



Sectoral Integration of Biodiversity in Fiji

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1. Introduction

Fiji reported¹ that in order for implementation of NBSAP to be successful with positive outcomes and impacts, biodiversity issues need to be integrated as far as possible in the policies, planning and mechanisms of the different sectors in Fiji. It is important that there is collaboration between the different sectors to maximize efforts and prevent duplicating work. The Department of Environment plays a vital role as it attempts to supervise or just keep up with all that is going on in spite of being disadvantaged due to lack of manpower and funding.

The advantages in mainstreaming include:

- empowering Department of Environment and partners the capacity to negotiate collectively;
- enables government to incorporate convention obligations into national legislation, policy and institutions;
- easier to manage resources and report to CBD, stakeholders and funding agencies;
- increases involvement of stakeholders in addressing global environmental issues;
- improve cross-sectoral co-ordination;
- improve development and enforcement of policies, legal and regulatory frameworks;
- improves processes such planning, management, monitoring and evaluation;
- better information and data collection, management and exchange;
- participants especially locals acquire skills and training;

However, there are constraints as well:

- fragmentation of responsibilities which may result in goals not being achieved;
- non-harmonization of Environmental Laws and may result in inconsistencies, overlapping and contradictory overtones especially when there is sectoral biases present;
- limited strengthening and enforcement of policies and legal framework;
- education and awareness of biodiversity issues;
- inadequacy of data, information and dissemination;

¹ Fiji (2010). Fiji's Fourth National Report to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, Department of Environment, 31 May 2010, 126 pp

- limited training and skills of staff;
- financial constraints;

The stakeholders are being considered under these groupings:

- Government
- Non-government organizations
- Academic institutions
- Community-based organizations
- Statutory bodies
- Private enterprises
- Regional non-government organizations
- Civil organizations
- International donors

2. Overall Assessment of Mainstreaming

Fiji's Development planning has been in some form since World War II - as an instrument for stimulating economic development. Plans began from capital development budgets for the public sector. More sophisticated plans were tied to the introduction of the Commonwealth Development and Welfare Grant Scheme – submission of DPs by British colonies in order to qualify for financial aid. On this basis, Fiji formulated its first Development Plan for 1949-1958 (DP1 – 10 yrs). Following this, another 8 DPs were formulated up to 1990 –5 year development plans. In 1989, a Technical Aid grant by ADB to support environment management projects (NEMPs) which tried to identify and evaluate implementation of environmental policies from DPs. DP6 (1971-75) prepared after independence started containing statements on environment and resource use. DPs that followed saw the introduction of environments Chapters, identification of programs and integration of environment issues into other sectors, convening of a national economic summit(1989) to produce policies and strategies for the Short and medium Term' DP9 (1986-90) included an indicative expenditure for Environment Management Program to include coastal zone management Plan amongst other thing.

1992- NEMP led to the State of Environment Report was largely a result of the national development planning process, a non-technical report to promote environmental awareness. In 1992, also Fiji made various commitments in the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro e.g. Agenda 21, and Rio Declaration, UNFCCC, CBD etc. In response to these commitments, Fiji Government set up a unit tasked with the formulation of environment reports and policies for Fiji. The first two policy documents produced were the State of Environment Report and the National Environment Strategy

1993. NES objectives were designed to achieve sustainable development and identified planning as a component under the objective on establishment of an administrative framework. Planning was identified in 3 main areas: National land use, environmentally sensitive areas and coastal zone management.

The Sustainable Development Bill followed, which led to the formulation of the Environment Management Act 2005. Early 2000 saw a shift from exploitation of natural resources due to the development of a national development plan, an overarching plan that defines the direction the government of Fiji intends to move towards. This plan incorporates sustainable development, to be in line with the Millennium Development Goals. This saw the incorporation of biodiversity into most of the sectoral plans and policies.

Integration of biodiversity into relevant sectors

Following UNCED, where agenda 21 was one of the outcomes, and because of the MDGs Fiji started incorporating biodiversity into sectoral planning. With the focus on climate change and the idea that conservation of biodiversity will minimize the impacts of climate change, the momentum of mainstreaming accelerates. There are other factors that contribute to the mainstreaming of biodiversity, mainly due to interest of institutions and non-government agencies initiating programs at the community level and raising awareness on the impacts of biodiversity loss. One of the main drivers of mainstreaming biodiversity is the overarching 10 year National Development Strategic Plan the government devised. The plan defined the way forward for Fiji and highlights strategies to pave the way. One of the goals of the plan is Sustainable Development, which compels all sectors to overall contribute to. Since most of the sectors are resource based, their input is vital to the achievement of the goal on sustainable development.

3. Ministry of Primary Industries – Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries

The Department of Agriculture administers the Quarantine Act now known as the Biosecurity Act. Their role is to inspect all incoming and outgoing ships to ensure that invasive species are not introduced. Due to increase in invasive species in Fiji, a committee on invasive species exists and comprises of Department of Quarantine/Bio-security, Department of Immigration, Department of Fisheries, Department of Environment, National Trust, and Nature Fiji.

The committee is currently working on eradication programs for Green iguana and termites present in the Northern and Western side of Fiji. The committee works very closely with the Ministry of Provincial Development and Indigenous Affairs. from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Department of Agriculture have been tirelessly working also on finding ways of eradicating African tulips, an invasive species from Africa. Currently operations have commenced on the eradication of the termite species that is posing to be a threat to Fiji's biodiversity.

The Ministry is also responsible for administering the Fisheries Act and Forest Decree, which have sections on environment and resource management.

4. Ministry of Lands, Mineral Resources & Energy

There are several legislations on Environment and Resource Management administered by the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources. These are;

- Mining Act (Cap. 18)
- Rivers & Streams Act (Cap. 136)
- Quarries Act (Cap.128)

These legislations spell out ways of extracting Fiji's natural resources and ensuring such activities are conducted in a sustainable manner.

5. Ministry of Public Works Department

The Ministry of Public Works Department housed some of the most vital departments to Fiji's infrastructure development. The Ministry consists of the Department of National Roads, Department of Water & Sewerage and Electrical. Since infrastructural development is vital to Fiji's economic development, legislations administered by this ministry contain sections of environment and Natural Resource Management approach. Some of the legislations included;

- Sewerage Act (Cap. 128)
- Water Supply Act (Cap.144)

6. Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health is responsible for administration of the Public health Act which has a portion on Environment and Natural Resource Management. The legislation outlines procedures in terms of physical development and ways of minimizing impacts on the environment and natural resources. This legislation is implemented by Inspection officers through the Central Board of Health. All development will have to comply with the requirements under this Act, prior to approving the construction phase.

The Central Board of Health is a multi-disciplinary committee with members comprising of different representatives from the different approving agencies.

7. Ministry of Transport

The Ministry of Transport is a regulatory agency in terms of land and sea transport. The Ministry is responsible for the following departments;

- Land & Transport Authority
- Fiji Islands Maritime & Safety Authority

The Marine Spaces Act administered and implemented by FIMSA48 has a section on Environment and Natural Resource Management.

8. Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment

This Ministry housed some of the relevant departments responsible for Environment and Natural Resources Management. The ministry consists of the following departments:

- Department of Environment
- Department of Town & Country Planning
- Department of Local Government and;
- Department of Housing

The most crucial department to Environment and Natural resources Management is the Department of Environment due to relevant legislations it administers and implements. Listed are legislations administered by Department of Environment:

- Environment Management Act 2005 – for the protection of the natural resources and for the control and management of developments, waste management and pollution control and for the establishment of a natural environment council and for related matters.
- Environment Management Regulations (EIA) 2007
- Endangered and Protected Species Act 2002 – to regulate and control the international trade, domestic trade, possession and transportation of species and wildlife fauna and flora (CITES) and for related matters.
- Endangered and Protected Species Regulation 2003
- Ozone Depleting Substance Act 1998 – phasing out of controlled substances and management of controlled substances
- Ozone Depleting Substance Regulation 2000
- National Air Pollution Control Strategy
- Climate Change Policy Paper for Fiji 2007
- Fiji National Liquid Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan 2006
- National Solid Waste Management Strategy and Action

The Department of Town & Country Planning administered and implements the Town Planning Act, and in the course of implementation required the assistance of Department of Environment since all constructions and development has to comply with the EIA regulations prior to approval.

9. Department of Tourism

In the absence of a legislation to guide and regulate tourism development, the department has finalized a 10 year Fiji Tourism Development Plan. The plan recognizes the important role biological diversity played on its development, and thus based the plan on a managed growth scenario. This scenario was selected after analysis and assessment of current trends. This is assumed to be at a sustainable level considering Fiji's vulnerable environment and natural resources.

The strategies included eco-tourism as a type of tourism to be encouraged and that certain areas have been selected with the type of tourism development that will ensure the carrying capacity is not exceeded thus remaining within an environmental sustainable state. Accreditation standards and tax incentives based on environmentally friendly operations is also included in the strategies.

10. Tools for mainstreaming

Fiji has employed a few tools to assist in mainstreaming, these tools involved few agencies decision making in regards to biodiversity and the environment. Environment Impact Assessments (EIA) is one of the commonest tool used in Fiji for mainstreaming biodiversity issues and to be reflected in the decision making process. EIA is a mandatory mainstreaming tool under the Environment Management Act 2005. The EMA Act requires that all development will undergo an EIA prior to any development of an area or site. There are other tools that are used in programs which are voluntarily. The following tools associated with streamlining utilized so far in certain programs by Government agencies and NGO partners:

- Ecosystem Based Management
- Integrated Coastal & Marine Management
- Tax incentives

11. Challenges to NBSAP implementation

The main challenges for Fiji were:

- Political and societal obstacles such as lack of political will and political instability that resulted in difficulties in mainstreaming. The political instability brought about by the events of 2000 and 2006 challenged cooperation between stakeholders in government and NGOs and the community.
- Institutional, technical and capacity-related obstacles such as lack of human resources, inadequate capacity and lack of technology transfer. Many requests from the community could not be addressed because of the lack of personnel.
- Economic and financial obstacles including lack of financing. Financial constraints limited travels to do fieldwork in the community.

- Lack of accessible knowledge/information such as lack of scientific and traditional knowledge on status of biodiversity. This has been a concern for terrestrial ecosystems and in the gathering of data on both fauna and flora.
- Lack of collaboration and co-operation between partners and stakeholders.

Addressing challenges and identifying opportunities:

- **Mainstreaming:** Strong networking and collaboration between the different ministries of government that are involved in the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources is vital for the successful implementation of NBSAP. In Fiji's situation, for example, the ministries of tourism, agriculture, fisheries, forest, mining, Fijian Affairs, Native Land Trust Board together with the local communities and the NGOs have to work together. FLMMA has achieved a considerable level of success in getting together these different parties and achieving success as a result. Gathering of data and information, analysis and dissemination is vital for success. It is much easier to identify problems and solutions and priorities when information is readily available. Synergy in information systems, data management and reporting go a long way in ensuring that Fiji meets its obligations under the Convention. Gathering available data from appropriate and up to date information was a major constraint in writing this report.
- **Community Participation:** Members of the community at the village level are directly involved in planning and decision making, collecting data as well as protection of their resources. There is an increased awareness in adults and children about conserving their resources. Knowledge transfer through conducting workshops or seminars, knowledge management, encouraging research, developing associations and forums for discussion would greatly enhance the level of synergy.
- **Traditional Knowledge:** The traditional hierarchy of the Fijian village and provincial system is being used to help in the implementation of NBSAP. Some of the Fijian chiefs have been instrumental in the setting up of marine protected areas or tabu. This was a custom observed as a sign of respect in mourning for chiefs. As the communities observe the benefit of increased biodiversity from such a practice many are lengthening the duration of the tabu period.
- **Upskilling of personnel:** Even though DoE facilitated much of the activities, there is a need for more skilled personnel since the officers at DoE already are inundated with work.
- **Funding:** Funding from international donor agencies and NGOs has greatly supplemented government contribution towards environmental issues.

The review of the NBSAP for Fiji as outlined in this report showed that the development of the document though completed in 1999, was not endorsed until 2007. However, implementation of the NBSAP for Fiji was well underway before 2007. Furthermore the NBSAP has undergone a review which has resulted in adapting the document to actionable framework and priorities.

Measuring the progress of the implementation of NBSAP has been dependent on reports of work and outcomes carried out by NGOs, as well as case studies. NBSAP is a dynamic, responsive process and changes will continue to happen. The review of the NBSAP has streamlined and clarified targets and framework to be followed. This should see a clearer and faster progress of implementation.

A meaningful progress towards 2010 biodiversity targets, goals of strategic plans needs the co-operation of all stakeholders including government agencies, NGOs and members of the community. The full participation of communities, who are resource owners in a majority of cases, ensures ultimate conservation of biological diversity. Evidence of this phenomenon is being observed in successful cases.

Mainstreaming or cross-sectoral integration has worked well towards the protection of biodiversity in Fiji. This has seen networking between all stakeholders including resource owners and the community, government ministries, NGOs and academic institutions such as University of the South Pacific.

This report has documented only a representative portion of all that has been happening in Fiji as far as implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans is concerned. A more comprehensive audit of projects, activities and relevant data would need to be done in the future.

12. Collaboration activities between different agencies

Table 1. The table below is a summary of what particular stakeholders are doing

Stakeholders	Activities & participating partners
1. GOVERNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · NLTB, DoE, Forestry, Fisheries have collaborated in certain programs such as assessing Sovi Basin, management plans in nature reserves, forest policy and timber identification, integrated resource management plans, studies on fisheries resources, enabling legislation, production of awareness material and inventories of resources · Department of Health (Nutrition Section), Town Planning, Lands, Education (Curriculum Development Unit-CDU), Rural Development, Tourism and Commerce also carry out conservation activities as minor parts of their major function · Department of Agriculture carries out programmes with farmers on planting of native fruit trees and vegetables. It also regulates the clearing of land in agricultural areas. The Department also carries out awareness programs on safe use of agricultural chemicals. · The Quarantine section of the department inspects incoming and outgoing shipments and passenger luggage for potentially harmful diseases and organisms and is an intercepting agency under CITES. Fiji Quarantine section has a bilateral quarantine agreement (BQA) with Australia and New Zealand pertaining to quality assurance for exported agricultural products such as mango, breadfruit, eggplant and pawpaw. · The Forestry Department carries out timber certification process. Fiji has a Code of Practice for logging and this Code has been undergoing review. The Code is allied to a legally-binding Forestry Decree, while the Forestry Policy was revised in 2007. · The Department of Forestry works actively with several non-government organizations including WCS, WWF, Birdlife International, Conservation International and the South Pacific Herbarium. · The Fisheries Department is an active participant in the FLMMA. It works with SPREP, SPC and other local and regional organizations in raising awareness (e.g. "Year of the Turtle", "Year of the Coral Reef") and surveying. · The Department of Environment performs a coordinating role with other environment-associated department and with their help develops and supports legislations and conventions to the environment and conservation activities.
2. NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- 3 NGOs already included in the report under case studies are FLMMA, WCS and Mamanuca Environment Society. · Birdlife International established its secretariat in Suva in 2003. Activities have included bird surveys at 20 forested sites in Viti Levu in 2003-2006; at 8 forested sites in Vanua Levu in 2003-2004. Developed Management Plans for Ravilevu Nature Reserve, Tomaniivi Nature Reserve. Carried out biodiversity surveys. Developing proposals with other NGOs such as IUCN to consider addressing legal impediments to establishing a network of protected areas in Fiji in 2008. Developing a proposal for empowering local people in their rights

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Live and Learn Environment Education Inc opened its offices in Suva in 1998. Some of its collaborative efforts are listed below. Developed HOPE (Helping Our Planet Earth) toolkit and program for primary schools in 2008. “HOPE for Peace” teacher training in 2006-2007. River Care Program for secondary schools (Vodafone Fiji Foundation) in 2008; Water quality and waste management with FAB in 2007-2008; Developing ‘ Sustainable Communities’ programs with SPC, Department of Agriculture and National Centre for Small Micro-Enterprises Development in 2007 · World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF South Pacific and Fiji Country Programme). Its Pacific programme aims ‘to support Pacific Island people in conserving and sustainably managing our natural inheritance for present and future generations.’ Some of its notable activities have been in their study of Wetland ecosystems in Fiji: uses and distribution in 2000; sustainable livelihoods on Kabara Island in 2006-2008; Self Help Tool Kit for marine protected areas for coastal communities of Fiji to encourage sustainable livelihoods in 2005-2007; Conservation & sustainable use of globally outstanding biodiversity in marine environment of Fiji in 2005-2007; The South Pacific Marine Program – Fiji activities, 2004-2007 South Pacific Whale Sanctuary, 2005-07; South Pacific Marine Turtles Program of Work, 2005-07; Report of the mangrove flora & fauna surveys conducted within Lomawai Reserve, Bole Reserve & Lotonaluya Reserve, Tikina Wai, Nadroga, 2003; Inventory of wetlands-kuta growing areas, 1999; Gau Island & Macuata Province protected areas project, 2007-08; community natural resource management and enhancement in Ono-i-Lau for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods, 2006-07.
3. ACADEMIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · University of the South Pacific- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Geography Department: MSc project (Takeda), flora of Sigatoka Sand Dunes and the impact of invasive species (with support from National Trust), 2008; MSc project (Kuruyawa), women in fisheries on Beqa, 2008 - Institute of Marine Resources: Turtle tagging project (with WWF), 2007-ongoing, Shark finning project (proposal), 2008 - Institute of Applied Sciences: community based closed areas in Fiji: a case study in the fishery effects of marine reserves and fishery closures, 2002; Marine-protected areas (MPAs), 2004-ongoing - Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics: Studies have included water quality of the Sigatoka River catchment, sediment circulation and metal loading in the Rewa River estuary, biology of the Fiji ground frog, study of local populations of an invasive ant species, studies of biology and ecology of beetles, butterflies, honey-eater birds, comparison of bird populations in degraded and pristine forest areas, study of persistent organic pollutants in freshwater and inshore marine edible mollusks, contamination levels in market fish and shellfish, an economic appraisal of MPAs and vegetative propagation of sandalwood and determination of sandalwood hybrids.
4. STATUTORY BODY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Trust of Fiji-It has maintained its care of the Sigatoka Sand Dune National Park and the Waisali Rainforest Reserve. It also has a Kadavu Bird Awareness project, the Kacau ni Gau awareness project and the Global Mangrove Information System (GLOMIS) project.
5. COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biasevu Tourism Committee: community biodiversity conservation and ecotourism support project – forest ecosystems, Korolevu, 2006-07. Funded by UNDPGEF. - Wainimate: its mission is to ensure that promotion, conservation and protection of safe and effective traditional knowledge and medicinal plant - Sovi Bay Working Group: Pacific –Asia Biodiversity Transect Network(PABITRA) survey, Sovi Workshop
6. BUSINESS/PRIVATE ORGANISATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clean Up Fiji: Its main activity is to is annual ‘Clean Up Day’ Fiji Times (News Limited): setting up of ‘One degree’ Climate change initiative nation-wide. Using the daily newspaper Fiji Water Foundation: Use of Sustainable Growth Initiative intended to make Fiji Water products ‘carbon negative’ - VODAFONE ATH Fiji Foundation: partners with credible NGOs to fund projects that will benefit communities in Fiji.