coastal ecosystem degradation and unsustainable agricultural practices, is exacerbated by limited access to technical extension support and diversified market opportunities, thus hampering investments in resilient, market responsive and climate adaptive production, post-harvest and other downstream activities in the value chains. Farmers also have to cope with the impacts of climate change and increasingly severe and prolonged weather events that threaten their livelihoods and food security. Remoteness and connectivity issues pose challenges to market access.

Development pressure continues to grow in the country from unfettered tourism, agro-industries, and housing, coupled with poorly planned development, leading to over-exploitation of forest, mineral, and marine resources, including removal of forest cover through agricultural conversion, logging, and mining operations. These threats are causing a multitude of problems, including loss of biodiversity and carbon stocks, fragmentation of habitats, and deterioration of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, e.g., from increased levels of siltation and pollution.

Turning challenges into opportunities: Vanua Levu offers abundant natural resources and rich biodiversity; a high potential tourism industry poised to recover and grow from COVID lows, particularly through eco, marine and agri tourism. Social unity and unexplored income-generating activities (IGAs) and business opportunities coupled with unmet local demand and new investments in intra island connectivity will offer considerable potential for sustained growth and market integration of target rural communities and farmers. Challenges will be addressed through BE-GREEN's complementary and integrated interventions on: a) Mainstreaming integrated island management b) Scaling up resilient production, conservation and ecosystem restoration, c) Supporting value chains and resilient market access and d) Strengthening the enabling environment. The interventions will have an embedded focus on i) empowering indigenous communities ii) prioritizing women and creating opportunities for youth (iii) climate resilient agriculture and community NRM and (iv) and participatory planning through engagement with local institutions, communities and government structures.

Starting with participatory natural resource mapping and value chain analysis, BE-GREEN will work with communities to identify potential pathways for shifting to more sustainable agricultural practices, identifying critical investments and market opportunities along the value chains. Introduced practices will include climate-resilient agricultural technologies (water saving techniques in horticultural production, bee keeping for honey production, among others) for improved productivity and climate resiliency, leveraging the diversity represented in the IP's food system, diversification of on-farm and off-farm IGAs in response to market opportunities and in an environmentally friendly and climate-smart manner including entry into product-led green village ecotourism model. To provide technical support

for early and potential adopters, research-extension linkages in the national system will be further enhanced with a particular focus on strengthening technical training delivery of the extension system. Further, interventions will respond to niche markets of export and import substitution in particular supplying the growing tourism sector.

To allow for the integration of these communities more directly into a systematic and impactful market, the project will put emphasis on working in inclusive value chains that provide opportunities to integrate and/or improve the role and or share of benefits of target beneficiaries, either as actors in the value chain or as service providers to the value chains. Links between production and postharvest with downstream market actors will be driven by identified market opportunities and growth prospects, and may include technical assistance in planning, production, and post-harvest infrastructure, development of fair contracts (both informal and formal), membership in market networks, and in some cases, investments in service businesses such as agri and ecotourism with direct access to end users. BE-GREEN will also support investments throughout the selected value chains which demonstrate direct participation and inclusive benefits for the project's target beneficiaries, especially indigenous and youth.

Potential for credit access, if needed, will be realized through value chain finance, and links with both public and private financial institutions. Rural youth will be integrated through the provision of business skills and entrepreneurship development, potentially through a youth incubation and challenge fund arrangement.

Finally, the project will strengthen the enabling environment for mainstreaming investments in sustainable agriculture and environmental protection by supporting policy dialogue, institutional capacity building, promoting knowledge exchange, taking into account traditional knowledge and practices.

Stakeholders are committed to collaborate and share information and are receptive to knowledge inputs. Farmers are willing to move from subsistence to market-responsive production in a sustainable way. Target beneficiaries take interest and lead the process of market led value chain integration. Providing investment opportunities through EPS/COOP/FOs to vulnerable farmers lead to inclusive, sustainable rural livelihoods There is sufficient support for financial solutions to address investment bottlenecks, including at farm level. Continuity of tourism development and investment strategies; Continuity of economic, social and market stability in absence of any climatic or pandemic calamity, Consumer demand and willingness to pay for sustainable production Governance and land tenure conditions enable integrated approaches.

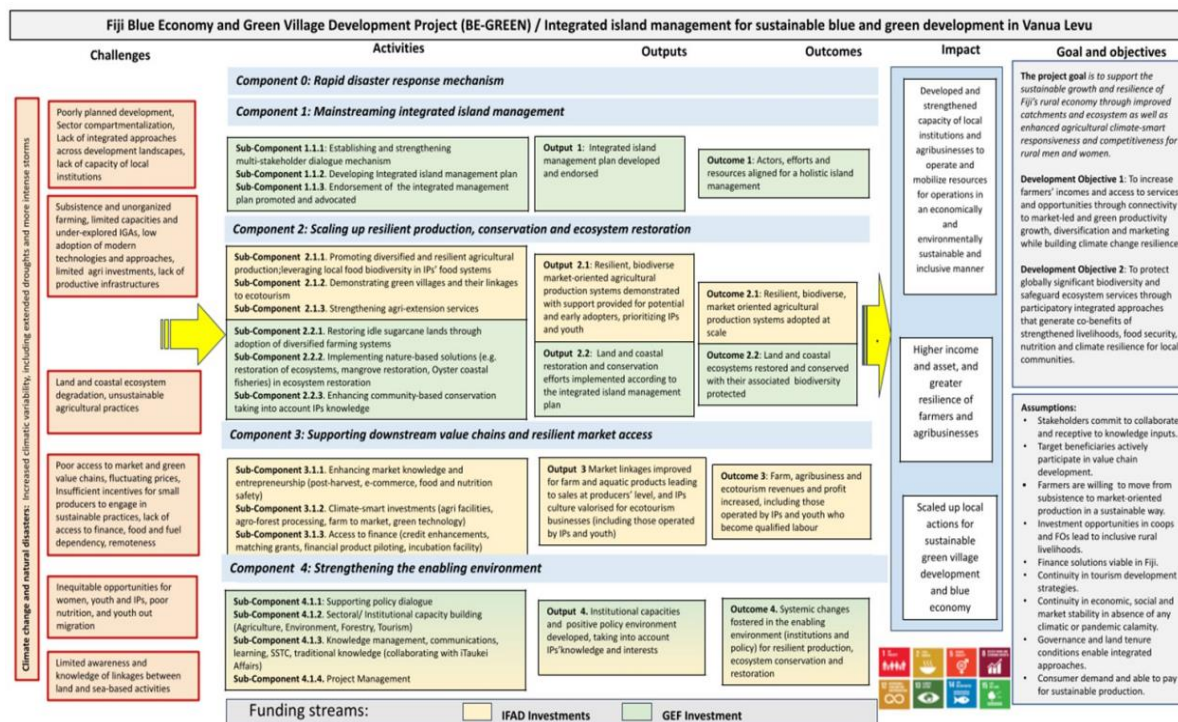
Through access to gender oriented technical assistance and training, good quality agricultural inputs, participation in FOs and other group based structures combined with improved integration into the relevant value chains and enhanced opportunities for access to finance and supported by a strong enabling environment, target beneficiaries are expected to establish lucrative links to markets, leading to improved and stable incomes, further reinforcing the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices. These communities will facilitate participatory planning in NRM, integrating indigenous knowledge systems with modern practices and technologies.

The underlying assumptions on which the TOC rests include:

- Stakeholders are committed to collaborate and share information and are receptive to knowledge inputs.
- Farmers are willing to move from subsistence to market-responsive production in a sustainable way.
- Target beneficiaries take interest and lead the process of market led value chain integration.
- Providing investment opportunities through EPS/COOP/FOs to vulnerable farmers lead to inclusive, sustainable rural livelihoods.
- There is sufficient support for financial solutions to address investment bottlenecks, including at farm level.
- Continuity of tourism development and investment strategies. Continuity of economic, social and market stability in absence of any climatic or pandemic calamity.

- Consumer demand and willingness to pay for sustainable production.
- Governance and land tenure conditions enable integrated approaches.

The following schema presents the rationale and linkages leading to the achievement of project objectives.



2.2 Scope and Targeting

Project area. The project will be implemented in Fiji's second main island of Vanua Levu. Key investment activities under IFAD financing that pilot blue and green economic development as part of rural transformation strategy will be centered on six districts in the province of Cakaudrove. The districts proposed by Government include: Savusavu, Naweni, East Wailevu, Navatu, Koroalau and Vaturova [7]. These were considered based on the following criteria: (i) high levels of poverty and low levels of socio-economic development, (ii) vulnerability to climate change, (iii) opportunities for blue economy and green development, and (iv) potential for connectivity to markets and access to rural finance. The six project districts include 65 villages and 235 settlements, and 3,720 farmer households [8]. Meanwhile the GEF financing will cover the whole island ecosystem of Vanua Levu as it will address the upper catchments land degradation as well as biodiversity in hinterland and coastal areas. Where opportunities allow target beneficiaries to provide services or goods to the broader ecosystem of Vanua Levu, they will be encouraged to do so.

Outreach and targeting. The project has the potential of directly serving and supporting 3,000 households, or 13,200 corresponding household members [9], covering more than 80% of the total farmer households in the project's intended. The Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways has categorized farmers into subsistence, semi commercial and commercial farmers. Reflecting the distribution in the targeted areas, the project beneficiaries will constitute 65% of subsistence farmers, 30% semi commercial farmers, and 5% of commercial farmers and emerging farmer and agri entrepreneurs, to reflect the interlinking of the value chain actors in the districts. The latter will be supported if they engage in providing just, transparent market opportunities contributing to benefit sharing for target group segments. Enterprises, in particular women and youth led MSMEs, will also be considered beneficiaries in as much as they are intrinsically linked to smallholders in their respective value chains in a just and fair manner. Among the beneficiaries, women will account for 50%, youth 30%, and Indigenous Peoples (iTaukei) 50%.

Target Group and targeting strategy. The target group comprises men and women living in the project area and being involved in subsistence and semi commercial farming as their primary means of livelihoods. The project will be supporting the advancement of farmers from subsistence to semi commercial and from semi commercial to commercial; with support for commercial farmers facilitating the market-led production of other farmers. It will also promote the participation of farmers organizations (FOs) and facsimiles, with a systematic approach and tailored inputs depending on the status of the organizations, measured by criteria, including governance, inclusiveness, management and financial capacity, and membership services. Value chains will be selected based on inclusiveness, market potential and sustainability prospects. Private sector players, in particular SMEs in the value chain, such as aggregators, small processors, input dealers, and service providers will be incorporated where there exists value addition and where they support and “pull through” market led production and marketing.

Duration. The IFAD investment project will be implemented over a period of six years, from 2025 to 2031. Meanwhile, the design and implementation of GEF financing is expected to start in 2026 and be completed in 2032.

2.3 Project/Programme Objectives

The project **goal** is to support the sustainable growth and resilience of Fiji’s rural economy through improved catchments and ecosystem as well as enhanced agricultural climate-smart responsiveness and competitiveness for rural men and women.

The project has 2 **development objectives**:

1. To increase farmers’ incomes and access to services and opportunities through connectivity to market-led and green productivity growth, diversification and marketing while building climate change resilience (primarily IFAD investment).
2. To protect globally significant biodiversity and safeguard ecosystem services through participatory integrated approaches that generate co-benefits of strengthened livelihoods, food security, nutrition and climate resilience for local communities (primarily GEF investment).

Outcomes. Expected outcomes will be: (1) integrated island management approaches mainstreamed in Vanua Levu, (2.1) Enhanced market oriented sustainable production development, (2.2) Strengthened participatory conservation and restoration, (3) Increased resilient value chain investments and improved market access and (4) Systemic change and sustainability fostered through institutional strengthening, knowledge management, communications and learning.

Components. There are four technical components and a rapid disaster response component. The components are designed to integrate the IFAD investment with the GEF 8. Further integration within the components and activities will be concluded at the design and will take into consideration complementarity, common nexus of delivery, timing of GEF 8 approval and disbursement and sequencing of activities.

Component Zero – Rapid Disaster Response (RDR) Mechanism. In recognition of fragility and vulnerability in the Pacific context, particularly in relation to natural disasters and extreme climate events, this component is an integrated part of the project design as a stand-by instrument to support timely and effective interventions in a post-disaster recovery context. With no budget allocation at design, the RDR will seek opportunities in support of the Government’s disaster management system [10] in the event contingency planning and a vulnerability assessment leads to a need for action.

Component 1 Mainstreaming Integrated Island Management aims to improve catchments and coastal management (soil and water conservation interventions) in Vanua Levu through establishment and strengthening multi stakeholder dialogue and the development of integrated island management plan. This plan is expected to be used as a reference and the basis for other sectoral development plans in the island.

Component 2 Incentivizing resilient production, conservation and ecosystem restoration. This component will promote market-oriented diversification and productivity enhancement, through inclusive production clustering and FO development and planning based on the selected value chain(s), facilitating access to quality inputs, technical skills training, financial and business literacy, and

community based and market responsive women and youth entrepreneurship. The diversity of crops inherent in indigenous people's food system will be fully leveraged in designing the diversified cropping systems. This component will also demonstrate and deliver activities around green village and blue economy investments particularly in eco and agri tourism through identification of anchor products (with village consent), the introduction and adoption of green technologies and waste management, village and coastal community participatory action planning and modelling for sustainable replication. Private sector and civil society partners will be actively engaged to ensure linkages with ongoing initiatives and to foster enabling partnerships with small producers and their organizations.

Support for the delivery of agri-extension services, with key activities such as gender sensitive, technical training at farm level on climate adaptation and diversification inclusive of traceability, and climate smart applications and technology, and will also include a research-extension-farmers linkage and capacity building in extension service delivery, including logistical supports.

Component 2 will also drive restoration of idle sugar cane lands through adoption of diversified farming systems. Seeking alignment with IP's knowledge in nature conservation and the ongoing community-based conservation and restoration efforts, the component will also implement nature-based solutions for investments such as mangrove restoration. Aquaculture, including oyster farming, will be explored as an alternative model for catchments and coastal protection and to reduce overfishing and poaching threats.

Component 3 Supporting downstream value chain investments and resilient market access BE-GREEN anticipates enhancing market and business knowledge and entrepreneurship for youth, SMEs, and producer organizations (post-harvest management, e-commerce, financial and business literacy, food and nutrition safety) and supporting their climate smart investments such as processing, service provision, blue and green eco/agri tourism, agro-forest processing, farm to market/table, supportive green technology within the selected value chains. Access to finance through credit enhancements and matching grant facilities will also be tapped. Both marine and land producers, and their organizations will be connected to private sector firms and financiers, through market linkages and aligned incentives.

Component 4 Strengthening the enabling environment by supporting policy dialogue, institutional capacity building, promoting knowledge management and its exchange, including SSTC and the integration of traditional knowledge and practices (collaborating with iTaukei Affairs) and project management.

2.4 Sustainability Strategy

The project invests in developing self-sustaining and community-based FOs and clusters and agri-entrepreneurs involved in production, aggregating, processing and marketing. This development of a market-oriented production system, rooted in market responsive, community driven participatory planning will facilitate mutually beneficial partnerships between the private sector, individuals and their organizations and communities. The initiative also focuses on building technical, business and financial literacies and capacities of individuals and producer organizations and an overall enhanced business environment will create better and expanded opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship, particularly for youth, providing incentives to stay/return to the country instead of out migration. In addition, the project will promote partnerships with relevant private sector organizations and traditional and non-traditional rural finance organizations to strengthen sustainability prospects. Alignment to growing and resilient market opportunities and investments in food production and tourism combined with an overall enhanced business environment will create better and expanded opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship.

The project will seek to build on existing agricultural extension service support networks and strengthen their capacities connected to the farmers and responding to their needs in diversified on-farm and off-farm income generating activities. Farmers will be encouraged to produce sustainably, in a climate smart way, by promoting soil health, nature-based solutions, and adaptation and agroforestry activities and investments. Those beneficiaries involved in marine based income generating activities will be supported to produce sustainably

Project investments in both private and public sustainable land management, conservation and restoration will safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem services. Where possible these efforts at the community and individual level will be linked to value chain investments to provide a performance-based incentive for continuation.[11]

Project integrated risk management framework and SECAP tools will also ensure that the project identifies and mitigates environmental, climate and socio-economic risks that may affect the sustainability of outcomes. Risk identification and mitigation will also be included in trainings provided to farmer groups and entrepreneurs.

A comprehensive exit and sustainability strategy will be developed at start-up to ensure all stakeholders have a common vision and understanding of sustainability requirements and modified and improved at MTR. Component 4 will ensure quality monitoring and evaluation of project results and develop required documentation and replication guidelines on good effective practices to facilitate the continuation of the improved extension approach promoted beyond the project. Policy engagement will contribute to maintaining the project's high national relevance and consolidate sustainability of investments.

SECAP-related review and categories. The environmental and social risk category for the project is proposed as moderate, based on the preliminary risk screening checklist volume 2 of IFAD's Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedure (SECAP) 2021[12]. The project is anticipated to generate overall positive social and environmental benefits. Proactive targeting and support will be ensured to the poor and marginalized communities, women, youth and Indigenous Peoples (IPs) through diversified production, value chain development, enterprises initiatives, skill development, and ecotourism. An implementation plan for Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) will be developed to incorporate traditional practices and social and cultural values of IPs into project design and implementation. The project activities will be focused on agriculture lands, productive forest and marine, and coastal areas, ensuring no forest encroachment, degradation, and deforestation as well as no exploitation to protected marine zones. The design will have a clear map of the protected and conservation area and those will be excluded from the project's geographic target.

The climate risk category of the project is proposed as Moderate, as per the SECAP 2021 risk screening checklist volume 2. The project intervention areas are likely to experience cyclones, floods, landslides, extreme heat, and wildfires. Mission field observations, stakeholder consultations, and published reports indicate that agriculture and livestock production sectors of the country have been affected by rainfall variability, changes in temperature or pest and disease. The country has made progress in adaptation activities and is well ranked in the disaster risk reduction progress score as per INFORM database [13]. An early action plan for the preparedness and emergency response is in place. The project will promote climate resilient diversified agriculture production. Extension workers will be capacitated to provide advisory support on climate smart agriculture. Farmers will be oriented to develop and use seasonal calendars. Small infrastructure support, such as processing, and collection centers, will be climate proofed.

The SECAP review made recommendations regarding i) climate, environment and natural resources management, ii) nutrition, iii) youth sensitivity enhancement, iv) women empowerment, and v) prioritization of Indigenous Peoples' needs.

This Project Concept Note (PCN) took into consideration the risk factors identified by the SECAP review; related recommendations, mitigation measures and actions will provide guidance for the final design.

2.5 Cost, Financing and timelines

Costs. The total project cost is estimated at USD 24.26 million over a six-year period (2025-2031) of implementation. The estimated project financing includes an IFAD Highly Concessional loan of USD 5.3 million, GEF 8 STAR grant co-financing of USD 8.2 million, additional donor fund grant of USD 3.0 million, and an estimated Government contribution of USD 1.17 million primarily in-kind, taxes and duties. Beneficiaries and the private sector are also expected to contribute provisionally USD 1.86 million. BE-GREEN has a financing gap of USD 4.7m

The component wise, source wise project financing (including X% contingencies) is as shown in the Table below (in USD).

Table 1: Costing of Component and Sub-component by Financiers

Component/Sub-Component	IFAD Loan	GEF	SSC (China)	Beneficiaries	Private Sector	Govt. Fiji	Total	Percent
0: Rapid Disaster Response							0	0
1: Mainstreaming Integrated Island Management								
1.1.1: Multi-stakeholder dialogue mechanism established/strengthened		250					250	
1.1.2: Develop integrated Island Management Plan		750					750	
1.1.3: Promote and advocate endorsement of the integrated management Plan		400					400	
Subtotal	0	1,400	0	0	0	0	1,400	5
2. Incentivising resilient production, conservation and ecosystem restoration								
2.1.1: Promoting agribusiness diversification	1,000	350				150	1,500	
2.1.2: Demonstration of green village and eco-tourism	1,000	300				150	1,450	
2.1.3: Support to agri-extension services	500	350				75	925	
2.2.1: Restoring idle sugarcane lands		1,500					1,500	
2.2.2: Implementing nature-based solutions		1,750					1,750	
2.3: Enhancing community-based conservation		1,750					1,750	
Subtotal	2,500	6,000	0	0	0	375	8,875	34
3. Supporting upper-value chain and resilient market access								
3.2.1: Enhancing marketing knowledge and entrepreneurship	825					124	949	
3.2.2: Climate smart asset building	3,850					124	3,974	
3.2.3: Access to finance	825					578	1,403	
Subtotal	5,500	0	0	0	0	825	6,325	25
4. Strengthening the enabling environment								
4.1: Supporting policy dialogue	200	400					600	
4.2: Capacity building	200	400					600	
4.3: KM, communications, learning, SSTC, traditional knowledge	200	563					763	
4.4: Project management	1,400	737					2,137	
Subtotal	2,000	2,100	0	0	0	600	4,700	18
Total Project Cost	10,000	9,500	3,000	500	1,000	1,800	25,800	100
Percent	39	37	12	2	4	7	100	

Outlines of lending conditions. The project will be financed through the IFAD13 (2025-2027) PBAS allocation for Fiji, with a total funding of USD 5.3 million.

As an Upper Middle-Income Country (UMIC) and classified as a Small State Economy (SSE), Fiji is eligible for IFAD's Highly Concessional (HC) terms. The IFAD Highly Concessional Terms are: i) term maturity up to 40 years, ii) grace period up to 10 years, iii) service charge at 0.75% in SDR. Note these lending terms are indicative and applicable for Fiji for 2024; they may change under IFAD13 starting from 2025, but likely not significantly.

Expected Benefits, economic analysis and financial sustainability. The project economic and financial analysis will be completed and detailed at design stage. 60.

Chapter 3: Organisation and Management

3.1 Organisational set-up

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) will assume the overall responsibility of project implementation through its extension offices in the six project districts in Cakaudrove province of the Northern Division. MoA will build partnerships with other relevant agencies and organizations, especially in areas where cross-sector and crosscutting interventions are required. The Ministry of Waterways and Environment (MoE) will be managing GEF financed activities, under overall project coordination of MoA. The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, who are responsible for indigenous people, will be providing implementation support for the Project Steering Committee.

Project Steering Committee (PSC). A PSC will be established and co-chaired by the Permanent Secretaries (PS) of MoA and MoE [14], including representatives from the related ministries of Finance, iTaukei Affairs, Maritime and Rural Development, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Industry, Commerce, Trade, iTaukei Affairs, and representatives from the Civil Society. The PSC will provide, evaluate and approve the project's annual work plans and budget, progress and financial reports, provide directives

on the implementation management's strategic aspects, and approve major competitive agreements and contracts if any.

Project Management Unit (PMU) will be established in the MoA's Crop Extension Division and MoE office in Vanua Levu. In view of the primarily operational management and coordination at district level, the mission recommended that the PMU office shall be located in Savusavu, and District Coordination Unit (DCU) should be established in all the project districts. A senior official shall be appointed by the MoA as PMU Director for the project, supported by a team of specialists to ensure the PMU key functions, namely financial management, climate change adaptation, M&E and KM, social inclusion (women, youth, IPs) and targeting, procurement, agricultural diversification and marketing, and agribusiness development. A similar team led by one GEF project coordinator will be established under MoE for managing GEF financing. These operational teams will be funded by the project and recruited through an open and competitive selection

A single PMU for both PBAS and GEF-funded projects is recommended to build synergies and encourage efficiencies. The PMU will ensure its roles and functions under the guidance of PSC co-chaired by Ministries of Agriculture and Environment. A GEF technical unit, based in the PMU, will be established through external recruitment. These will be supported by service providers as needed.

The **District Coordination Unit (DCU)** composition and staffing will primarily follow the PMU set-up, ensuring the key positions of DCU Coordinator/Officer, specialists of M&E and KM, Procurement and Agricultural and Agribusiness Development assigned or recruited by the District Agriculture/Livestock Offices. Specialists responsible for Gender and Youth Development and Climate Change Adaptation with offices established and operating in the project districts.

3.2 Key Management Concerns

Management concerns were raised by the mission for follow-up prior to or during the final design.

Technical feasibility on introduction of green technologies. Under its technical intervention of organized production under promotion of agribusiness diversification and green village set-up under demonstration of ecotourism and green village, green technologies such as greenhouse and hydroponic farming were mentioned by stakeholders consulted. All such technologies will be explored during the design mission and an agronomic and investment perspective and recommendation will be offered as to the most cost effective, resilient, investments to be considered.

Partnership in final design. The final design team will include a technical focal point from the Ministry of Agriculture in order to help ensure the technical response of proposed interventions under components 1 and 2, especially in areas related to institutional capacity building and extension service support in diversified agriculture, agro-processing, storage and marketing arrangement.

Potential Implementing partners/parties. Learning from experience of other projects in the Pacific including in Fiji, the selection of implementing partner(s) can take up to 2 years after project start-up. Advance procurement or pre-identification of partner(s) at design stage will avoid significant delays in project implementation. The partner(s) will be identified/nominated and discussed with the government during the final design mission. An institutional analysis is required before or during the final design in order to have a better understanding on their capacities of possible service provision for the project.

3.4 Further actions

Comprehensive data in support of target group profiling. The PCN observes and recognizes the vulnerabilities of different target group segments such as the poor, women, youth, IPs subsistence farmers but the exercise of profiling is challenging due to some missing recent data. The final design will need more transparent and updated data in the relevant fields and from related ministries and agencies in order to effectively draw up the profiles of different target segments for the sake of differentiated project support.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation. In project monitoring and evaluation, the precision and reliability of findings are critically dependent on meticulously planned sampling methodologies. IFAD's Research and Impact Assessment Division (RIA) together with the Research and Evolution Team at AidData aim to collaborate with Fiji National University (FNU) and Fiji Bureau of Statistics to develop a robust

methodological framework to monitor and evaluate the impacts of the project across diverse demographic and geographic domains. Further discussion needs to be undertaken to finalize and agree on the plan, roles, responsibilities and budget implications.

Review of financial management and procurement will be undertaken during the final design.

Key steps of processing timeline are as follows:

- OSC: August 2024
- Final Design mission: October 2024
- PDR draft sharing November 2024
- DRM January 2025
- Government endorsement February 2025
- FA Negotiation: March 2025
- IFAD Executive Board approval:
April 2025 Start Up Workshop: Second half of 2025

Footnotes

[1] <https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/handle/20.500.11822/28869>

[2] Fiji - Agricultural Commodities (trade.gov)

[3] The World Bank 2023, Fiji Tourism Development Program in Vanua Levu (P178694). Project Information Document (PID)

[4] <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/ru/132791540532813264/pdf/131345-WP-FJ-From-the-Farm-to-the-Tourists-Table- PUBLIC.pdf>

[5] Agritourism is a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors while generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner

[6] MoA, Strategic Development Plan (2024 – 2028), page 29

[7] The mission invites the government to consider the possibility of additional districts, in view of the possibly partly overlapping districts by GEF-funded project, the necessity for a sourcing/cluster element, and the geographic connection of two project areas without overlapping

[8] As consolidated and presented by the Savusavu Agriculture Office

[9] On the basis of average of 4.4 members per household in Cakaudrove province

[10] The government is undertaking community-based disaster risk management trainings in communities and formulating disaster risk reduction (DRR) plans around the country to safeguard communities and assets from the impacts of disasters.

[11] Recent IFAD blog on NRM and value chains

[12] <https://www.ifad.org/en/secap>

[13] <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index>

[14] In view of the close coherence and synergy building with the coming GEF-funded project, and the single-PMU set up proposed by the Government. The two PS could co-chair or taking round in chairing the PSC meetings, supported by the PMU as PSC secretariat.