

RURAL & MARITIME DEVELOPMENT

Fact Sheet

BACKGROUND

Rural and Maritime development is one of the key priorities for the government given the need to develop infrastructure, macroeconomic stability and coherent long term development strategies to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas. As per 2017 census, Fiji's total rural population is estimated to be around 386,632 of which 39.8% of the population resides in the Western Division followed by the Central Division (26.2%), Northern Division (25.4%) and Eastern Division (8.46%).

CURRENT STATUS

1. Rural Roads and Community Access - A sum of \$18.3 million has been allocated for rural roads programme which will be supplemented by the establishment of the Public Works Department.
2. Outer Island Connectivity - Shipping Franchise Scheme subsidises the operational costs of 10 uneconomical routes around the country, namely Rotuma, Beqa, Yanuca, Vatulele, Northern Lau, Southern Lau, Yasayasa Moala and the islands north east of Vanua Levu.
3. Water and Wastewater - Approximately 58% of Fiji's rural population have access to safe and adequate drinking water. Currently, WAF has an allocation of \$7.9 million for rural water programme.
4. Rural Electrification Programme - Government is fully committed to ensuring the continuation of rural electrification projects (grid-extension, house-wiring projects and Solar Home Systems). For the period of 2012-2022, a sum of \$187.4 ad been utilised for rural electrification projects.
5. Disaster Management - Government is currently undertaking community-based disaster risk management trainings in communities and formulating disaster risk reduction ('DRR')

plans around the country to safeguard communities and assets from the impacts of disasters.

CHALLENGES

1. The lack of infrastructural development (roads, water, electricity, telecommunication and ICT).
2. Access to Public Services: The rural and outer island communities travel long distances to access public services.
3. Inconsistent and poor quality of shipping services coupled with high freight and transportation costs including non-delivery of services by domestic shipping companies.
4. Enterprise development and market inaccessibility: Lack of business training and financial literacy resources for Fiji's population.
5. Vulnerability to Climate Change and Disaster: the rural and maritime communities are vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters.
6. Infestation of Asian Subterranean Termite ('AST') for rural houses in the districts of Ba, Lautoka and Nadi.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Investment in Climate Resilient Infrastructure - Enhancing infrastructure development for rural communities that will be sustainable.
2. Rural Housing Programmes - Self-help housing projects to enhance usage of resilient building structures to withstand natural vulnerabilities.
3. Implementing DRR Approaches - DRR planning can enhance better risk management and preparedness for rural and outer maritime islands vulnerable to the adverse impacts of disasters.
4. Enterprise development and economic opportunities - Enhancing awareness and training resources in regards to commercial farming and financial literacy.

5. Digital transformation and development - Bridging the digital divide and promoting technology development.
6. Subsidising Outer-island Transportation - Incentives and subsidies to make sea and air transportation to outer islands become affordable.

FUTURE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- **Improve Connectivity and Accessibility for rural and maritime communities**
 - ✓ Expand access and work towards ensuring equity in the provision of rural infrastructure – roads, jetties, bridges seawalls, riverbanks, drainage, electrification, water supply, transportation, and communication infrastructure.
- **Ensuring Sustainable Living Standards and Resilient Communities**
 - ✓ Rural development priorities are addressed through a coordinated approach to improved rural development with the Integrated Rural Development Framework as a common administration.
- **Supporting sustainable growth and resilience of the rural economy**
 - ✓ Sustainable Rural Economic Growth and strengthening of conservation and management of resources.
 - ✓ Improved information and evidence to support rural economic development.
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 - ✓ Adopting risk informed development to ensure sustainability of development programmes.
- **Building communities that are resilient to all hazards**
 - ✓ Disaster Risk reduction measures and resilience mainstreamed into every level of

- disaster governance arrangements, development initiatives and financing.
- ✓ Well-coordinated disaster risk reduction measures and humanitarian emergency response.

- **Efficiently and effectively manage any community relocation program**
 - ✓ Compliance with the Planned Relocation Guidelines and the Standard Operating Procedures for the Planned Relocation in Fiji.