

The Republic of Fiji

ER-PIN Summary: Reducing emissions and enhancing livelihoods

Fiji is offering 2,960,500.51 tCO₂ of emission reductions from avoided deforestation, avoided forest degradation and enhancement of carbon stocks between 2019 and 2024. The emission reduction programme will be implemented on 91 % of Fiji's land area / 94 % of Fiji's forest area.

Fiji has a low deforestation rate but high forest degradation (1990 – 2010: 19 %). The main drivers of degradation are logging – commercial and unplanned – and agriculture, subsistence as well as semi-commercial scale. Further, there is large potential for carbon sequestration on the vast grassland areas. The planned activities address these drivers and bear the potential to substitute the income-generating activities. Rather than loss from reducing production, REDD+ offers a new range of products.

The reference levels for the different activities are based on studies and analyses conducted in Fiji after 2006. However, current data is fragmented, making it necessary to make highly conservative calculations. This data quality is expected to improve through the readiness package. It is expected therefore, that Fiji will produce much more carbon emission reduction units by 2024 than the very conservative figures of the ER-PIN. During participation in the Carbon Fund, Fiji will be scoping for additional funding for beyond 2024.

Fiji is well progressed in its REDD+ readiness programme and can utilize the experiences from REDD+ pilot activities. This will support the implementation of the ER program by beginning of 2018. The R-Package is planned to be ready for endorsement around the same time.

Considerable emphasis will be placed on the co-benefits of the emission reduction programme. Ongoing pilot projects have shown that income-generating activities and ecosystem valuation are effective incentives to interest communities in the implementation of sustainable forest management and forest protection.

The programme will be implemented in a holistic synergetic effort with funding coming from a variety of sources. Through the REDD+ Steering Committee, government and non-governmental organisations are currently working together on a national land use planning guideline and national FPIC approach, which will apply to any process for planning and implementing land use activities. The establishment of a REDD+ lease will be the legal basis for a project and benefit sharing. The Forestry Department implements various activities that contribute to more sustainable utilization of forests and to afforestation / reforestation (A/R). Private sector, donors, CSOs and local community projects are contributing to A/R as well.

With regards to iTaukei (indigenous) land, Fiji has strong legal requirements for a consultative process as more than 85 % of the land is customary owned. The draft national FPIC approach, the proposed benefit sharing mechanisms, the drafted safeguard and resource monitoring systems, and the strengthening of decentralized governance structures are based on existing structures (for both iTaukei and non-iTaukei land). This will be analysed for suitability against REDD+ safeguard requirements and subsequently revised as part of the readiness package.

The fundamental objective of Fiji's proposed ER program is enhancing livelihoods. Whilst the ER program will ensure long-term emission reductions and removal through A/R, forest rehabilitation and improved harvesting practices, the program aims to also enhance benefits that extend beyond carbon. Non-carbon benefits such as an improved ecosystem and the array of services it provides,

strengthened food security, and conservation of social and cultural values, will be part and parcel of the ER program activities. The Government of Fiji confirms its commitment to provide complementary support to generate synergies with the proposed ER programme so that the development of local communities is holistic.

All activities of the ER program will be implemented within a broad holistic land use plan covering the site(s). The land use plan will be developed using participatory approaches and involve landowners, land users, supporting sectoral agencies and other stakeholders. The land use plan will ensure all social, economic and environmental needs are considered with climate change and gender issues addressed. The REDD+ activities will be carefully planned to maximise both climate change mitigation and adaptation. When afforesting degraded grasslands, the selection of tree species will not only be based on carbon storage but also on the most tree suitable tree species (in terms of climate change resiliency and biodiversity enhancement and protection), food security needs and the cultural and social significance to the community. Agroforestry systems will be promoted.

Whilst the ER programme will provide carbon funds through performance based payments, Government-funded projects will support local communities with capacity building for sustainable alternative livelihood ventures and broad community development. This not only ensures that the ER activity is not compromised (by competing land use needs of the local community) but also promotes sustainable socio-economic development where landowners and land users are capacitated to sustainably manage their land resources and earn an income through sustainable means. This will also help prevent the local displacement of business-as-usual activities.

Through the ER program Fiji will provide valuable lessons and experiences on REDD+ implementation from an island forest landscape under a largely customary land tenureship arrangement.

The main strengths of the Fiji ER-PIN are the participation by all relevant stakeholders since 2009, the existing framework for community engagement and governance with high commitment from national and community levels, the emphasis on generation of co-benefits and the scope, including 94 % of the forest areas in Fiji. The development of an MRV system to include forest degradation will contribute to global advancement in this area.