The Republic of Fiji lies at the heart of the Melanesia archipelago in the South Pacific covering an area of 18.27 million ha and about 330 islands, of which a third is uninhabited (FAO, 2010; GoF, 2011). Fiji is the largest country in the Pacific Island region with a population of about 837,271 and a GDP of US$ 3.882 billion (World Bank WDI, 2012). In terms of economic development Fiji lies slightly above the Pacific but below the global developing countries average (ibid). However, in terms of social development in health and education Fiji performs above the regional and significantly higher than the global average for developing countries.

The national framework for REDD+ is being developed within the context of climate change
adaptation and long-term national goals for sustainable development in the forestry sector. Approximately 56% (1.01 million ha) of Fiji's land area is forested and nearly 90% of all forestland is located on customary lands under the ownership of the iTaukei, which is the main ethnic group indigenous to Fiji (FAO, 2010; GoF, 2013). Any developments in the forestry sector, including REDD+, could therefore have a potential large impact on the majority of the population. Reforestation and afforestation activities are actively promoted through plantation developments and agroforestry and the forestry sector contributes to approximately 3% to the GDP. Planted forests cover as much as 17% (177,000 ha) of the total land area (FAO, 2010).

The main drivers of deforestation are commercial and small scale agriculture. Traditional practices of shifting cultivation have gradually been replaced by commercial agriculture for establishing cash crops, such as kava and taro, which are a common cause for forest clearing at the forest frontier. Timber harvesting is the main driver of forest degradation. Although commercial harvesting in native forests has largely been replaced by extraction from plantations, harvesting for the domestic and informal market remains unregulated and continues to drive degredation.

As a small island state Fiji is extremely vulnerable to climate change. It is therefore not surprising that Fiji is quite advanced in its climate change policy and planning framework. For example, in 2012 a National Climate Change Policy was developed and a national strategy and action plan for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is being prepared. There is also a Regional Island Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006-2015 and a Regional Framework Policy for REDD+ (2012) in place. At the national level a Climate Change Coordinating Committee coordinates climate change activities between government agencies, supported by a Climate Change Unit and a National Carbon Technical Team which were established in 2009.

At the international level Fiji is a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and has ratified the Kyoto protocol. In the UNFCCC REDD+ negotiations it supports the position of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations together with neighbouring countries Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. In 2009 Fiji started developing its national REDD+ programme, with the support of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) project “Coping with Climate Change in the Pacific Island Region”. One of the first achievements of the national REDD+ process was the development of a national REDD+ Policy in 2010, and in November 2013 Fiji submitted a Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). In December that same year Fiji received a readiness grant of US$ 3.8 million to implement the R-PP and develop a REDD+ strategy. The readiness grant will fund the implementation of the R-PP, which will start in 2014 and is expected to last until 2017 (4 years).

REDD+ readiness in Fiji will follow a hybrid approach, which means that REDD+ will start from the subnational level through pilot projects that will later be nested into a national programme. A national REDD+ pilot project is underway in Emalu, Navosa province on Viti Levu, and in Vinuvia on Vanua Levu. Additionally, a community reforestation project is being implemented by Conservation International on Viti Levu, Ra province, and another community forest management project is being implemented by Live and Learn on Drawa, Vanua Levu island. These are expected to inform the development of the national REDD+ Strategy.

**Content**

- Institutional arrangements
- Stakeholder engagement and participation
In 2009 a national REDD+ Steering Committee (SC) was established to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the national REDD+ programme. The SC was officially approved in 2011 with a mandate to ensure that the national REDD+ programme in Fiji is implemented according to the guidelines and safeguards provided in the national REDD+ policy.

The SC has both a managerial and an advisory role and comprises stakeholders representing various government institutions and sectors, land owners, NGOs, CSOs, and the private sector. The Forestry Department is Chair and the different government agencies on the committee are responsible for incorporating REDD+ into their organisational planning and budget to ensure that REDD+ activities are supported across government and sectors.

The SC reports to the Forestry Board, the National Environment Council and the National Climate Change Coordinating Committee, who in turn reports to Cabinet level. The SC is supported by a Secretariat, hosted by the Forestry Department, and by a number of Technical Working Groups (TWGs). There are five TWGs and these focus on safeguards, awareness raising, governance and finance, MRV and education and research. The TWGs are made up of members of the SC who represent both government and non-governmental sectors.

At the sub-national level divisional REDD+ working groups will be established in the divisions to support implementation of the R-PP and the consultation and participation plan. Working groups will comprise of senior government officials, landowners, and non-governmental actors working with activities relevant for REDD+ in the division. Members of the divisional working groups are expected to report back to their respective organisation and in addition to the SC they will also report to the Provincial Council and the Divisional Development Board.

Although the national SC has an established structure members are currently meeting on a voluntary basis. A full-time body is expected to be needed in the future. A REDD+ Unit has been proposed for this purpose to provide support at the national level but also at the subnational level in terms of providing technical support to projects, for example, streamlining project methodologies to fit into national systems. The REDD+ Unit would be based in the Forestry Department and would report directly to the Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCFS) and the SC.
90% of forest land is collectively owned by a number of landowner groups (GoF, 2013). The government policy is to directly consult with all the registered landowners, with the landowner representative (head of the Mataqali) present. In order to achieve effective engagement and participation in the national REDD+ process the government has developed a stakeholder Consultation and Participation plan (C & P) which has been developed based on the outcome of a number of consultation workshops and meetings.

At the national level stakeholder engagement for REDD+ started in 2009 as part of the development of the national REDD+ Policy and the Climate Change Policy. Two major workshops were carried out between 2009 and 2010 involving a broad range of stakeholders including indigenous landowners, participants from different ministries, local government, NGOs, private sector and regional agencies. Since then more than twenty national level REDD+ stakeholder consultations, awareness raising workshops and seminars have taken place. Outcomes from these initial workshops and consultation processes helped inform the formulation of the national Climate Change and the REDD+ policy, as well as the REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP).

At the subnational level, at least for the time being, consultations with local communities and land owners are mainly taking place in areas where REDD+ is being piloted. For example, at the Emalu project site a village and community awareness programme is being carried out by a multi-sector team including the Forest Department and Agriculture Department (Land Use section), the Provincial Office, trained landowners and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit).

At a broader level awareness raising about REDD+ is also being carried out as part of the C & P plan, which aims to integrate REDD+ into other relevant stakeholder engagement and participation processes to ensure REDD+ is not treated as an isolated strategy. For example, the forestry department’s extension officers include REDD+ in their general community awareness programmes, and members of the iTaukei Affairs Board and the Roko Tuis (head of the provincial council) have received separate training on climate change and REDD+ to facilitate knowledge sharing with local communities. A field guide on how to communicate REDD+ to local communities is in the process of being developed, as is a guideline for REDD+ project implementation.

The government policy to ensure full consultation and participation of all landowners (Mataqali members) is necessary for the national process, considering existing traditional structures of collective landownership, benefit sharing and decision making. However, it also has its challenges. Fiji covers a vast archipelago of over 330 islands and landowners are often spread out, living at opposite ends of the country or even overseas (GoF, 2013). The stakeholder engagement process is therefore quite complex and costly and will most likely be amended as REDD+ progresses.

Updated date: 1/2014

**Land tenure arrangements and carbon rights**

The vast majority (88%) of land in Fiji is owned by the iTaukei people and about 90% of forests are located on their customary lands (Trenorden, 2013). Ownership of iTaukei lands is communal and vested in traditional landowning units, known as mataqalis. Mataqali is also the term used to describe a kinship group or clan. All members of the mataqali have equal ownership rights to the land. Also under ownership of the iTaukei is another tenure type, reserve land, which is land that has been set aside under the iTaukei Land Trust Act (2002) for a specific purpose. Reserve land
cannot be alienated but it can be leased or licensed by the iTaukei Land Trust Board to other iTaukei for a ‘good cause’ and with the consent from land owners (Partt III iTaukei Land Trust Act). Approximately 566,908 ha (or 36% of iTaukei land) is held as iTaukei reserved land (Trenorden, 2012 p. 27).

Nearly all land titles lands have been registered in the Register of iTaukei Lands with recorded boundaries, although these are not always formally surveyed (GoF, 2013; Ogle, 2013; Trenorden, 2012). The names of the individual members of the mataqali - the "proprietary unit" - are recorded in the Vola ni Kawa Bula, which forms the register of births, deaths, and genealogy records of all iTaukei.

The remaining tenure types are private freehold land (5.80%), which is privately owned land where the title owner has the right to sell and transfer the land as he wish, and state land (4.26%), which amongst other things also includes land held in trust for indigenous land owners (classified as Schedule A and B land) and foreshore land (including Mangroves) (GoF, 2013). Private freehold and state land can be leased from the ‘Land Bank’, which serves as a depository for lands that are available for investment. The Land Bank is administered by the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources.

iTaukei lands can be leased via the iTaukei Land Trust Board (TLTB) but may not be sold or transferred to a third party, with the exception of the State. The TLTB was established in 1940 to ensure the long term tenure security, management and protection of iTaukei lands on behalf of the iTaukei people and has for filled an important role in maintaining iTaukei landownership. Another function of the TLTB is to facilitate commercial transactions involving the use of iTaukei lands. Under the iTaukei Lands Act the TLTB it is in charge of managing contracts for leasing and issuing licenses for iTaukei lands. Before a lease or a license is granted the TLTB must satisfy itself that the land is not being used by the landowners and will not be required for their use, maintenance or support (s. 9, iTaukei Land Trust Act).

iTaukei lands can also be leased via the Land Use Unit, established in 2011 at the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, to be included in the 'Land Bank' administered by the Ministry. In this case the State leases the land from the landowner and pays the rental, which it recovers from a lessee (Trenorden, 2012). Leasing through the Land Use Unit and the Land Bank has a number of benefits to landowners. For example, it provides greater security of income as the government guarantees up to 99 years lease rental, charges more in rental fees and can therefore provide a higher return to landowners, and the Land Use Unit does not charge an administration fee (TLTB charges 15%) (ibid). However, despite these advantages so far only a relatively small volume of land has been leased through the unit (Trenorden, 2012).

Customary rights to land are recognised in the iTaukei Lands Act, which defines mataqali and other divisions or subdivisions of the iTaukei as having the legal right to occupy and use iTaukei lands (GoF, 2013). Despite this legal recognition Fiji courts are yet to recognise the mataqali as an independent land-owning legal entity. In the past this has caused problems as mataqalis have been unable to take cases to court where land negotiations and use compensations have been unfavourable made on their behalf by the TLTB.

Under the current legal framework all trees growing naturally on the land are automatically viewed as property of the landowner. On leased land trees are considered the property of the landowner until cut (e.g. timber concessions), with the exception of plantations where trees that have been planted under the consent of the landowner. Here ownership of the trees is transferred for the period of the lease agreement (Trenorden, 2013). However, unless specified in the lease agreement this does not automatically include ownership of the carbon. Broadly speaking it can therefore be
concluded that in Fiji forest carbon ownership rights rests with the landowner (Trenorden, 2013). However, since carbon ownership is not explicitly mentioned in the current legal framework there is still some uncertainty. For example, the TLTB has specifically highlighted the need for a TLBB REDD+ Policy and REDD+ lease to formalise carbon rights and ownership arrangements on iTaukei lands.

As Fiji is preparing for REDD+ implementation clarity on carbon rights and leasing arrangements for REDD+ projects is seen as a priority and discussions have started on both of these issues. For example, two proposals have been put forward regarding the lease of iTaukei lands for REDD+ purposes. The first proposal suggests to introduce a Special Condition relating to REDD+ (referred to as REDD+ clause) in the standard form Agreement used by the TLTB for land leases (Ogle, 2013). The special condition commits the lessor and the lessee to have further discussions on how income would be shared should the lessee wish to develop a carbon trading project later on. The second proposal is currently being developed for a model "REDD+ lease" to be used by iTaukei landowners who may wish to use their customary land for REDD+ activities (ibid). The benefits of a REDD+ lease is that it would reduce the transaction costs for REDD+ activities and would provide more certainty for landowners, those providing REDD+ finance, and for the government.

There are three possible options being discussed for dealing with carbon ownership in Fiji. The first option is that the State assumes ownership in a similar way that mineral rights are reserved to the State. However, this would require the drafting of new legislation and it might result in Fiji being in contravention of its obligations in relation to indigenous landowners (Trenorden, 2013). The second option is for landowners to maintain ownership of the forest carbon rights. Under this option no substantial legal reforms would be required; however, some level of clarification of the current legal provisions would be required to avoid any uncertainty (Trenorden, 2013). The third option is to set up a separate forest carbon property right, which would enable ownership and trade by a third party. This last option would require the establishment of a system for registering and recording forest carbon rights. Out of all the options the second one offer the least change from the current system and would be relatively simple to apply as it merely extends existing forest property rights to include carbon.

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1/2014

**Forest management**

In Fiji forest reserves are divided into two management categories: production and protection forests. The Forest Decree (1992) makes a distinction between forest reserves and nature reserves, where the former are managed as protection or production forests, and the latter as permanent preservation forests. Nearly half of the forest area (47.5%) is covered by native forests, whereas softwood (Pine) and hardwood (Mahogany) plantations cover about 8% of the forested area (Leslie and Tuinivanua, 2010). The majority of plantations are industrial and owned by the state, only a small percentage is community plantations. Overall there is a low level of participation of local communities in forest management in Fiji, despite the overwhelming majority of community owned forest.

Forest management generally falls under the responsibility of the Forestry Department (FD) of the Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry who approves forest management plans and issues licenses. The FD oversees the enforcement of the Forest Decree (1992) and guides the implementation of the Fiji Forest Policy Statement (2007) and the Rural Land Policy (2005, together with the Ministry of
Agriculture), the latter which promotes land use planning as a way of protecting forest areas from unplanned deforestation. It also ensures that the Forest Harvesting Code of Practice (2010), which is the main guiding document for best practice and sustainable forest management in Fiji, is implemented and enforced. Fiji does not have a designated law for protected areas, although the Fiji Forest Policy Statement (2007) recognises the need to create a protected area system for the conservation of some of Fiji’s indigenous forest types. The Forestry Department is supported by two former state institutions, Fiji Pine Ltd (FPL) and the Fiji Hardwood Cooperation Ltd (FHCL) now both public companies owned and managed by the government and landowners, in managing Fiji’s softwood and hardwood plantations. Their government directed mandate is to promote Fiji’s wood growing and processing industry whilst ensuring that benefits from their activities are equitable distributed amongst rural communities.

The Forest Decree (1992) provides for two types of timber licenses: a) forests concessions, which can be issued for a period of 10 - 30 years, and b) annual logging licenses. Currently the majority of plantation forests are managed under long term lease agreements, whereas timber extraction in natural forests tend to take place under annual or short term licensing arrangements (Klassen, 2012). The widespread use of annual licenses for timber extraction is undermining the transition to more sustainable and long term management and investment in Fiji’s forests, particularly as it provides little incentive for logging contractors to invest in more durable infrastructure or to value the resource beyond the “quick income” it provides in a year (Ogle, L. 2013).

The majority of forest land, however, does not fall under the authority of the FD but the traditional administration and the iTaukei Land Trust Board (TLTB). The authority of the FD only applies to land that has been declared as a forest reserve in one form or the other, which does not include the majority of forests on iTaukei lands. Under the iTaukei Lands Act forest use is permitted and does not require any management plans or licenses as long as it is for subsistence purposes to meet household or local community (mataqali) needs. However, for timber extraction and for the establishment of tree plantations a harvesting plan (including details on annual allowable cut, roads layout, reforestation requirements etc.) must be approved by the FD before a license is issued and prior consent must be obtained from the TLTB (GoF, 2010; GoF, 2013).

Compliance with the Forest Decree (1992) and the Fiji Harvesting Code of Practice (2010) has been limited due lack of enforcement and monitoring. The FD is inadequately staffed and sometimes overlapping mandates between the FD, the FPL and the FHCL has led to confusion on responsibilities, with negative impacts on management and coordination within the sector. Although the Fiji Harvesting Code of Practice (2010) sets a clear standard and guidelines for sustainable forest management, it is essentially a policy document and there is no clear legal basis for its enforcement (Ogle, 2013). Neither the Forest Decree (1992) nor the Fiji Harvesting Code of Practice (2010) contain provisions which require the rehabilitation and reforestation of logged over forest areas, only rehabilitation of infrastructure (e.g. skid-tracks, landings and haulage roads). In 2013 the Forest Decree (1992) was under review to be reformulated and better aligned with the rest of the policy and legal frameworks. This includes the Environmental Management Act (2005), the Forest Policy (2007), the Rural Land Use Policy (2005) and the Fiji REDD+ Policy (2010), which together promote a shift from timber production to the conservation and sustainable management of forest resources, land use planning and greater involvement of landowners in managing resources sustainably.

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Reference levels

The process of establishing national reference levels (RL/REL) in Fiji is in its early stages. At the moment Fiji is using the FAO forest definition to determine its forest cover. Progress has been made on identifying an appropriate classification of forests in Fiji. The method that has been put forward identifies five forest classifications: Upland Forest, Lowland Forest, Cloud Forest, Dry Forest, and Mangroves. Separate classes are expected to be added for plantation forests (GoF, 2013).

In 2013 information was being gathered to supplement existing data sets to reflect the requirements for REDD+. A preliminary study carried out in 2012 concluded that there is not enough data available to develop RL/RELs but that a more comprehensive inventory study will be required. A study from 2011 used datasets from 1991, 2001 and 2007 to estimate past changes in forest cover, but a more detailed study including the causes of conversion and information on carbon stock changes is needed. The national forest inventories that were carried out by the Forest Department for the years 1969, 1991, and 2006, also provides a source of data. However, these were designed before REDD+ and do not allow for an analysis of forest cover change over time and space, which is essential for developing RL/RELs or a national forest monitoring system (GoF, 2013).

Fiji is adopting a bottom-up approach and will first develop subnational RL/RELs in specific pilot sites that will later be linked up to the national level. The Forestry Department is working with the University of Wageningen, Netherlands, and University of Freiburg, Germany, to fill some of the gaps in the national forest inventories. Forest cover change maps and a methodology for detecting forest degradation are being developed for the island of Viti Levu. However, whether the same methodology can be scaled up for the national level remains to be seen. A forest carbon assessment was carried out in 2012 based on an original assessment carried out the year before, but this time taking into consideration additional information form inventory sample plots. Additionally, a biomass and carbon inventory has been carried out for mangrove forests on the southeast coast of Viti Levu as part of the IUCN Mangrove Ecosystem Conservation and Livelihoods project (MESCAL).

The methodology used for developing the subnational RL/RELs will be based on historical changes in land use and land cover. These will be further refined and adjusted taking into account national circumstances (such as existing development plans and policies, socio-economic development etc.) and how these are likely to affect future changes in forest cover. Information will be used to develop a country specific model for estimating RL/RELs and future scenarios. Fieldwork for gathering data for the national level RL/RELs and MRV system has already started with 75 permanent sample plots established throughout the main islands.

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MRV

Fiji is currently in the process of developing a national forest inventory and monitoring system based on a combined ground-based and remote sensing methodology. Rather than starting at the national level Fiji is taking a bottom-up approach and is developing RL/RELs and MRV systems for selected pilot sites, which will later be linked to a national system. Forest inventorying and monitoring has already started in the two pilot sites in Emalu (Viti Levu) and Vunivia (Vanua Levu). In order to address the risk of leakage the government has stated that it will use existing carbon accounting standards (e.g. VCS, CDM, AFOLOU etc.).
The Forestry Department (FD) is responsible for collecting and managing national forest inventory and greenhouse gas data and will be responsible for reporting REDD+ related information to the UNFCCC. However, a system for reporting information is yet to be established.

In parallel to monitoring emissions from land use change and land cover change Fiji will set up a monitoring system for non-carbon impacts, or co-benefits and safeguards. A Safeguards Information System (SIS) will be developed to guide how these impacts should be monitored and addressed. Monitoring of forest governance is also expected to be carried out and this will be developed based on an initial forest governance assessment due to be carried out as part of the R-PP implementation.

Last updated: 1/2014

**Safeguards**

The development of a safeguards information system (SIS) has not yet started in Fiji although this is an important component of the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP). It is envisioned that the SIS will include not just monitoring of negative impacts but also multiple benefits that are non-carbon related. Already the Fiji REDD+ Policy (2011) provides a guiding framework for the type of safeguards that should be respected by all REDD+ project activities. These include amongst other things: the need to protect and respect the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples; the full and effective participation of indigenous people and other relevant stakeholders; the equal distribution of benefits amongst rights holders; the consideration of gender issues in all phases of REDD+ decision making and implementation; and the exclusion of any projects that cause the conversion of natural forest for REDD+ (GoF, 2011).

As part of the R-PP implementation process Fiji will also develop a Social and Environmental Safeguards Assessment (SESA) and an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) for REDD+. The SESA is meant to help the government identify potential environmental and social risks across government sectors and assess these for REDD+ implementation. Whereas the ESMF will help managing unwanted impacts during the REDD+ Strategy implementation to either avoid them, or if inevitable, ensure there is compensation plan in place. The process of developing both the SESA and the ESMF will provide the foundation for developing a national SIS.

Fiji’s national REDD+ Programme is also supporting the development of a national guideline for Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and is proposing to use the Emalu REDD+ pilot site as an initial case study. The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs is leading the development of an FPIC guideline for Fiji, which is intended to be used not only for REDD+ but for all consultation purposes with iTaukei landowners.

Whilst the REDD+ safeguards system is still under development there are already a number of safeguard measures in place to prevent negative social and environmental impacts of interventions. For example, the Environmental Management Act (2005) provides that all concessions, which could include REDD+ projects, require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out prior to the start of operations. The Forest Decree (1992) recognises the customary rights of the iTaukei to access and use forest reserves for subsistence use. Fiji is also a signatory to a number of international conventions and declarations that provide additional recognition and protection of iTaukei indigenous rights. For example, it is a signatory to the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and a party to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNCSICH) and the indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989) (also known as ILO 169).
Gender Equality

The REDD+ policy document from Fiji that gives most consideration to gender is the Fiji R-PP, submitted in 2014 (as of November 2015, the national REDD+ strategy was yet to be published, Lagataki, 2015). The R-PP contains various measures relating to gender, including a short work plan for engaging with gender and vulnerable groups (section 1b.8i). This work plan sets out a timeline to develop guidelines for carrying out an analysis of gender/vulnerable groups in REDD+ communities in Fiji; these guidelines are expected to be published and disseminated in early 2016. There is also a clear calculation of costs in Table 1b.

Section 1c.2 of the R-PP defines forest-based communities as key stakeholders, and in this context Fiji strives to include gender considerations in all stages of decision-making. Section 1b.7 emphasises the need to ensure female participation in REDD+ consultation, especially given that female members of the mataqali (traditional land owning units of indigenous - iTaukei - Fijians) can be otherwise be overlooked. The overall consultation plan on REDD+ (in section 1c.3) acknowledges the importance of addressing gender issues, given that it may be difficult to consult with landowners directly or to examine the extent to which representatives really do represent the interests of all those for whom they speak. Table 2 includes gender as a consultation priority for NGOs and CSOs (though not for local communities or government agencies). The consultation plan also notes that women are represented on Provincial Councils and that women’s groups are also a potential consultation partner (1c.3 Phase 4). The steps for development of FPIC guidance also mention the need to include gender groups in consultation workshops (1c.4 Phase 6).

The R-PP contains plans for a legal and policy analysis, to include consideration of gender legislation and be published at the start of 2014 (Section 2a.5). However, as of November 2015 this did not appear to be on the Fiji REDD+ website (meanwhile, a background legal analysis of REDD+ and carbon rights in Fiji was published, but with no mention of women or gender). Gender is expected to be among the non-carbon variables monitored as part of the planned Safeguards Information System (Section 4b.1(1)) and gender and cultural norms are recognised in the SIS plans for capacity building (4.b.2). The overall monitoring and evaluation plan for REDD+ should include guidelines around gender (Table 17).

The R-PP Assessment Note (FCPF, 2015) points out that although a safeguards working group is making progress, Fiji has limited technical capacity to implement social and environmental safeguards (p.36). There are risks that consultation with women and non-indigenous Fijians could be ineffective, and specific efforts are needed to avoid this (p.29, p.38). It also points out that although female and male mataqali members share equal land rights, dialogue around land tenure tends to be male-dominated. The FCPF therefore calls for the planned Strategic Social and Environmental Assessment to include a robust gender analysis, investigating men and women’s knowledge of and management strategies for forests, and the role of women in decision-making about land use, resource management and benefit sharing arrangements (p.38).

Further policies on gender include a Strategic Development Plan, in force from 2007-2011, which incorporated strong commitments toward gender and development (Sections 2.12 and 7.11). To achieve gender equality and social justice, the government committed to undertake affirmative actions (Section 2.3). In 2014, Parliament approved a National Gender Policy (Government of Fiji 2014) to promote gender equality and equity, including in agriculture, rural development and the
environment (section 5.4); resilience to climate change (5.15); and by collecting disaggregated data, including on agriculture and ownership (5.17).

Fiji’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2007) enshrined women’s right to access to resources (Guiding Principle VI) and promoted the involvement of men and women in its implementation (Guiding Principle XVIII). Fiji subsequently enacted a Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for 2011-2020. Target 14 of the Plan sets out that by 2020, ecosystems that provide vital services shall be restored taking into account the needs of women. Fiji is also party to the Pacific Islands Regional Policy Framework for REDD+ which recommends that benefit-sharing mechanisms should address gender inequality (Recommendation 4.6g).

Fiji is a participant in the programme of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community /GIZ, on ‘Coping with climate change in the Pacific Island Region’ (CCCPIR), which includes a gender focus, as described in the Vanuatu country profile. As part of the CCCPIR, in 2013 over forty iTuakei women (members of the Soqosoqo Vakamarama iTaukei, the largest non-governmental organisation of women in Fiji) took part in a three day training course on climate change and REDD+ (REDD+ in Fiji, 2013a).

In 2015, two national REDD+ pilots are underway. There is limited information available on the more recently-added site, Vunivia, which covers 2703ha of forest owned by two mataqalis (REDD+ in Fiji, 2015a). Planning is more advanced at Emalu, a site covering 7347ha of rugged, forested terrain (REDD+ in Fiji, 2015b). This has clear, agreed boundaries, and is traditionally owned by the Emalu mataqali, though not all land users are members. Most registered members of the mataqali are female, but many live outside the area, so when very few women attended the first consultation meeting on REDD+, a second meeting had to be set up in 2013 to ensure all members, especially women, could understand the implications of the plans (REDD+ in Fiji, 2013b). From the start, the pilot planned to promote the involvement of women. Socio-economic surveys and mapping exercises were carried out in 2012-2014 to gather baseline information, including on traditional skills and knowledge, farming systems, decision-making structures and gender issues. However, despite the strong start, the only gender-specific information in a 2015 report referred again to the initial efforts to ensure that female members of the mataqali attended the early meeting (REDD+ in Fiji, 2015b).

References


**Contributors**

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