

**The Republic of Fiji**  
**Supplement to Expression of Interest in joining the**  
**Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)**

**1. General Information**

Submitted by: Republic of Fiji

Submitted on:

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**2. Background**

**2.1 In what capacity would Fiji participate in the FCPF?**

iv. The Republic of Fiji is aiming for participation with full financial support through a preparation grant to implement the R-PP. A two-stage approach with formulation grant is not necessary.

**2.2 Has Fiji already identified or had discussions with a Delivery Partner for channelling FCPF resources and providing REDD+ readiness Services?**

No. After confirmation by FCPF that Fiji will be considered for support, Fiji will seek discussions. Preferred delivery partner is World Bank.

**2.3 Does the World Bank have an active portfolio on forests and natural resource management in Fiji?**

No.

**2.4 Has Fiji received, or is Fiji expecting to receive in the near future, technical or financial support for REDD+ from the UN-REDD Programme or any other multilateral or bilateral assistance program for REDD+?**

Fiji has received technical assistance on REDD+ from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) since 2009. The support is ongoing.

GIZ is supporting the Fiji Forest Department in structuring and facilitating the process which has so far lead up to clear governance structures, capacity building, publishing of the Fiji National REDD+ Policy and preparation of demonstration activities in pilot areas. Current

support also focuses on commissioning studies to develop a robust monitoring system and collect and compile available land use data as a solid database for Fiji.

### 3. REDD+ and National Development

#### 3.1 How important are forests in Fiji, including for poverty reduction, the well-being of forest-dependent Indigenous Peoples and other forest dwellers, and biological diversity?

The Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2008 -2009 Household Income & Expenditure Survey (HIES) reported that between the periods 2002 -2003 and 2008-2009 there was an overall decrease of 10% in the overall population poverty (from 35% to 31% respectively). However, the incidence of Rural poverty increased from 40% to 43% during the two periods (whilst incidence of poverty in Urban areas declined by 34% from 28% to 19%). The HIES showed that poverty in rural areas have worsened in all Divisions in Fiji and for all ethnic groups. Bulk of this rural poor are forest dependent communities

Whilst financial income may be below poverty lines in rural areas, majority of rural forest communities draw sustenance from forest products. Surveys undertaken in forest communities reveal that up to ninety percent of their daily diet comes from the forest and the main source of income comes from their land. This reveals a very high dependency on forest products and wild foods. Forest communities are also highly dependent on forests for fuelwood, drinking water and building materials. There is also a strong spiritual and cultural connection to the forest where specific forest animal or bird (usually indigenous and endemic to the site) are totems for the local clans or tribes.

On the macro-economic scale, the HIES reported a bulk of “agriculture” loans going towards forestry (logging) with sugar cane farming virtually disappearing (47% of all agricultural loans in 2000 to just around 5% in 2009). This indicates a strong move towards the forestry sector for economic return especially with the flagging local sugar industry.

Fiji’s indigenous forests are a refuge to its rich original biodiversity. Around 80% of the terrestrial biodiversity in Fiji are found in forests. This statistics reveal the devastation deforestation and forest degradation will have on the biodiversity of the country.

According to the Fiji Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (FBSAP), invasive species “are generally regarded to be the second most serious threat to biodiversity after habitat loss, but for an oceanic island like Fiji, it may be the most harmful.” Forest invasive species now include mahogany, African tulip (*Spathodea campanulata*) and climbers that suppress forest regeneration, as well as predators (mongoose, rats and cats) that can move into remote forest areas through logging roads. Over time, such degradation of forest habitat results in a situation today where 11 endemic bird species of Fiji are threatened with extinction and a further six are near threatened. Degradation or loss of forest habitat has resulted in three of the six native bats officially categorised as threatened, as well as both of its endemic frogs, a third of the reptiles, and half the palms (FBSAP 2003). All but one of Fiji’s endemic palms are forest species and the status of at least 12 (50%) are of conservation concern due to forest degradation and deforestation.

An island landscape like Fiji's relies heavily on forests to provide a healthy ecosystem for its coastal and marine life.

### 3.2 What are the current situation and trends in deforestation and forest degradation? What are the main causes of deforestation and forest degradation?

It is indicated that forest degradation is largely due to commercial logging operations. Forest clearing for agriculture (both commercial and subsistence) has resulted in major losses of forests in the smaller islands as well as the drier and lowland rainforests of the higher islands (Watling and Chape, 1992). From 1967 to 1992 between 90,000 to 140,000 hectares of forest were converted to non-forest use. (ADB, 1992). In 2007 ITTO reported that a further 70,000 hectares has been lost since and estimate the removal of forest to continue at a rate of between 0.5 and 0.8% each year (ITTO, 2004). Recent figures however, show an increase in forest area, largely as a result of the changes in the forest definition during the 2007 national forest inventory.

A more recent in-depth analysis of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation needs to be carried out. The work on the methodology and development of a reference emission level for forests is currently ongoing and will contribute to the understanding of these drivers.

### 3.3 Does Fiji currently have a forest monitoring system, including estimates of greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation?

At present, Fiji is lacking a proper forest monitoring system. Fiji is aiming to develop a National Forest Monitoring System that will include MRV functions for REDD+ activities and for national greenhouse gas inventories for the forestry sector. Support for the establishment of proper GIS/RS facilities will be required. The Forestry Department currently have skilled GIS officers but further upskilling will be required for REDD+ MRV requirements.

A rudimentary forest area change analysis was carried out for the period 1991–2007 where it only distinguished forest and non-forest without further subdivision. A forest *carbon stock* assessment was first carried out in early 2011 when national carbon stocks of indigenous and plantation forests were quantified on the basis of existing inventory data. In early 2012 a reassessment was carried out to take into consideration additional datasets from measurements of inventory sample plots.

Conventional National Forest Inventories were undertaken in 1991, 2005/2007 and 2010/2011. At the time of the design of these forest inventories, REDD+ was not on the agenda yet and the current design is not able to accommodate the MRV or NFMS requirements, including the rules as they can be anticipated for REDD+ (E. Trines, 2012). For the most recent measurements however (2012), above ground, dead wood and litter biomass were taken. These are the initial steps towards incorporating carbon stock measurements into the inventory design.

### 3.4 . What is the current thinking on what would be needed to reduce deforestation and forest degradation in Fiji?

The following issues had been identified during various consultations:

- Work with the Agriculture sector in developing policies that will ensure better utilisation of land to minimise forest clearance
- Enforce adherence to the Forest Harvesting Code of Practice (FHCOP). Fiji recently revised their FHCOP. The current FHCOP promotes reduced impact logging and provide silvicultural prescriptions to ensure better management of both indigenous and plantation forests
- A national Land use plan is proposed for development. The main sectors called on to work on this include the main land-based resource sectors (Agriculture, Forestry, Environment, Land Use) and Town and Country Planning, Infrastructure Development and the Ministry of National Planning. This will consider better management of forest areas and protection of biodiversity hotspots
- The REDD+ Strategy (to be finalized in 2013) is currently under development with participation of various stakeholders and agencies
- Strengthen National Plantation Programme
- Expand protected area system
- Specific capacity building, esp. on forest information systems
- Develop multi-sectoral policies
- Forest infrastructure development.

### 3.5 What are the key potential challenges for REDD+ in Fiji?

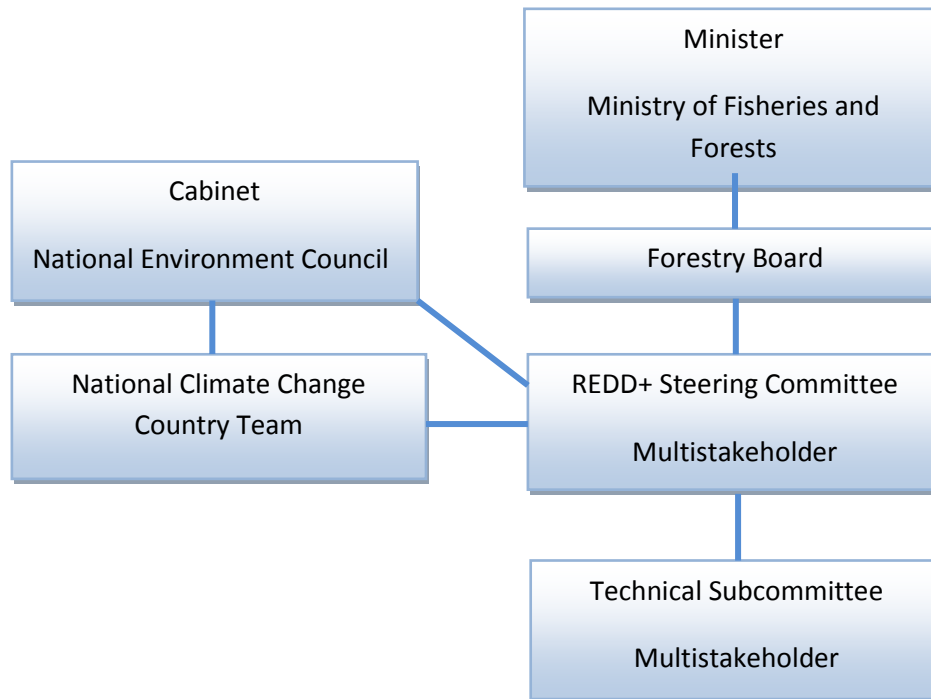
- Due to the land tenure system in Fiji, almost 90 % of the land in Fiji is customary owned by the indigenous Fijians (*iTaukei*). The land tenure system does not allow for the alienation of *iTaukei* land. *iTaukei* land can only be leased but never sold (with exception to the State under special conditions). This has implications on land agreements which need to ensure landowners receive optimal returns whilst expecting a long-term commitment from landowners to provide long term security for the implementation of REDD+. Fiji is already consulting with forest landowners on conducive arrangements
- Lack of funding for big projects, such as a national forest monitoring system, broad awareness and training, broad implementation of demonstration activities, national land use planning (consisting of local land use planning).
- Technical capacities need to be strengthened, especially for carbon stock measurements, remote sensing, project development, and also for effective participation in international negotiations.
- Governance in Fiji is less of an issue. REDD+ is currently being mainstreamed into different sector policies and the National REDD+ steering committee is attended regularly by different government sectors, land owner representatives, NGOs, CSOs, and other stakeholders.

### 3.6 How does REDD+ fit in Fiji's national low-carbon development strategy/plan, if any, or in the strategy/plan for the forest and other relevant sectors?

- The role of Forests in Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation is addressed in various sections of the forest policy. Fiji is encouraged to participate in carbon financing initiatives not only to gain financial benefits but as a means to reach the overall goal of sustainably managing its forest resources.
- The Fiji National Climate Change Policy (2012) supports the National REDD+ programme (under Mitigation strategies), and reference is made in the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan in terms of protecting forest biodiversity
- Formal support at the national and political level is reflected by the establishment of REDD+ capital programme within the Ministry of Fisheries and Forests in 2012 with the Government of Fiji allocating a significant annual budget for the national REDD+ programme
- The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and iTaukei Land Trust Board are developing new policies which will include sections on REDD+
- The Fiji national REDD+ steering committee is a formally endorsed committee under the Forestry Board. It is regularly well attended by its members coming from government, private sector, regional organisations, non-governmental organisations, landowner representatives and civil society
- REDD+ is integrated in the annual corporate plans and/or workplans of the Ministries of Fisheries and Forest, iTaukei Affairs, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (National Climate Change focal point).

3.7 Please briefly describe the envisaged national management arrangements for REDD+, explaining at what level of government REDD+ would be steered.

The national arrangements to steer REDD+ in Fiji were put in place in 2009. The Fiji National REDD+ Steering Committee was formally endorsed in 2011. The committee is made up of stakeholders representing various government sectors, land owners, NGOs, CSOs, and private sector. The Forestry Department chairs the meetings. The Forestry Department and Technical Subcommittees work on planning and implementation of REDD+, the drafts are discussed and approved by the Steering Committee. The steering committee screens all REDD+ activities, whether Project-scale or national-scale. More detailed explanations on the REDD+ Steering Committee, the members and its roles and responsibilities can be found in the ToR for the institution (attached). The figure below shows the communication channels and the relationship of the REDD+ Steering Committee to other bodies relevant to the committee.



Divisional REDD+ steering committees will also be established in Divisions where REDD+ sites are located. The Divisional Committees serve to coordinate activities at the divisional level and are made up of senior government officials, landowner representatives and relevant non-governmental organisations active in the division. Initial consultations with senior divisional officers have taken place and a TOR is being drafted.

The draft Forest Decree (currently in its final stages) requires that all forest carbon related projects and activities be approved by the Conservator of Forests. This serves to ensure that the rights of the landowners are safeguarded and genuine developers are involved. The Steering Committee will advise the Conservator of Forests on such matters.

3.8 Please briefly describe the proposed consultations that would be conducted to design the REDD+ strategy.

Fiji's REDD+ initiative began in 2009 with a REDD+ Policy Consultation & Scoping Meeting. The participants list can be found as an annex to the report. Fiji is taking a phased approach in its REDD-plus programme. The first phase put in place the national REDD+ policy (*endorsed December 2011*) and institutional frameworks for the implementation of REDD+. The ongoing work addresses capacity needs and methodology development for the establishment of a national monitoring system.

The second phase involves the development of a national REDD+ strategy, the establishment of pilot sites and strengthening MRV capacities (towards Tier 2 and 3 level reporting). The third phase will be the implementation of the strategy, participation in a REDD carbon financing mechanism, and the establishment of an operational MRV and IPCC reporting system.

The development process of the REDD+ Strategy followed the guidelines on consultations that are described in the Fiji REDD+ Policy and the other documents. Several consultations have taken place and the drafting of the strategy involved various agencies and sectors. Thematic working groups (from various agencies and sectors) have been assigned sections to draft. The REDD+ Strategy in Fiji is drafted and planned to be launched by mid 2013.

Fiji has established a REDD+ pilot site for the purpose of testing different elements of REDD+ implementation. The initial activities focused on the process of free, prior, informed consent (FPIC). Through the national REDD+ programme, FPIC guidelines are being developed to provide guidance for all REDD+ project development and other initiatives that require the involvement of resource owners.

For some reports on the Fiji REDD+ development please go to:

[http://www.spc.int/lrd/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=cat\\_view&gid=310&Itemid=48](http://www.spc.int/lrd/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=310&Itemid=48)

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[http://www.spc.int/lrd/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=cat\\_view&gid=377&Itemid=48](http://www.spc.int/lrd/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=377&Itemid=48)