

# FORESTRY

## Fact Sheet

### BACKGROUND

The forest sector has played a crucial role in the economic development of Fiji since the sandalwood trades of the early 19th century. The Government is committed to elevating the forestry sector to contribute to socio-economic growth and uplift the livelihoods of forest dependents by working closely with the pine and mahogany industries and the forest resource owners. The sector contributes 0.3 percent of real GDP.

The policies and strategies for the sector aim to sustainably manage and develop Fiji's forest resources with policies to strengthen sustainable forest management by encouraging private sector participation in plantation development and development of more timber products.

### CURRENT STATUS

The forestry and logging industry continues to contribute towards the national GDP and supports the growth of many other industries. The forestry industry contributed \$31.1 million (0.3 percent) to Fiji's real GDP in 2022 out of a total \$10.1 billion.

Fiji's forest areas cover is about 1.1 million hectares, and this is equivalent to 60 percent of Fiji's land area. Out of this, natural forests accounts for 82 percent, softwood plantations accounts for 7.4 percent, hardwood plantations accounts for 6.5 percent and mangrove forests accounts for 4.1 percent.

### CHALLENGES

1. *Review of legislations:* There is a need to review several regulations and standards to ensure sustainable forest management practices and compliance are on par with the current standards.
2. *Illegal and unsustainable logging:* Illegal and unsustainable logging also poses a challenge. It undermines the legitimacy of the forest sector

and hinders efforts to implement sustainable forest management.

3. *Strengthen national monitoring and coordination:* To deter illegal and unsustainable practices and enhance productivity.
4. *Forest waste:* Currently there is no policy governing the utilization of forest wastes. There is a need to strengthen the regulations with respect to utilization forest wastes and develop technology to process pine chips to energy. Policy to promote renewable energy needs to further strengthen.

### OPPORTUNITIES

1. *Value-Added Processing:* increase value added from the forest sector by diversifying to other timber species, non-timber and non-wood products such as bamboo, sandalwood, cocowood, candlenut and beach mahogany, creating employment opportunities, and contributing to economic growth.
2. *Restoration of forest:* bring benefit in terms of improving livelihood of the people.
3. *Implementation of ERP:* open new revenue streams to landowners from carbon trading.
4. *Legislative Reform:* Updating laws and regulations to reflect evolving economic landscapes and support sector growth.
5. *Human Capital Development:* Implementing comprehensive training programs and promoting agribusiness entrepreneurship.
6. *Infrastructure Development:* Developing and upgrading transportation networks, storage facilities, and marketplaces.

## **FUTURE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

### ➤ **Review of policies, regulations and law:**

- ✓ Review legislation to increase penalties/fines to create a transparent and simple system that reflects the true value of forest resources by the Forestry Division and forest-related Government tasks and stimulate investment in sustainable forest management and processing.

### ➤ **Encourage private sector participation in plantation and growth of timber product development:**

- ✓ Develop a Plantation Policy that will ensure better management, development and production from plantations.
- ✓ Formulation of a National Land Use Plan.
- ✓ Provide an enabling environment for private sector investment in plantation development.
- ✓ Continue Fiji Hardwood Corporation Limited's (FHCL) re-planting programme.

### ➤ **Encourage the growth of wood and non wood forest product development:**

- ✓ Strengthen wood and non-wood forest product research, development and promotion through the provision of appropriate infrastructure and expertise (e.g. facilities, machines, equipment).
- ✓ Support Micro. Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) in their development of niche products through appropriate MSME schemes.

### ➤ **Establish sustainable life cycle management of forest resources in Fiji:**

- ✓ Develop a Discussion document to articulate components of Sustainable Forest Management that provide cohesiveness and coherence to legislations, policies and plans.
- ✓ Refine/review and develop Policies, Regulations, Certifications and Standards
  - revised Forest Act 1992
  - National Rural Forest Fire Strategy
  - Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice 2013
  - Draft Forest Plantation Policy

- Mahogany Act 2011

### ➤ **Improve capacity and capability to strengthen sustainable forest management:**

- ✓ Enhance creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship and at all levels of education and training related to forest management.
- ✓ Enhance Forest Research Capabilities.
- ✓ Enhance regional and international collaboration on Trainings and Applied Research for Forestry.
- ✓ Equip and use state of the art technology of Remote Sensing and Geographical Information System

### ➤ **Enhance Forest Financing- Establish Forest Trust Fund:**

- ✓ Develop financing mechanisms related to conservation and protection measures.