

Safeguarding Marine & Terrestrial Biodiversity in Fiji (SAMBIO)

Part I: Project Information

GEF ID
10675

Project Type
FSP

Type of Trust Fund
GET

CBIT/NGI
☐ CBIT
☐ NGI

Project Title
Safeguarding Marine & Terrestrial Biodiversity in Fiji (SAMBIO)

Countries
Fiji

Agency(ies)
CI

Other Executing Partner(s)
Department of Environment

Executing Partner Type
Government

GEF Focal Area

Biodiversity

Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Demonstrate innovative approaches, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Stakeholders, Indigenous Peoples, Communications, Awareness Raising, Behavior change, Public Campaigns, Education, Private Sector, Large corporations, SMEs, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Academia, Non-Governmental Organization, Beneficiaries, Type of Engagement, Participation, Information Dissemination, Consultation, Partnership, Local Communities, Gender Equality, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Biodiversity, Species, Threatened Species, Invasive Alien Species, Mainstreaming, Tourism, Certification -National Standards, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Coastal and Marine Protected Areas, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Financial and Accounting, Conservation Finance, Biomes, Wetlands, Coral Reefs, Mangroves, Sea Grasses, Gender results areas, Participation and leadership, Access to benefits and services, Capacity Development, Access and control over natural resources, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Gender Mainstreaming, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Women groups, Gender-sensitive indicators, Enabling Activities, Learning, Theory of change, Indicators to measure change, Adaptive management, Knowledge Exchange, Innovation, Knowledge Generation

Rio Markers**Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 0

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate Change Adaptation 0

Duration

60 In Months

Agency Fee(\$)

652,994.00

Submission Date

9/24/2020

A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
BD-1-1	GET	3,627,746.00	16,000,000.00
BD-2-7	GET	3,627,745.00	16,000,000.00
Total Project Cost (\$)		7,255,491.00	32,000,000.00

B. Indicative Project description summary

Project Objective

To establish new marine and terrestrial protected areas within priority areas of biodiversity and strengthen Fiji's protected area network, improve the management of key biodiversity areas in forests and coastal ecosystems to protect Fiji's most threatened biodiversity, and strengthen policy and financing pathways to secure ecosystem services and other benefits to island communities into the future.

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 1: Improvement of management and expansion of protection of key terrestrial biodiversity areas on Fiji's two largest islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu	Technical Assistance	<p>Outcome 1.1: Forests and freshwater habitats outside of terrestrial protected areas on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu are under improved management to benefit biodiversity with enhanced local livelihood opportunities</p> <p><i>Indicator(s):</i></p> <p><i>Number of hectares of forests and freshwater habitats and their buffer zones outside of PAs with improved management under the co-management model to benefit biodiversity (Target 24,564 ha);</i></p> <p><i>Number of persons with improved livelihoods (Target: at least 1,000 with at least 50% women)</i></p>	<p>Output 1.1.1: Baseline information and data assessed and collected to identify and define candidate freshwater KBAs within Viti Levu and Vanua Levu</p> <p>Output 1.1.2: Co-management model for freshwater and forest KBAs developed and demonstrated within key sites to preserve Fiji's biodiversity through a participatory process involving multi-level stakeholders; inclusive conservation</p> <p>Output 1.1.3: Improved sustainability and diversification of agricultural commodities grown by communities on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu</p> <p>Output 1.2.1: Terrestrial biodiversity is assessed to define new protected area boundaries within KBAs/IBAs on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu</p>	GET	2,404,580.00	10,650,000.00

Outcome 1.2: KBAs and IBAs are newly designated as terrestrial protected areas on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu

Indicator(s):

Number of hectares of forests and freshwater habitats (KBAs and IBAs) under newly designated PA legal status to benefit biodiversity (Target: 49,738 ha)

Output 1.2.2: Consultations are conducted, and landowner consent is secured or reaffirmed (to advance legal formalization of the proposed PA boundaries).

Output 1.2.3: Management plans are developed or updated for each new PA, including District-level co-management requirements together with landowning communities

Output 1.2.4: New PAs are legally designated through partnership between landowning communities and Government, with co-management guidelines in place

Component 2: Establish new and better manage existing MPAs/LMMAs within the Fiji's Eastern Division	Technical Assistance	<p>Outcome 2.1: Offshore areas and archipelagic waters critical for biodiversity are designated as MPAs in Fiji's Eastern Division within the Lau Seascape and Kadavu archipelago</p> <p><u>Indicator(s):</u> <i>Offshore MPAs established (ha) with Management Plans and Guidelines in place (target: 10,760,000 ha)</i></p>	<p>Output 2.1.1: Marine biodiversity assessed for outlying islands and new MPA boundaries defined</p> <p>Output 2.1.2: Management plans for each MPA developed and key actions implemented (Criteria and delineation proposed through a participatory process comprised of technical and multi-level stakeholder workshops)</p>	GET	2,407,651.00	9,100,000.00
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- **Output 2.1.3:** Protected areas in the offshore are legally designated with management guidelines established
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Outcome 2.2: Coastal and nearshore marine areas in Kadavu, the Ringgold Islands and Lau under improved management with enhanced livelihoods delivered to island communities

Indicator(s):

Coastal and nearshore MPAs with improved management effectiveness (ha) (Target 1,579 ha)

Number of persons with improved livelihoods (Target: at least 1,000 with at least 50% women)

Output 2.2.1: Biodiversity management strategy developed to harmonize management of coastal and nearshore waters in Kadavu and the Ringgold Islands

Output 2.2.2: District and Provincial level management plans developed for coastal and archipelagic waters delivering improved governance and coordinated management

Output 2.2.3: Market assessment developed and environmentally friendly value chains for livelihood-important products improved for coastal island communities in Lau Seascape and Kadavu

Output 2.3.1: Integrated Management plan for the Lau Seascape is developed and approved, with key actions implemented.

Outcome 2.3:

Marine habitats outside of MPAs in the Lau Seascape archipelago are under improved management, strengthening biodiversity protection at scale and benefitting local community livelihoods

Indicator(s): Number of hectares of Marine habitats outside MPAs delineated and under improved management (ha) (target: from xx ha to 22,700,000 ha);

Output 2.3.2: Marine management and zonation/ delineation plans are developed for areas outside of protected areas with a focus on enforcement.

Output 2.3.3: Co-management monitoring system piloted— in partnership with the Fijian Navy Recommendations developed for scaling up and amplifications of the co-management model to all maritime islands

Component 3: Enabling conditions strengthened to accelerate expansion and improved management of Fiji's PA and MPA network, in full alignment with Fiji's NBSAP	Technical Assistance	<p><u>Outcome 3.1:</u> A national sustainable financing framework is developed to fund forest, coastal and marine ecosystem protection benefitting Fiji's entire PA and MPA network.</p> <p><i><u>Indicator(s):</u> National sustainable financing framework with programs and strategies for PAs and MPAs in place (target: 1</i></p>	<p><u>Output 3.1.1:</u> Sustainable financing framework is developed and approved with inclusive programs and strategies to support formalization of Fiji's PA and MPA network</p> <p><u>Output 3.1.2:</u> Sustainable financing for PAs advanced (to formalize protection of key areas on Viti Levu, Vanua Levu and Taveuni)</p>	GET	1,880,000.00	10,750,000.00
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*strategy benefitting
41,100,300 ha of marine
area and 305,100 ha of
land area)*

*Hectares of forest
where key sustainable
financing actions are
implemented to support
management (target:
49,738 ha of forest)*

Outcome 3.2:

Fiji's key biodiversity
areas and keystone
species better managed
and protected against
climate change and
anthropogenic impacts,
in alignment with the
NBSAP

Indicator(s):

*Number of keystone
species for which
national strategies,
plans, and protocols
developed with climate
change mainstreamed
and key actions
implemented (target: To
be determined at PPG))*

*PA/MPA Framework
coherent to Sustainable
Financing Framework
and formally approved
and endorsed by GoF*

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-
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Output 3.2.1: Management,
recovery and monitoring plans
and protocols for *threatened*
keystone species developed in
alignment with Fiji's NBSA as
an integral part of PA/MPA
management plans. Note:
these plans will address
climate change related
impacts on biodiversity.

Output 3.2.2: Fiji's PA and MPA
Framework is updated and
harmonized with the
sustainable financing
framework developed under
outcome 3.1 (approved and
endorsed by the government)

Output 3.3.1: Data
management system is set up
that centralizes national PA
and MPA data management
and supports Fiji's reporting to
the CBD

Outcome 3.3: Data management and tracking systems in place and community and government groups trained to monitor and report on resources management at scale, for delivery of key NBSAP priorities

Indicator(s): Number of PA and MPA data management and tracking system established (target: 1 system)

Number of capacity building programs implemented at national level with government extension officers (target: at least 2 programs)

Number of staff trained (target: at least 400 with at least 50% women)

Number of Yaubula Management Support Team representatives with increased capacity, including women and youth (target: at least 600 with at least 50% women)

Output 3.3.2: Tracking system established to strengthen reporting on national commitments related to protection of biodiversity and benefits are in place

Output 3.3.3: Government capacity to support NBSAP Implementation and Reporting Framework built

Output 3.3.4: Community capacity to support NBSAP Implementation and Reporting Framework built.

Component 4: Monitoring and evaluation plans inform adaptive management	Technical Assistance	<u>Outcome 4.1:</u> Monitoring and evaluation in place and used to facilitate adaptive management - <i><u>Indicator:</u> % of required reports and evaluations completed (target: 100%)</i>	<u>Output 4.1.1:</u> Monitoring and evaluation program developed <u>Output 4.1.2:</u> Monitoring and evaluation program implemented - <u>Output 4.1.3:</u> Final report on monitoring and evaluation program	GET	217,761.00	1,000,000.00
Sub Total (\$)					6,909,992.00	31,500,000.00
Project Management Cost (PMC)						
GET					345,499.00	500,000.00
Sub Total(\$)					345,499.00	500,000.00
Total Project Cost(\$)					7,255,491.00	32,000,000.00

C. Indicative sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Forests	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,425,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of iTaukei Affairs	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,250,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Waterways	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,190,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,410,000.00
GEF Agency	Conservation International	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Fisheries	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	625,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	13,200,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Birdlife International	Grant	Investment mobilized	500,000.00
Others	National Trust of Fiji	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Sovi Basin Protected Area Endowment Trust Fund	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,900,000.00
Total Project Cost(\$)				32,000,000.00

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

Preliminary identified Investment Mobilized will come from a wide range of programs funded, identified in partnership with government. Among many others, these include specific project interventions implemented by Conservation International, as well as projects implemented by the relevant ministries within the Government of Fiji. The Agency will work to further diversify and expand the sources of Investment Mobilized during the PPG phase. In-kind co-financing from the GoF has been classified as recurrent expenses, and grants from donor and GEF agencies have been classified as investment mobilized. Estimates have been kept deliberately low at this stage to ensure that targets are kept within realistic bounds, recognizing the scale and expected impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to the tourism sector in Fiji. The amounts will be confirmed during PPG.

D. Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
CI	GET	Fiji	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	7,255,491	652,994	7,908,485.00
Total GEF Resources(\$)					7,255,491.00	652,994.00	7,908,485.00

E. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)
PPG Required



PPG Amount (\$)				PPG Agency Fee (\$)			
200,000				18,000			
Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
CI	GET	Fiji	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	200,000	18,000	218,000.00
Total Project Costs(\$)					200,000.00	18,000.00	218,000.00


Core Indicators

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
49,738.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
49,738.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
TBD		Others	49,738.00			

Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)		Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00


Name of the Protected Area	WDPa ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 2 Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use

Ha (Expected at PIF)		Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
10,761,579.00		0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created


Total Ha (Expected at PIF)		Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
10,760,000.00		0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
TBC		Others	10,760,000.00			

Indicator 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)		Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
1,579.00		0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
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TBC	Others	1,579.00	
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Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
24564.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
24,564.00			

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes that meets national or international third party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations (hectares)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Please upload document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title	Submitted
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Indicator 5 Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
22,500.00			

Indicator 5.1 Number of fisheries that meet national or international third party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

Type/name of the third-party certification

Indicator 5.2 Number of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) with reduced pollutions and hypoxia

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (achieved at MTR)	Number (achieved at TE)

0	0	0	0
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LME at PIF	LME at CEO Endorsement	LME at MTR	LME at TE
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Indicator 5.3 Amount of Marine Litter Avoided

Metric Tons (expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	75,463			
Male	75,462			
Total	150925	0	0	0

Part II. Project Justification

1a. Project Description

1. Global Environmental Problems, Root Causes and Barriers to Address

Geography: Located in the South Pacific Ocean, Fiji is an archipelago of roughly 330 islands (110 of which are permanently inhabited), with a population of approximately 900,000, and 80% living on the two largest islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Ranging from high volcanic islands to atolls and sand cays, the Fiji Islands are home to a wide variety of plants and animals, including endemic and critically endangered species. Fiji's total land mass is 1.83 million ha, of which 60% is forest (863,775 ha is primary forest) and possesses an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 129 million ha. Fiji is a middle-income country with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of approximately US\$ 6,000, but with large income disparities across rural and urban areas, and heavily dependent upon tourism and its natural resources (GoF 2017b).

Socio-economic context: According to the Asian Development Bank, roughly 28% of Fiji's population is currently classified as living below the poverty line (ADB, 2019), with notably higher rates in rural areas (38.3 percent relative to 29.9 percent in the 2013/14 survey) and an average GDP per capita of around US\$ 6,220 in 2019 (World Bank, 2020). Roughly 90% of Fiji's land mass belongs to indigenous (iTaukei) landowners and is administered by the iTaukei Lands Trust Board (TLTB) on their behalf (Trenorden 2013, TLTB 2020). Fiji's marine and terrestrial biodiversity provides a wealth of natural resources that support the well-being of Fijian communities, including for food and nutrition, culture, fuel, building materials, traditional medicines, cash income and other ecosystem service benefits. One study in Fiji found that subsistence food provision from inshore fisheries and coastal resources was valued at FJ\$ 88.08 million (US\$ 44.09 million) and, a total national gross value of FJ\$ 59.0 million (US\$ 29.6 million) per year (Gonzalez et al., 2015). Approximately 90% of Fijians live in coastal areas and secure a large portion of their protein and subsistence food security needs and nutrition from coastal and nearshore fisheries. Many rural Fijians still rely heavily on farming for food security and basic subsistence needs (GoF, 2020a). In addition, Fiji's National Climate Vulnerability Assessment notes that increasingly intense natural disasters, such as tropical cyclones and floods, shift 25,700 people per year into situations of poverty, and this is only expected to increase as a result of climate change impacts (GoF, 2017a).

Biodiversity: In addition to providing critical ecosystem service benefits to local Fijians, the Fiji Islands possess unique marine and terrestrial biodiversity that have been globally documented and appraised. Fiji is located within the Tropical Southwestern Pacific Marine Ecoregion (Heaps, 2005) and the Polynesia-Micronesia Biodiversity Hotspot (CEPF, 2007), placing it among the world's important ecosystems and habitats. Other nearby islands, including those in the Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea are part of the center of Indo-Pacific marine species diversity, but do not have similar levels of species diversity compared to Fiji (Veron, 1995). This is due to prevailing westerly flowing Subequatorial Current and trade wind drift, and the moderate isolation of Fiji from western island archipelagos (600 nautical miles from Vanuatu in the west, 1200 nautical miles from Solomon Islands in the north west).

Fiji's forest ecosystems possess high levels of species endemism, with fifty percent of all species (24 palms, 72 of 76 species of *Psychotria*, frogs, and roughly 90% of Fiji's insects) found nowhere else on earth (CBD, 2020). Of Fiji's roughly 2,600 vascular plants, about 1,600 are native and 1,000 are introduced; and similarly, 12 out of Fiji's 27 reptile species are endemic. Approximately 98 percent of Fiji's endemic species live in Fiji's forest ecosystems and play a key role in maintaining ecological functions of forest areas. Native forests are subdivided into three management categories, including preserved forests, protected forests and multiple use forests with just under 90% of Fiji's native forests under customary ownership. The total number of vascular plants known is approximately 2,600, of which 1,600 are native and 1,000 introduced. Flora is estimated at 310 pteridophytes and at least 2,225 seed plants. Fiji has 25 existing and 43 proposed (priority) terrestrial protected area sites (MoF database), identified largely based on the presence of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Important Bird Areas (IBAs) (Birdlife International 2006, 2011).

Fiji also has abundant freshwater resources that are largely under-managed and under-evaluated. Many of Fiji's rivers contain endemic species, such as the Rewa River, Fiji's largest river at 145km long and up to 1km wide (in places near its mouth). Fiji's freshwater systems also provide a series of benefits to rural highland communities, including freshwater fish for food security. Across Fiji, communities have traditionally used tabu areas, or no-take-zones, to improve the management of their freshwater resources. Recent assessments of Fiji's freshwater systems conducted in 2014, highlighted that the condition of Fiji's rivers range from fair to good, but are experiencing an overall decline in their condition. This is largely attributed to unsustainable harvesting of resources, including gravel extraction and other unchecked development activities.

Fiji's reefs also have a higher level of biodiversity compared to other Pacific Island countries (Lovell and Sykes, 2007), which is partially attributed to the large number of different habitats within Fiji's group of islands, including smaller maritime islands with limited infrastructure development and smaller populations. Fiji's marine environment is characterized by a highly diverse array of estuaries, macro-algal assemblages, lagoons, coral reefs and slopes, as well as seagrass beds. These biodiverse marine habitats support vibrant ocean life, including 1,198 fish species, 1,056 marine invertebrates, and roughly 1,000 coral reefs (GoF, 2020). Furthermore, Fiji's mangroves and seagrass meadows are highly productive ecosystems which sustain the livelihood of coastal villagers as fisheries breeding grounds and sequester vast amounts of CO₂. Fiji possesses the third largest mangrove area in the Pacific Islands region, originally estimated at 51,700 ha (Wilkie and Fortuna, 2003), yet recent local analysis suggests this is closer to 60,000 ha (Cameron et al, 2020). Mangroves also provide critical ecosystem service benefits to Fijians, including filtering out nutrients and pollutants, providing coastal protection from storm surges, and stabilizing shorelines to impacts of coastal erosion.

Fiji's unique biodiversity further provides significant benefit to the national economy (Gonzalez et al., 2015), as specific resources are harvested for domestic consumption or export, thereby contributing to Fiji's foreign reserves for national economic development. Fiji's marine species trade industry contributes to national GDP, to foreign exchange earnings, and is a direct source of income and livelihood for the local communities. In addition, Fiji's tourism sector is heavily reliant on its natural environment and pristine marine waters, which, together with its rich history and cultural traditions, draw holiday makers from around the globe. Fiji's gross earnings from tourism for the first quarter of 2019 were estimated at FJ\$3.03 billion, which equates to roughly US\$ 167.6 million. Prior to the global COVID19 pandemic, tourism was the main foreign revenue earner for Fiji (CBD, 2020).

Finally, Fijians have a strong cultural connection with their natural environment, grounded in generations of traditional approaches to management of their ocean and island homes. Roughly 90% of the land in Fiji is owned by indigenous landowners, whose identity, as well as human wellbeing and livelihood is tied to their terrestrial environment. Similarly, iTaukei communities have access rights to their traditional fishing grounds, where they serve as customer managers.

Fiji's Policy Response to Biodiversity: Fiji has several relevant policy documents and strategies that support the preservation of marine and terrestrial protected areas. Relevant legislation includes the Constitution of Fiji, Green Growth Framework, the National Environment Strategy, the Fiji National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), the National Forest Policy, Environment Management Act (2005), Forest Decree 1992, Fiji's Offshore Management Act (2012), the Integrated Coastal Management Framework, the National Trust of Fiji Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012, the World Heritage Policy, Fiji's REDD+ Policy, the Rural Land Use Policy, Fiji National Ocean Policy, the Low Emissions Development Strategy (LEDS), and the Fiji Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. For terrestrial protected areas, there is no overarching legislation that aligns the nineteen legal mechanisms into a national legislative approach, making it difficult for inter-agency coordination on implementation, enforcement and monitoring of Fiji's protected areas. While the Fiji Protected Areas Committee has developed a Framework for Protected Areas in Fiji, this is not formally endorsed.

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Proposed Intervention Sites: The project's target areas were selected based on their biodiversity significance as KBAs and IBAs (terrestrial sites), or for marine areas, their status as Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) or Special and Unique Marine Areas (SUMAs), possessing significant or ecologically representative biodiversity, special or important endemic species, threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats, biological productivity or naturalness. Roughly 90 % of Fiji's KBAs and IBAs are located on the two largest islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, demonstrating the need to consolidate protection within these sites. As such, project activities focusing on expanded and improved protection of terrestrial biodiversity are focused on these islands. In the marine realm, Fiji has undergone a multi-year process to identify priority sites for a network of offshore No-Take-Zone (NTZ) MPAs equating roughly 30% of Fiji's EEZ. Fiji's MPA Placement Guidelines incorporate three different types of design principles: 1) biophysical; 2) socio-economic and cultural; and 3) management feasibility. As of December 2019, Fiji has identified 15 candidate offshore 'no-take zones' or MPAs as well as inshore and archipelagic frequency maps showing priority sites developed based on placement guidelines and data provided by government, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) stakeholders and open sources. This project will partner with the Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment to advance the establishment and management of MPAs located in Fiji's Eastern Division, containing more than 8% of Fiji's NTZ MPAs.

As highlighted above, the project focuses on terrestrial interventions on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu (87% of Fiji's total land area) and marine interventions in selected priority maritime islands in Fiji's Eastern Division (including Lau and Kadavu Provinces and the Ringgold Islands). Project sites on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu include a critical selection of Fiji's KBAs and IBAs with representatively high biodiversity, that also provide critical ecosystem services to Fiji's rural population as well as to build on and complement the biodiversity conservation assessments and work done in the Fiji GEF-PAS 4 and GEF 5 projects. On Viti Levu, the project will focus interventions on the Monasavu Tomaniivi Forest Corridor, which is rapidly under threat from degradation and deforestation (Olson et. al., 2010). Fiji's Greater Tomaniivi area covers about 18,000ha with habitats ranging from lowland to mountain forest and contains Fiji's highest mountain peak (Mount Tomaniivi). As a KBA and IBA, Mount Tomaniivi is home to seven globally threatened bird species (Birdlife International, 2020) and other globally significant biodiversity. The other relevant KBAs and IBAs within the Monasavu Tomaniivi Forest Corridor under this project will include Mount Nakauvadra and Mount Nakorotubu. A 2009 Rapid Biodiversity Assessment for the Mount Nakauvadra Range identified 418 plant taxa, roughly 338 of which were native species and 80 were aliens. Of the native species, roughly 200 species were identified as indigenous species and 138 endemic species, equating to roughly

41% of native flora and 34% of entire flora. Similarly, a rapid biodiversity assessment of Mount Nakorotubu identified 38 bird species, of which 15 were endemic, including three globally threatened species – the Pink-billed Parrotfinch (*Erythrura kleinschmidtii*), Black-faced Shrikebill (*Clytorhynchus nigrogularis*) and the Friendly Ground-Dove (*Gallicolumba stairi*).

On Vanua Levu, the project will principally focus on catchments in the Greater Delaikoro region and Natewa-Tunuloa Peninsula to build on and complement the biodiversity conservation assessments and work done in the Fiji GEF-PAS 4 and GEF 5 projects. The biodiversity of the Greater Delaikoro region has been comprehensively assessed (FPAM, 2014). The Greater Delaikoro Area is an upland region spanning the main mountain range of Vanua Levu, encompassing Mt Delaikoro, Mt Sorolevu and the Waisali Reserve. During the biodiversity assessment a total of 641 vascular plant taxa and 117 bryophyte taxa were recorded. Range extensions were documented for 90 vascular plant species and all the bryophytes, including the rare moss, *Bescherelli cryphaeoides*. Ten taxa were recorded that have botanical significance due to their rarity or protection status, including five critically endangered endemic trees and palms, viz. *Astronidium inflatum*, *Balaka macrocarpa*, *Cynometra falcata*, *Metroxylon vitiense* and *Weinmannia exigua*. The region includes 24 endemic bird species and four endemic lizards. The area is also vital for Fiji's freshwater fish biodiversity, with a total of eighteen species of fish from six families occur in the tributaries of the Delaikoro ranges, including two Vanua Levu endemic gobies (*Redigobius leveri* and *Redigobius lekutu*), two undescribed gobies from the genus *Stiphodon*, and the goby *Lentipes kaaea*. The area is also extremely rich for freshwater macroinvertebrates, with 70 species including 37 endemics and one prawn (*Macrobrachium spinosum*) only ever recorded in Fiji on Mt Delaikoro. A new endemic and critically endangered *Hibiscus*, *H. bennettii* was discovered near the summit of Mt Delaikoro in late 2015 (Thomson and Braglia, 2019), further underscoring the importance of this region for biodiversity conservation both globally and in Fiji.

The Natewa-Tunuloa Peninsula encompasses approximately 55,000 ha of the south-eastern section of Vanua Levu, Fiji and retains large expanses of tropical lowland and hill forest. The biodiversity of the Peninsula possesses an extremely high conservation value (Martin, 2018). A total of two native mammal species, 48 bird species (15 endemic), 10 herpetofauna species (3 endemic), 13 butterfly species (4 endemic), 61 gastropod species, and 84 tree species (26 endemic) occur in the study area. The Peninsula comprises only around 3% of the total land area of the Fijian archipelago, but 59% of terrestrial birds, 33% of native terrestrial mammals and 35% of reptiles known to occur nationally have been found here. Numerous species are also locally endemic. These include the critically endangered Natewa Silktail (*Lamprolia klinesmithi*) and Natewa Swallowtail butterfly (*Papilio natewa*), which are restricted to the peninsula. A further six species and five sub-species are endemic to Vanua Levu and its offshore islands. The biodiversity of the Peninsula has been little studied, and a comprehensive biodiversity assessment is planned in 2020, under the GEF 5 Ridge-to-Reef project.

The Lau Seascape comprises about fifty-seven islands, a third of which are inhabited, and represents Fiji's easternmost archipelago. The Lau Seascape encompasses a total land area of approximately 49,000 ha, with an ocean area of roughly 33,500,000 ha, including both the archipelagic waters (5,200,000 ha) and Fiji's offshore areas. These islands and their surrounding waters are a mecca of marine biodiversity with 531-788 bony fish species (Meo et al 2017; Auckland War Memorial Museum, unpublished data, 2017); marine reptiles: 3 species (Tuiwawa & Aalbersberg, 2013), 12 seabird species (Tuiwawa & Morrison, 2008); 2 cetacean species (Tuiwawa & Aalbersberg, 2013; Auckland War Memorial Museum, unpublished data, 2017), 281 stony coral species (Meo et al 2017), 2 acidians (bi-valves), 42 algae, 26 sponges, 22 cnidarians, 1 hydrodean and 1 bryozoan (Tuiwawa & Aalbersberg, 2013).

Lau's more than 9,600 inhabitants depend on healthy island, coastal and ocean ecosystems for food, livelihoods and climate resilience. The islands of the Lau Group are as diverse as the region's biota, with volcanic, limestone and oceanic atoll islands with a range of habitats including forest, limestone vegetation, lowland vegetation, secondary vegetation, mangroves, seagrass, oceanic patch reefs, extensive barrier reef systems and ocean archipelagic waters. The remote oceanic conditions provide a unique range of habitats and serve as important nesting and breeding areas for endemic birds, insects, snakes, green and Hawksbill turtles as well as the endemic clam (*Tridacna balavuana*), and migratory paths of mega cetaceans (including humpback whale).

The high degree of naturalness of the Lau Seascape can be attributed in part to its remoteness and minimal human pressure. A 2008 survey conducted in the far south on Ono-i-Lau noted very high coral cover of roughly 68.5% and exceptional invertebrate and fish counts in size and abundance (Fiu, Tokece, & Areki, 2010). Terrestrially, the southern Lau Islands have exceptional herpetofauna diversity, which in a 2011 survey (CI PIP, 2013) were found to be largely consistent with the 1921-1932 Whitney South Seas Expedition (Burt & Burt, 1932). The survey noted that many islands are important havens for endemic insects, such as the long-horn beetle (*Xixuthrus heros*), as well as endemic butterflies (*Papilio scmidtzi* and *Polyura caphontis*) and the Fiji stick insect (*Nisyris spinulosus*), previously found only in the highlands of Viti Levu. In addition, reptile surveys across 27 islands noted 14 reptile species, five of which are endemic to Fiji and one endemic to Lau (Ono-i-Lau skink, *Leiopisma alazon*), with new records documented for most islands during the survey. The Southern Lau group is also an area of important terrestrial biodiversity, home to the endemic Ogea Monarch (a flycatcher) found only on the Ogea group. Similarly, the Vanua Masi Islet has been identified as an IBA, home to a Lesser Frigatebird colony in excess of 5,000 individuals. The Lau archipelago is botanically rich, with 548 vascular plant species in 405 genera and 126 families (Tuiwawa & Aalbersberg, 2013). The northern Lau islands also contain economically vital biodiversity, such as the Vanuabalavu population of Fiji sandalwood (*yasi* or *Santalum yasi*) which is genetically distinct to other inbred populations in Fiji and Tonga, and provides a critical source of income to communities in Fiji.

Fiji's Kadavu Island is a major repository of marine and terrestrial biodiversity, being surrounded by the Great Astrolabe Reef, the world's fourth largest barrier reef. It houses four endemic bird species: Kadavu fantail (*Rhipidura personata*), Kadavu Shining Parrot (*Prosopeia splendens*), Whistling Dove (*Chrysoenas layardi*) and Kadavu Honeyeater (*Xanthotis provocator*), as well as endemic subspecies such as the Kadavu Island Thrush. Kadavu also provides refuge for nesting colonies for threatened seabirds such as the White-Throated Storm Petrel and the Collared Petrel. Two forest areas have been identified as priority biodiversity sites on Kadavu, including Delaivuiivi or Mt Washington in the district of Nabukelevu, and Koronibanuve in the district of Nakasaleka, both of which include representative populations of endemics.

Unlike Lau and Kadavu, much less is known about Fiji's Ringgold Islands, which surround Fiji's third largest island of Taveuni. The Ringgold Islands encompass an archipelago that includes the Budd, Nukusemanu and Heemskercq reefs. Of the islands, many of them are uninhabited, including the small sand cay islands of Vetauua, Nukubasaga, Nukupureti, and Nukusemanu, which provide breeding and nesting grounds for seabirds, particularly for Frigatebirds. While most of the islands are uninhabited, the larger island of Nagelelevu has one village community. The islands are also home to a wealth of marine biodiversity including migratory species such as sea turtles, humpback whales, and several reef fish, with strong evidence of the prevalence of cold-water corals.

Environmental problems: According to the 2013 State of Conservation in Fiji Country Report, Fiji's unique marine and terrestrial biodiversity is under threat (SPREP, 2013). Over half (56%) of Fiji's 258 extant endemics have been assessed as threatened, with 32% listed as critically endangered. Limited data is available for at least 50% of all endemics; however, in general the threats to endemics are the same as those impacting threatened species. Some of the key threats driving ecosystem degradation and destruction include:

Degradation and loss of habitats: Loss and fragmentation of forest cover is a major contributor to biodiversity loss and extinctions of forest-dependent species and populations, and also reduces timber and other plant resources including for firewood, medicines, dyes, construction and canoe or boat building (Thaman, 2002). Forest cover, which supports the majority of terrestrial species in Fiji—roughly 90% of which is indigenous forests—has been cleared at an increasing rate over the past ten years, primarily due to agricultural expansion (for kava and root crops), logging, mining and traditional uses (GoF, 2017). Loss of forest habitat has also led to loss and damage of migratory pathways for freshwater fish, ultimately affecting the number of amphidromous fish species and the number of all fish species in mid-reaches of Fiji rivers (Jenkins et al, 2009).

Inshore coastal ecosystems, including seagrass meadows and coral reefs, are also being degraded, due to coastal residential and tourism development, inadequate disposal of solid waste, sewage pollution, coastal erosion, storm surge and flooding. Siltation of rivers and coral reefs as a result of soil erosion from inland agriculture and forestry, gravel extraction and mining are major degrading factors (McKenzie and Yoshida, 2007). The Fiji State of the Environment Report, estimates that mangrove areas have decreased by 2,000 hectares between 1991 and 2001, caused by expansion of urban areas, tourist development, and creation of waste disposal sites (GoF, 2014). Loss of mangrove habitats impact the productivity of coastal fisheries, resulting in reductions in fish, crustacean, mollusc and bird habitats, including vital pelagic fish spawning grounds, which affects both food security and income-generating opportunities for Fijians.

Over-exploitation/unsustainable resource use: Overexploitation of fisheries resources has damaged the health of Fiji's coastal and offshore areas, primarily extraction of seaweed, finfish, bêche-de-mer, crabs and lobsters, shellfish, corals and other marine invertebrates. In addition, with roughly 2.6% of Fiji's EEZ under formal protection or management, and limited resources for monitoring, control and surveillance of archipelagic and offshore waters, Fiji's offshore marine biodiversity is also being degraded—with some such as shark and tuna species stocks potentially devastated—by Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Pollution and erosion from Agriculture: More than half of Fiji's growing human population is dependent upon subsistence agriculture for survival. Biodiversity impacts related to agriculture are not only due to the loss of habitat but are also due to other impacts related to land clearing more generally, such as increased erosion and sedimentation. The common use of fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture causes increases in sedimentation, runoff and eutrophication within freshwater and coastal marine ecosystems (GoF, 2020a). Interventions to address these threats focus on sustainable agricultural models, agroforestry and alternatives to agriculture to meet food and livelihood security needs.

Invasive species: Invasives are another critical threat to Fiji given that it is an island archipelago nation. Herbivores and predator species including cats, mongoose, pigs, goats, the giant invasive iguana (*Iguana iguana*) and the ship rat (*Rattus rattus*) represent a threat to endemic species, especially those already under pressure in Fiji, such as the seemingly extinct kulawai (*Charmosyna amabilis*). The threat from exotic invasives in the marine environment is lesser known but perhaps just as great, with thousands of new, often microscopic, alien marine organisms being introduced every year, mainly in ballast water. Such organisms lead to algal blooms, smothering of reefs, displacement of native species and the serious disruption in marine food chains. Several extremely invasive weeds, especially African tulip tree, and biological control agents have also threatened and brought to extinction several endemic species on the islands of Fiji (Thaman, 2002). Invasives are often difficult to manage and better to prevent their introduction in the first place through thorough quarantine screening.

Climate change impacts: Climate change impacts are already affecting human well-being and natural resources in Fiji (Pelling & Uitto, 2001), with notably larger impact on women and marginalized groups. Rapid sea level rise is eroding coastlines and altering groundwater supply and estuaries; increasingly intense natural disasters are destroying agriculture, damaging mangroves and forests, and causing severe inundation, erosion and landslide events, and

freshwater pollution (Burns, 2000). Fiji's coral reefs have experienced bleaching events due to climate change (extended periods of above average sea temperatures), and severe breakages from severe tropical cyclones. The impacts on biodiversity of small islands are particularly severe in that they have small but diverse populations of terrestrial, freshwater and marine plants and animals, that occupy limited spatial areas of important ecosystems. Islands may be separated by large stretches of ocean with limited potential for rapid replacement through inter-island dispersal. Recent increases in the frequency of the most severe categories of cyclones have caused widespread habitat/ecosystem destruction and degradation and the depletion or extinction of rare or endangered species. For example, three species of recently described endemic Fiji *Hibiscus* became critically endangered due to strong winds (up to 285 km per hour), flash floods and landslides associated with Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2016 (the strongest cyclone ever to make landfall in the Southern Hemisphere). Temporary increases or falls in sea level and sea-surface temperatures have been shown to have extremely serious impacts on coral reefs, producing widespread reef bleaching, the death of corals and breakdown in coral reef and marine ecosystems (Thaman, 2002)

Root Causes: Several root causes underlay the environmental problems outlined above. These include:

Absence of natural resource planning and protection: Fiji has committed to protecting at least 17% of its terrestrial area and 30% of its marine area, through establishment of an integrated network of marine and terrestrial protected areas. As of 2014, only 2.7% of Fiji's forest area is under legal protection; similarly, only 2.6% (3,001,100 ha) of Fiji's EEZ is under formal protection.

Population growth combined with limited natural resources: The Government of Fiji estimates that 140,000 ha of Fiji's native forests have been converted to non-forest land-use since 1967, due to agriculture as well as urban and smaller settlements linked to population growth and economic development. Fiji's growing human population and growth in urban centers has also increased domestic demand for fish and other coastal resources, putting greater strain on coastal fisheries and ecosystems that were formerly reserved for local subsistence.

Overharvesting for food and economic security: Overharvesting of coastal and forest resources for food and livelihoods is degrading forest and coastal habitats. For example, the sea cucumber fishery is Fiji's second most important commercial fishery, following tuna (California Environmental Associates, 2016), however current extractions rates are unsustainable.

Increasing economic growth and production: The root causes of habitat degradation and loss include population growth and associated economic growth and production across multiple sectors. Forests have been lost at an increasing rate over the past ten years, primarily due to agricultural expansion, logging, mining and traditional uses (GoF, 2017).

Agricultural expansion into forested areas: Agriculture remains the largest driver of forest degradation and deforestation. Specifically, increased demand for kava and other crops is leading to deforestation of native forests, including within KBAs and IBAs. Fiji's kava industry has grown significantly in recent years, with kava export prices roughly doubling between 2012 and 2018 (PHAMA, 2018), resulting in a documented expansion of deforestation of native land. Interventions to address these threats and barriers should focus on sustainable agricultural models, agroforestry and alternatives to agriculture to meet food and livelihood security needs. Agricultural expansion, associated with habitat disturbance, is also a driver of an increase in invasive species (GoF, 2020). As Fiji's island flora and fauna have evolved in isolation, they are less able to compete with organisms from continental areas.

Barriers: Several barriers exist to address the root causes of the environmental problems. These include:

Process for formalizing terrestrial PAs lengthy and expensive: Costs for establishment and management of protected areas in Fiji are high. To establish protected areas a land lease can be developed under the Fiji Forest Decree, which can require time and resources to deliver. Once a lease is approved, initial capital is required to provide annual lease payments to landowners, including compensation for loss of income or royalty payments, ongoing engagements, and the related administration of the lease agreement. Due to the high cost and confusing process associated with establishment, trial and adoption of alternative models will be critical to deliver on Fiji's national protected areas commitments.

Absence of clear policies and legislation on MPAs/PAs: Another barrier is the complicated legal process for establishment of protected areas. On the terrestrial side alone with no stand-alone legislation for protected areas management, over 26 different laws have been passed mandating over 15 government authorities for the protection of the environment, each having different values and levels of legal status or protection. There is currently an elaborate yet outdated proposal for a policy framework for developing PAs and MPAs in Fiji. If updated and adopted by the government, this framework has the potential to streamline and accelerate the establishment of new PAs and MPAs in Fiji.

Lack of awareness, data and plans to better manage biodiversity: According to the State of Conservation in Fiji Country Report 2013, there are 258 extant Fijian endemics. Over half (56%) of these endemics have been assessed as threatened, with 32% listed as critically endangered, however, limited data is available for at least 50% of all endemics. In addition, the government lacks specific species management and action plans to protect endangered and critically endangered species. Fiji also lacks detailed freshwater biodiversity and valuation analysis at national scale to identify priority sites for protection and management, and to identify which freshwater systems are most at risk from development activities, such as gravel extraction. A freshwater KBA assessment is needed to understand the current ecological health and functioning of Fiji's freshwater environment. There is no dedicated database for the collection, analysis and management of Fiji's biodiversity data, which is critical for long term biodiversity monitoring and reporting on the NBSAP.

Lack of livelihood alternatives with lower resource impact: In Fiji's coastal areas, recent assessments of the impacts of COVID-19 on coastal communities in Fiji have documented increases in fishing activity, both for subsistence as well as for income. The survey documented increased community concerns related to financial stress, livelihood loss and food availability over time. These concerns are exacerbated by climate impacts such as increasingly intense and destructive Tropical Cyclones such as Thomas (2010), Winston (2016), Gita (2018) and Harold (2020), which severely impacted Fiji's Eastern and Northern Divisions. Both in coastal and rural terrestrial areas, there is a lack of diversified or value-added livelihood options to address cash economy needs for island communities, resulting in the overharvesting of resources, loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystem services. Evidence also demonstrates that the combined impacts of climate change and COVID-19 have a disproportionate impact on women, including increased incidence of violence against women and girls (GoF, 2020b).

2. Baseline Scenario and Any Associated Baseline Projects

Fiji's proposed network of terrestrial protected areas includes 43 sites, selected because of their designation as KBAs and IBAs, all of which are located on iTaukei-owned land. In recent years, Fiji has taken significant steps to assess and identify areas of biodiversity significance, and has identified a total of 32 KBAs, including 10 marine IBAs, as well as 4 EBSAs. Priority areas for terrestrial protection were identified through a national process led by the Fiji Protected Areas Committee (PAC), comprised of both government and civil society partners that advance key issues in partnership with the Fiji Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment, as well as the Marine Technical Working Group focused on establishment of MPAs, under the Ministry of Fisheries. This includes development of a 10-step strategy and action plan to fulfil the development of the National System of Terrestrial PA in Fiji. Five (5) of the 14-step process are completed such as the identification of priority areas through gap analysis and other forms of assessment, based on the presence of KBAs and IBAs.

With support from IUCN, the Government of Fiji has also developed a zero-draft map of candidate NTZ MPAs that cover 31.6% Fiji's EEZ, to which the Eastern Division (including Lau and Kadavu) will include MPAs that cover 8.26% of Fiji's EEZ.

At the national scale Fiji has made efforts to strengthen management of its KBAs and IBAs through site-based initiatives by government, Civil Society Organization (CSO) and NGO-led processes, driven in partnership with traditional management by communities. More than 50% of Fiji's people are iTaukei (indigenous), and possess customary rights to lands and resources, with roughly 90% of Fiji's land under customary tenure. More attention to inclusiveness in Fiji has the potential to generate significant opportunities for enhanced management and better coherence across the different layers of conservation in terms of geography, legal status, and policies.

The Fiji State of the Environment (SPREP, 2014) report highlights that while Fiji's forest cover and freshwater ecosystems are in 'fair' condition, they demonstrate significant deteriorating trends. These trends must be arrested and addressed with actions at site and national level. Similarly, the health of Fiji's marine migratory species are in 'fair' condition, but demonstrate deteriorating trends, exacerbated by significant pressures and threats. While ocean and coral reef health appear to be in somewhat better condition, however, given the fragility and the low ecosystem resilience of these reef systems, if active protection and management are not strengthened, additional repercussions are likely.

The Lau Seascape and Kadavu archipelagos represent areas of significant marine and terrestrial biodiversity within Fiji's Eastern Division. A 2011 expedition to the southern Lau Islands conducted by the University of the South Pacific (USP) and CI found fish abundance and diversity to be relatively high around those islands compared to other parts of Lau and around Fiji (CI PIP, 2013). This is especially true for the uninhabited islands towards the south: Tuvana, Yagasa, Ono-i-lau and Vuata ono and Naevo. In addition, a 2013 expedition conducted by the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation surveyed the health and resiliency of coral reefs around 11 islands of the Lau archipelago and found the reefs to be generally healthy with high coral cover (36% on average) (Bruckner et al., 2016). On several of the surveyed islands, coral cover exceeded 45%. The expedition found 85% of the substrate surveyed covered with living organisms, with a high diversity of motile invertebrates. In particular, Tuvana-i-Ra had a notable abundance of the giant clams *Tridacna spp.*, and the endemic giant clam *Tridacna balavuana* was spotted in Matuku.

The more recent expeditions CI and partners conducted in 2017 produced more variable results. Some of the reefs were stunning, with more than 80% live hard coral cover, while others were well under 20% and showed signs of past mortality from bleaching and Crown of Thorns Starfish (COTS) outbreaks (Meo et al., *in press*). Some reefs showed signs of significant overfishing; however, reef sharks were observed at 26 of 28 survey sites, providing a good indicator that Lau's reef ecological functions can rebound significantly if structured and systematic management and protection mechanisms come to play.

Similarly, historic assessments and recent surveys of the Kadavu archipelago have demonstrated the significant biodiversity of the Kadavu islands, with multiple reefs of biodiversity significance. For example, Kadavu's Great Astrolabe Reef is characterized as a large barrier reef system that extends to the North of the island of Kadavu, containing spawning and aggregation grounds for inshore and offshore fisheries. Similarly, the adjacent Kadavu Plateau seamount is associated with incredibly dynamic upwelling areas that are key for major fisheries. The Province of Kadavu has established over 60 Locally Managed Marine Areas across 29 iqoliqolis (Wendt et al. 2016), identified and established through a community-based adaptive management process facilitated to balance fishing needs with continued ecological health and functioning.

The Lau and Kadavu archipelagos are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, specifically the increasingly intense and unpredictable weather events, such as cyclones. Despite significant biological diversity, important fisheries and community readiness, their remote locations have resulted in varying levels of support from and investment by government and civil society. Across both geographies, the increasing use of unsustainable and destructive fishing

practices among communities are impacting fish abundance and coral health. For example, overharvesting of invertebrate populations, such as sea cucumbers and giant clams, has caused ecological imbalances and increased algal cyanobacteria blooming on the reefs (Bruckner et al, 2016). The sea cucumber fishery is Fiji's second most important commercial fishery, following tuna (California Environmental Associates, 2016), however current extractions rates are unsustainable. When combined with the impacts of climate change on reef health and productivity, the continuation of current fishing and harvesting in both Kadavu and Lau will result in a reduction in coastal fisheries productivity, which will impact the health and livelihoods of island communities, as well as the degradation and destruction of globally significant biodiversity within the Lau and Kadavu EBSA.

In tandem, the lack of protections with Fiji's offshore and archipelagic waters threatens the long-term viability of its marine fisheries, that provide food security benefits to island communities. Encroachment of traditional fishing grounds from offshore fishers and industrial vessels contribute to food insecurity and threaten local livelihoods. Nationally, 75% of the country's domestic tuna fleet stopped operating between 2010 to 2015 as increasing competition from foreign fleets compromised the economic viability of the domestic fleet, most of which were catching less than 50% of the volume of fish needed to break even (Gillett, 2014). If marine protection and management is not strengthened in both coastal and offshore areas in Fiji's Eastern Division, under the current business-as-usual scenario, coastal and nearshore fisheries will be insufficient to meet national food security needs. Bell, et al, identified Fiji as one of 11 Pacific Island countries and territories where coastal fisheries will not be sufficient to supply the fish needed for food security, which will be amplified by an increasing need to earn income to reduce hardship related to the impacts of climate change (Bell, et al., 2009).

The Fiji LMMA (FLMMA) network has demonstrated that community managed areas can have a positive impact in maintaining and revitalizing invertebrate populations that are critical for ecosystem health and functioning. While the FLMMA network has supported many communities to establish LMMAs and 'tabu' (protected) sites, most sites lack management plans or formal site monitoring. In some sites, that has resulted in lack of management action, such as addressing increases in invasive species. As noted by Brucker et al, COTS outbreaks are thought to be one of the main factors contributing to observed changes in coral composition and structure. Invasive species pose a major threat to biodiversity and ecosystem health across Fiji, including in the Kadavu and Lau Islands and reefs. Although Fiji is currently implementing a GEF project on Invasive Alien Species (IAS), it does not focus on addressing marine invasives and other species that contribute to coral system degradation. If action is not taken, the impact of COTS outbreaks will significantly damage coastal health and ecology. There is also one active project executed by the GoF (GEF 6) focused on strengthening the integration of LMMAs into Fiji's national MPA network by improving institutional and local capacity, management planning and monitoring (i.e. strengthened policy and legal frameworks, and improved management effectiveness). This project is expected to increase capacity, management, and policy around LMMAs, however given its resources and its constraints, it is not clear how the protection of LMMAs will be practically and institutionally integrated in the bigger scheme of PAs and MPAs in a holistic manner. This may lead to a significant institutional and practical conservation and management gap in the years to come.

The Lau Seascape initiative aims to empower and enable local communities to effectively co-manage, along with the national and provincial governments, Lau's rich marine resources to ensure long-term food security, biodiversity conservation and community well-being. Driven by their goals and ambitions for their islands, the Provincial Chiefs of Lau, as representatives of their island communities, formally endorsed the initiative in 2016. Building upon these commitments, the Lau Seascape is now a multi-partner initiative composed of government representatives, traditional leaders, private sector and NGO stakeholders, grounded in a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) among all partners. The Lau Seascape Strategy was launched in November 2019 and envisions "sustainable regenerative resources [management] by 2030 grounded in values of respect and collaborative participation."

Without resourcing and support for the delivery of this partnership, the aspirations of Lau's traditional leaders and island communities will remain unrealized, while the globally significant biodiversity of the Lau and Kadavu archipelagos becomes increasingly degraded, driven by unsustainable fishing in both the coastal areas and IUU fishing in archipelagic waters and offshore marine areas, leading to a loss of ecosystem services within coastal ecosystems. Due to the

remoteness of the Lau and Kadavu archipelagos, as climate change impacts increase, if ecosystem services such as fishing grounds are degraded, these islands will become increasingly uninhabitable.

Fiji's KBAs on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu are also in a state of decline (SPREP, 2013), as forest loss increases, causing equally devastating impacts to freshwater habitats and ecosystems. With increases in demand for kava in both domestic and international markets (PHAMA, 2018), farmers are seeking more area coverage and more fertile land for farming, with specific interest in native forest areas. Slope agriculture and use of chemical additives such as pesticides and fertilizers are also common practice, resulting in landslides and sedimentation of coral reefs. If alternatives for sustainable agriculture and value-addition are not delivered in partnership with local landowners, the impact of agricultural encroachment into native forest areas will result in a significant loss of Fiji's native forest area, as well as irreparable damage to freshwater biodiversity resulting from erosion, sedimentation and runoff. The loss of forest area will lead to the eventual loss of Fiji's many unique endemic species. To name a few, these include the Fiji Long-legged Warbler, the Fijian Blossom-bat and the Polynesian-Sheath-tail bat, as well as the Fijian Tree Frog and Green Tree Skink (Birdlife, 2020).

Table 2. Existing Programs and Projects of linked to the project

Project Name	Year s (Start-End)	Budget (US\$)	Donor(s)	Brief description on links to this GEF project
Community-based Integrated Natural Resources Management Project	2019-2023	2,420,770	GEF 6/UNDP	This project aims to promote community-based integrated natural resource management at landscape level to reduce land degradation, enhance carbon stocks and strengthen local livelihoods in Ra and Tai levu provinces (Land Degradation, Climate Change). This aligns with Outcome 1.1 of the Results Framework activities within KBAs in Ra Province.
Strengthening Fiji's Network of Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) to Support Globally Significant Marine Biodiversity	2019-2023	805,496	GEF 6/ UNDP	To strengthen and integrate Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) into Fiji's Marine Protected Area (MPA) system through improved institutional and local capacity, management planning and monitoring
				The program's overall objective is to: Improve the economic, social and environmental benefits for 15 Pacific ACP states (P

Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership Programme	2019 - 2023	45,000,000	European Union; The Pacific Community	ACPs) arising from stronger regional economic integration and the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment. The specific objective (outcome) is to: Support sustainable management and development of fisheries for food security and economic growth, while addressing climate change resilience and conservation of marine biodiversity. Project investments in Fiji will align with outcome 2.2 in the Results Framework.
Building consultative and transparent decision-making processes to increase sustainable fisheries management and marine protected areas for food security and biodiversity protection	2020 - 2023	1,200,000	Bloomberg Foundation Vibrant Oceans Fund	This project aligns with delivery of Outcome 2.2 under the project, to strengthen community-based fisheries management in the Lau Seascape and other sites through improvements in coastal management, including mainstreaming women in fisheries management.
Establishing the Lau Seascape to deliver sustainable development and ocean conservation at scale through a network of integrated ocean and island protected areas	2020 - 2022	920,000	GEF7/Blue Nature Alliance	This project will support development of the Lau Seascape initiative, including strengthening offshore and inshore protection commitments in partnership with government and indigenous peoples. This aligns directly with Outcome 2.1 and 2.3 of the Results Framework. The GEF is one of the funders of the BNA (through CI), GEF-7 ID: 10375. Name: Blue Nature Alliance to expand and improve conservation of 1.25 billion hectares of ocean ecosystems
Building Capacities to Address Invasive Alien Species to Enhance the				To improve the chances of the long-term

Chances of Long-term Survival of Terrestrial Endemic and Threatened Species on Taveuni Island and Surrounding Islets	2015 - 2022	3,502,968	GEF 6/UNDP	survival of terrestrial endemic and threatened species on Taveuni Island and surrounding islets by building national and local capacity to prevent, detect, control and manage Invasive Alien Species.
Implementing a "Ridge to Reef" Approach to Preserve Ecosystem Services, Sequester Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods in Fiji (Fiji R2R)	2015 - 2021	7,387,614	GEF 5/UNDP	To preserve biodiversity, ecosystem services, sequester carbon, improve climate resilience and sustain livelihoods through a ridge-to-reef management of priority watersheds in the two main islands of Fiji
Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN I; BIOFIN II)	2012 - 2022	1,000,000	UNDP/Set of bilateral donors	The project maps the impact of economic sectors on biodiversity, identifies the main financing mechanisms being used and reviews which subsidies have an impact on biodiversity. It also reviews the overall financing architecture for biodiversity in the country and generates specific recommendations for an improved institutional framework.

3. Proposed Alternative Scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project

The SAMBIO project will address biodiversity threats and their underlying causes through establishment of marine protected areas within a seascape approach, combined with strengthened management of terrestrial and freshwater KBAs within Fiji's Viti Levu and Vanua Levu landscapes. The SAMBIO project aims to expand protection and better manage Fiji's globally significant and locally economically and environmentally vital biodiversity by significantly advancing the formal network of marine and terrestrial protected areas, as well as improve the sustainable management of Fiji's KBAs and IBAs within forest and freshwater ecosystems. In addition, the project will progress sustainable financing for protected areas, while delivering and demonstrating the legal and policy frameworks necessary for establishment and management of Fiji's Protected Area network. The project fits within the GEF-7 Biodiversity focal area, notably Objective 1, on mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors, landscapes and seascapes, as well as Objective 2, that addresses direct drivers to protect habitats and species. The geographical focus includes biodiverse island systems in Fiji that are not formally protected, but house globally important key species and habitats that are critical, as also stipulated in Fiji's NBSAP. The specific target sites may, perhaps, not seem as homogeneous geographical units

for protection and management, from a project administration and coordination perspective, but were selected based on their biodiversity significance as KBAs and IBAs (terrestrial sites), as well as EBSAs and SUMAs (marine sites), possessing globally significant or representative biological diversity, special or important endemic species, threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats, and biological productivity or naturalness.

The project will aim to establish formal terrestrial protected areas covering 49,738 ha of the most critical and threatened biodiversity, and secure improved management of 24,564 ha of non-protected KBAs and IBAs, by addressing the most pressing drivers of ecosystem degradation and deforestation. Primarily, this will build on the efforts of previous interventions to formally designate protected areas using the land lease model, demonstrated in the Sovi Basin Protected Area (Naitasiri Province, Viti Levu) and the Kilaka Forest Conservation Area (Bua Province, Vanua Levu). The project will also deliver an alternative model to improve management of high biodiversity areas that are not formally protected, achieved through dynamic co-management (inclusive conservation) ^[1] between government and communities. These efforts will take place within a selection of critically significant terrestrial KBAs and IBAs on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Similarly, the project will work to establish offshore MPAs across 10,760,000 ha of ocean within Fiji's Eastern Division, while strengthening management of 1,579 ha of priority SUMA and EBSA areas in Lau, Kadavu and the Ringgold Islands, and improving management practices within 22,700,000 ha of marine habitat outside of protected areas. The offshore MPAs established and under improved management will collectively account for more than eight percent of the marine landscape of Fiji. In total, the project will secure marine and terrestrial ecosystem services for at least 150,925 people and provide direct livelihood benefits to at least 2,000 community members. Finally, the project will work closely with the Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment to advance sustainable financing necessary to support establishment and management of Fiji's PA and MPA network. On this basis, the project will strengthen and facilitate formal endorsement of Fiji's PA and MPA framework and establish protocols and enabling conditions for improved data collection and management for reporting and delivery in alignment to Fiji's NBSAP. The Theory of Change and Results Framework, summarized here, is given, respectively, in Appendix E and in Table B above in this document.

Component 1: Improvement of management and expansion of protection of terrestrial key biodiversity areas on Fiji's two largest islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu

Outcome 1.1: Forests and freshwater habitats outside of terrestrial protected areas on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu are under improved management to benefit biodiversity with enhanced local livelihood opportunities

Under this outcome, the project will expand protection and improve management of priority KBAs and IBA within forest and freshwater habitats outside of terrestrial protected areas in Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, delivering improved biodiversity outcomes, ecosystem service benefits for 7,820 Fijians. The project will first address critical knowledge gaps in freshwater systems through delivery of a freshwater KBA assessment, prioritizing analysis of freshwater sites across Fiji's two main islands (Output 1.1.1). This assessment will provide pivotal information necessary for the design of comprehensive and effective action strategies to preserve freshwater and forest biodiversity and reduce harmful impacts to freshwater systems. Building upon this work, the project will deliver co-management between government and communities (inclusive conservation) within priority freshwater and forest sites identified under the KBA assessment (Output 1.1.2). This will reduce the vulnerability of freshwater and forest KBAs and secure critical biodiversity and provisioning of ecosystem services upon which Fijian communities depend. An integrated element of these efforts is addressing the underlying drivers of freshwater and forest degradation, most critically, forest loss because of agricultural expansion, resulting in increased sedimentation and erosion within riverine systems. The project will tackle these issues by building more sustainable, yet profitable, approaches to agricultural production, focusing specifically on farming communities within and around IBAs and KBAs on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, while developing solutions that can be replicated nationally across Fiji's KBA and IBA network (Output 1.1.3).

Outcome 1.2: KBAs and IBAs are newly designated as terrestrial protected areas on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu

Under this outcome, the project will establish new protected areas covering 49,738 ha of KBAs and IBAs on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, benefitting 122,546 people, the population of districts living within and adjacent to proposed sites. The project will first conduct biodiversity assessments where necessary to determine the boundaries and delineation of the protected areas within each proposed site (Output 1.2.1). Following this, the project will conduct stakeholders' discussions and consultations with landowners to secure or reaffirm the consent of landowners to place their area under a conservation lease (Output 1.2.2). Finally, a management plan will be developed for each site that focuses on co-management, which is critical for successful delivery of improved biodiversity protection through an inclusive conservation approach (Output 1.2.3). Inclusive conservation is expected to narrow the current gap in the fragmentation of biodiversity protection from a geographic and governance coherence perspective. Finally, the new protected areas will be legally secured through a 99-year lease agreement between community leaders and the Government of Fiji (Output 1.2.4), under a typology that maintains indigenous rights to access and use of the forest areas.

Component 2: Establishment of new and better management of existing MPAs/LMMAs within the Fiji's Eastern Division

This component is focused on expansion and enhancement of management effectiveness of Fiji's MPAs system, including coastal, offshore and archipelagic waters, within Fiji's Eastern Division. The component will focus on Fiji's Lau Seascape, the Kadavu archipelago and the Ringgold Islands. The project will help deliver sizeable MPAs within Fiji's Eastern Division, specifically within priority EBSAs and SUMAs in Lau, Kadavu and in the Ringgold Islands, to significantly strengthen protection of Fiji's globally important marine biodiversity while improving management of coastal ecosystems that provide critical food security, livelihood and other ecosystem services to Fijian communities. This component will be operationalized under the leadership of the Fiji Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment, facilitating the formal establishment of 10,761,579 ha of MPAs within Fiji's Eastern Division, in alignment with Fiji's zero-draft candidate MPA map developed by IUCN Oceania under Fiji's Protected Areas Committee, as key technical stakeholders. In addition, the project will support strengthened management of 1,579 ha of coastal and nearshore areas in Lau, Kadavu and the Ringgold Islands, and improved management practices within 22,700,000 ha of marine habitat outside of protected areas in the Lau Seascape.

Outcome 2.1: Offshore areas and archipelagic waters critical for biodiversity are designated as MPAs in Fiji's Eastern Division within the Lau Seascape and Kadavu archipelago

The project will assess the marine biodiversity for outlying islands and will develop boundaries of new MPAs across existing EBSAs and SUMAs within Fiji's Eastern Division, primarily in Kadavu, Lau, and the Ringgold Islands (EBSA/SUMA-guided expansion of protected areas). The marine biodiversity assessment will be conducted within Fiji's relevant outlying islands in the Eastern Division to fill critical information gaps and inform development of MPAs within Fiji's archipelagic and nearshore waters, particularly in the Ringgold Islands where additional information is needed (Output 2.1.1). Second, the project will develop a Management Plan for each MPA based on criteria and delineation derived from technical and multi-level stakeholder workshops (Output 2.1.2). Building upon this plan, offshore MPAs will be legally designated with established co-management guidelines (inclusive conservation) in Lau and Kadavu within Fiji's Eastern Division, in alignment with key actions outlined in Fiji's NBSAP (Output 2.1.3). Legal designation will be delivered through a consultative stakeholder engagement process, that outlines key considerations for co-management and inclusive conservation of marine and coastal resources.

Outcome 2.2: Coastal and nearshore marine areas in Kadavu, the Ringgold Islands and Lau under improved management effectiveness with enhanced livelihoods delivered to island communities

Building upon the establishment of offshore MPAs under Outcome 2.1, the project will aim to improve management effectiveness of 1,579 ha of coastal and nearshore areas, including through improved livelihoods, within Lau, Kadavu and the Ringgold Islands. The project will work closely with island communities and key stakeholders to design biodiversity management and restoration strategies within key sites in Kadavu and the Ringgold Islands that integrate food security and community livelihoods imperatives (Output 2.2.1), building from the example of the Lau Seascape Strategy. These strategies will be based on

Fiji's NBSAP (GoF 2020) and other relevant coastal and mangrove plans including the Integrated Coastal Management Programme (2003), Integrated Coastal Management Framework of the Republic of Fiji (2011), Mangrove Management Plan (2013), National Policy Plan for Fiji Mangroves (1986) and the Ra and Kadavu Integrated Coastal Management Plans. The project will then engage with local communities to develop district and provincial level management plans in alignment with these strategies (Output 2.2.2). Building upon these efforts, the project will contribute to improved sustainable livelihoods of island communities, supporting at least 1,000 direct beneficiaries with training and technical assistance. This will include identifying livelihood opportunities, including commodities and products that can be sustainably harvested and providing technical assistance for product development and market access, through a market analysis and local value-addition in an environmental protection context (Output 2.2.3).

Outcome 2.3: Marine habitats outside of MPAs in the Lau Seascape archipelago are under improved management, strengthening biodiversity protection at scale and benefitting local community livelihoods

Under outcome 2.3, project activities will strengthen management of the Lau Seascape covering 22,700,000 ha of marine habitat outside of formal MPAs and LMMAs to improve management, strengthen biodiversity protection and bolster resilience of at least 9,600 Fijians, the total population of Lau Province. Working closely with traditional leaders and a range of stakeholders under the Lau Seascape initiative, the project will develop a management plan for the Lau Seascape and implement key actions in alignment with the Fiji NBSAP (Output 2.3.1). This will include development of a zonation plan for areas outside of protected areas, with a significant focus on improving monitoring and conservation of high biodiversity areas (Output 2.3.2). Once finalized, a co-management and monitoring system will be piloted to improve monitoring and enforcement within the Lau Seascape boundaries, in partnership with the Fijian Navy (Output 2.3.3). The pilot effort will take place within the northern Lau Seascape with at least three islands and associated communities, providing recommendations for amplification of the model to all maritime islands across the Lau Seascape, and possibly Fiji. Finally, to address future drivers of degradation within Fiji's maritime zones, a regional ecotourism strategy will be developed for Fiji's Eastern Division, which will include close partnership and consultation with key stakeholders.

Component 3: Enabling conditions strengthened to accelerate expansion and improved management of Fiji's PA and MPA network, in full alignment with Fiji's NBSAP

At the national level, the project will work closely with key ministry stakeholders to build the enabling conditions for achievement of Fiji's Aichi targets and delivery of its NBSAP, including improved population health and status of key species, development of protected areas and sustainable financing strategies, and land/seascape management.

Outcome 3.1: A national sustainable financing framework is developed to fund forest, coastal and marine ecosystem protection benefitting Fiji's entire PA and MPA network.

The project will design national sustainable financing programs and strategies to support the management of Fiji's PA and MPA network. Building on the outputs from Fiji's GEFPAS4 program and UNDP's BIOFIN^[2] project, key sustainable financing strategies will be refined. at the national level to support resourcing for priority protected areas (Output 3.1.1). These will then be actioned within key terrestrial protected areas that will be formalized under the project (Output 3.1.2), in alignment with delivery of Outcome 1.2.

Outcome 3.2: Fiji's key biodiversity areas and keystone species better managed and protected against climate change and anthropogenic impacts, in alignment with the NBSAP.^[3]

Building on the implementation of priority actions within key sites, the project will advance delivery of Fiji's Aichi targets through strengthening of protection for key species. This will include the development of priority species management and recovery plans, which are central to enhancing biodiversity-driven effectiveness of protected area systems (Output 3.2.1). This effort will be considered an integral part of the overall effort to enhance conservation management and the respective plans, as per Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) guidance and GEF Focal Area Investment. In addition, the project will seek government endorsement of the protected areas framework in Fiji to address legal and policy oriented uncertainties with the protected area establishment process (Output 3.2.2), in alignment with the sustainable financing framework developed under Output 3.1.1.

Outcome 3.3: Data management and tracking systems in place and community and government groups trained to monitor and report on resources management at scale, for delivery of key NBSAP priorities

In addition to establishing MPAs, improving management of KBAs and IBAs, and developing long-term financing strategies to fund management actions beyond the project timeline, the project will also develop biodiversity data management tracking tools to improve upon delivery of the NBSAP, in partnership with community and government stakeholders through the co-management approach. This will include the establishment of a data management system, that centralizes information and data on PAs and MPAs in Fiji (Output 3.3.1), as well as establishment of a tracking system to strengthen reporting on national commitments related to protection of biodiversity and benefits (Output 3.3.2). This will further require working closely with government agencies and providing training and capacity building on these data management and tracking systems, as key tools for delivery of Fiji's NBSAP (Output 3.3.3). The project will also support community capacity building around the NBSAP Implementation and Reporting Framework (Output 3.3.4).

Component 4: Monitoring and evaluation plans inform adaptive management

Outcome 4.1: Monitoring and evaluation in place and used to facilitate adaptive management

Under Component 4, a participatory monitoring and evaluation program will be developed (Output 4.1.1) to ensure tracking against all deliverables under the project. Building on this Output, the monitoring and evaluation program will be implemented under the project (Output 4.1.2) and a final report on monitoring and evaluation program will be delivered (Output 4.1.3). Gender will be mainstreamed into this component as it will be mainstreamed throughout the whole project and will be guided by a gender strategy as stipulated in the gender equality and empowerment section of the proposal. Learnings from this project that are captured through these efforts will be stored and disseminated to a multitude of relevant stakeholders through the approaches outlined in the knowledge management section of this document.

Ultimately, the SAMBIO project will address biodiversity loss, and associated environmental degradation and loss of sustainable livelihoods through three components, supported by a fourth component related to monitoring and evaluation. The project will deliver a series of outcomes and outputs described below in Table 1b. Approaches will include trialing and tuning of new models of community managed PAs and enhanced local community management of

surrounding and connecting forest and coastal areas. In a COVID-19 context, it is also envisaged that the project will contribute to enhancing these regulating ecosystem services that prevent the spill over of viruses from one species to the other, as increased biodiversity can act as a bio-buffer and provide increased resilience to potential shocks, such as the current pandemic.

CI as the Implementing Agency, in tandem with the Project Management Team and the Project Steering Committee (PSC) will ensure coordination with existing projects at the national level, as well as being implemented in the proposed target areas of the current proposal (see baseline section). They will also ensure alignment of the project with new initiatives and projects that begin during the preparation and the implementation of the proposed project. In this regard, CI will guide the PSC to propose adaptive management interventions as the need arises, to ensure technical and financial coordination with other activities.

4. Alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies

The project aligns with the GEF-7 biodiversity focal area objectives BD-1-1, Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors, and BD-2-7, Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species and improve financial sustainability, effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate. The project increases coverage and improves management of priority habitats/ecosystems through setting up of new protected areas, improving the management of existing protected areas, and strengthening management of areas not formally under protection. It explores putting financial resources in place for long term management and examines opportunities for public and private sector financing. It also helps build institutional, community and individual capacity to manage PAs and MPAs, putting in place stronger legislation and institutional support as well as community network engagement in an inclusive conservation setting. It implements co-management and new models for protection—helping to unlock bottlenecks in terrestrial protected area designation. The Project helps enhance climate change resilience by scaling up protection to cover land and seascapes, and it also helps fill in significant gaps in global biodiversity protection, particularly in the marine ecosystems given the scale and size of effort, and helps include endemic island species into terrestrial protection as part of global targets.

5. Incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing

This GEF investment is very timely with respect to Fiji's present state of development. The incremental approach can be summarized as follows: the project will seek to safeguard marine and terrestrial biodiversity from the threats listed in section II.1 through (i) Improved management and expansion of protection of KBAs and IBAs; (ii) Expansion and improved management of MPAs, LMMAs and adjacent marine environment; and (iii) creation of the enabling governance environment and the capacities for Fiji to enhance the management of species, protected areas, landscapes and seascapes (delivering on its Aichi commitments) and to monitor progress and report on biodiversity.

Without project interventions, the fragmentation of the island habitats and degradation caused by the range of threats identified above will not only continue but will most likely accelerate as human populations and economic pressures, including tourism, are expected to increase. There will be insufficient investment in protected area management, resulting in the loss of unique biodiversity with significant costs and detriment to Fiji's national economy.

The GEF investment will seize the opportunity and fill the existing gaps in terms of financing strategies, coordination and capacities for the protection of biodiversity enhancing the management effectiveness of KBAs, PAs, MPAs and LMMAs, expanding the National and Global Protected Areas Network (PAN), preventing species extinctions, sustainably safeguarding globally significant biodiversity, and improving community livelihoods through an innovative and

inclusive co-management model.

Table: Baseline, Alternatives and Global Environmental Benefits of the proposed project

Baseline Practices	Alternatives to be put in place by the project	Global Environmental Benefits
Lack of protection and management of terrestrial and freshwater KBAs in Fiji leads to biodiversity loss and water degradation from unsustainable practices and unregulated use of natural resources	Identification and definition of terrestrial and marine areas for improved management and expansion PAN to reverse biodiversity loss and protect high value species	Improved management and protection of 10,761,579 hectares of MPAs with enhanced protection and recognition status comprising of 8.15% of Fiji's total EEZ
Low proportion of marine and coastal areas under effective management practices and official protection status in Fiji leading to increasing pressures on vulnerable habitats of threatened and endemic species	Innovative co-management model with implementation guidelines are established between Government, NGOs and communities for coordinated management of key freshwater sites and PAs in offshore and archipelagic waters, with roadmap for scaling up to all islands based on a common conservation/development vision	KBAs/IBAs under new protection and improved management practices, comprising 4% of Fiji's total land area
Uncontrolled use of marine protected areas and keystone species continues, resulting in local declines and possible extinctions, particularly given the high rate of endemism	Development of a data management system, specific Management Plans for each MPA, specific Management Plans for LMMAs, and specific plans for marine areas outside protected areas for improved network coordination, management and enforcement	Innovative co-management model established and demonstrated at project sites with a roadmap for scaling up (best practices for global use), contributing significantly to the existing pool of co-management approaches.
	Mainstreaming of biodiversity concerns into the Consolidated District Management Plan and Elevation of the PA and MPA framework	Populations of endemic and threatened species will be protected from the threats listed under section II.1
		Populations of other high value species at project sites will be safeguarded

<p>Lack of resources and governance infrastructure for efficient planning, management, coordination, recovery, monitoring, and financing frameworks (management of species, land, seascape) leading to intensification of environmental impacts from the continuously increasing and uncontrolled use of natural resources</p>	<p>to a formal government policy for improved biodiversity governance</p> <p>Establishment and training of YMSGs at village and District level for improved management of biodiversity across the board</p> <p>Development, refinement, and implementation of sustainable financing strategies harmonized to the revised PA/MPA framework to address funding gaps, tackling the issue in an integrated manner.</p> <p>Capacity building at community and government levels to support improved biodiversity management and national and international policy commitments</p>	<p>equivalent</p> <p>Reduction of environmental impacts across the board in and around project sites</p> <p>Provision of long-term, participatory, and sustainable mechanisms for the management of biodiversity and the reduction of threats</p> <p>Increased awareness and capacities for 10% of project communities population (50% women) in biodiversity protection and management</p> <p>At least US\$ 32 million leveraged in co-financing and invested into safeguarding globally significant biodiversity (TBC)</p>
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6. Global Environmental Benefits (GEFTF)

The project will contribute to safeguarding globally significant biodiversity and its ecosystem goods and services in a manner that strengthens the livelihoods in local communities engaging them in direct co-management and custodianship. The project will also contribute to the goals of the CBD / Aichi targets in implementing activities identified in Fiji's NBSAP, such as Target 11 which states that 17% of terrestrial and inland water, and 10% of coastal and marine areas should be efficiently safeguarded. The project will facilitate the expansion, management and protection of MPAs adding significantly to the National and Global PAN, but also bring KBAs under improved management. In this regard, it will protect species of global significance from a variety of threats and while

reducing the intensity of overall environmental impacts in and around the project sites. Innovative co-management models will be developed and deployed with a roadmap for scaling up to benefit and provide lessons learned to communities in other parts of the planes. The proposed mechanism for the protection of biodiversity and the reduction of threat will provide long-term and sustainable results while awareness and capacities for biodiversity protection and active participatory co-management will be increased. The project leverages co-financing from other global, regional, and national donors and entities generating a serious investment to protect globally significant biodiversity.

Specifically, the project will bring 49,738 ha of forest and freshwater habitats under new protected areas and deliver improved management of 24,564 ha of landscapes to benefit biodiversity on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. It will improve management of 22,700,000 ha of marine landscape habitat not formally protected and establish 10,760,000 ha of marine habitat as MPAs in Fiji's Eastern Province. It will furthermore improve the management effectiveness of 1,579 ha of coastal and nearshore MPAs. The project will benefit (directly) about 150,925 people with specific livelihoods support to at least 2,000 people.

7. Innovation, Sustainability and Potential for Scaling up

SAMBIO's innovative approaches include more effectively and efficiently advancing the protection of KBAs, IBAs, EBSAs and SUMAs through a biodiversity science informed and guided expansion of Fiji's PAN (and as a model of expansion of the Global PAN), in full alignment with the Fiji's NBSAP (GoF, 2020). The project will pioneer iterative, co-management models—community and organizations (LMMA, Yaubula Management Support Teams (YMST)), government (Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment, and the Ministries of Forestry, Fisheries and Agriculture) and conservation NGOs—of KBAs and IBAs, to deliver strong protection, governance coordination, and sustainable utilization of Fiji's biodiversity that are based upon action monitoring, development of sustainable livelihoods and traditional resource conservation management practices. It will be the first project of this nature and scale for the country with two more noteworthy elements of innovation seen in (a) the work on KBAs as sites contributing significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity in a freshwater context in SIDS, which can be *defacto* used as guidance for the expansion of PAs, and (b) the engagement of the Fijian Navy in piloting the co-management and monitoring of MPAs. For the latter, wider reach and enhanced active control of the MPAs is expected to be one of the groundbreaking benefits of this partnership in the proposed co-management model. In Fiji's Eastern Division, the project will be guided by the Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment to establish a network of MPAs in the Lau-Kadavu EBSA, while further strengthening the management of coastal resources and biodiversity in partnership with local communities, statutory bodies and NGOs, such as National Trust of Fiji and FLMMMA.

The project is innovative, not only for the South Pacific, but for all SIDS in its utilization of land and seascape models, to improve marine conservation outcomes by extending management actions to vast ocean areas that encompass both MPA networks as well as sustainable production zones, such as commercial fisheries and ecotourism zones. These models have not yet been adopted widely globally but represent a major potential to connect networks of PAs as well as KBAs and IBAs through holistic, better integrated management approaches and coordination across different geographies and layers of protection. These efforts will address threats to ecological keystone species, such as sharks, as well as expand livelihood options to reduce local extractive pressures on forest, coastal and marine ecosystems.

Sustainability is addressed in different dimensions of the proposed project: (a) Institutional sustainability is sought through the review of PA/MPA framework, the Management Plans for each site, and the legal designation of new PAs/MPAs galvanizing the commitment for protection, (b) Social/Behavioral (change) sustainability through ownership of the newly developed co-management model from all stakeholders and especially the actual custodians of the areas (i.e.

the local communities), and (c) Financial sustainability achieved through the development of a specific framework with inclusive programs and strategies underlining the formalization of protection status, harmonized with the reviewed PA/MPA framework.

The opportunities for scaling up are substantial, given the creation of new models for establishing terrestrial PAs, and through the land and seascape approaches. The seascape model represents a convergence of community-based management through inclusive conservation approaches and large-scale monitoring and protection with the support of the Navy, which is innovation for the region by itself, and will achieve marine conservation at scale by establishing an expansive network of interlinked marine and terrestrial protected areas and multi-use managed areas, including smaller community-based managed areas and larger co-managed MPAs. Piloting of improved communications between local communities and Government agencies, especially the Fiji Navy, will be crucial to better policing to address illegal fishing. The Lau and other Seascapes designated will demonstrate effective measures to bridge these different scales of governance to deliver national goals through a community driven/inclusive conservation approach, a model that can be readily replicated in all SIDS. As the largest maritime province, the Lau Seascape is critical for Fiji to meet its 30% protection commitment, and because it is driven by the indigenous Lauans, success will inspire global recognition of the vital importance of indigenous communities in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

It is envisaged that during the intervention, programs will be integrated into government workplans and agendas. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development & National Disaster Management under the Fiji 2020 Agriculture Policy Agenda promotes sustainable agriculture, recognizing organic production systems as a pathway to fulfilling policy objectives. SAMBIO will ensure close collaboration with the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture, to support integration of long-term monitoring and continued support to organic farmers into their workplan. Similarly, the establishment of YMSTs, or community-based environment committees, is a policy priority of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment. YMSTs will be established in conjunction with the Ministry to ensure that post-project coordination and follow-up is continued by Ministry focal points and TAB conservation officers. As economic development of the fisheries sector is a core objective of the Ministry of Fisheries, it is anticipated that the Integrated Coastal Management Plans developed under the Activity will provide the enabling environment for local fishers in the eastern maritime areas to assess resource capacity and potential for harvesting and market sale. Additional support for scale-up will be provided by the Ministry of Fisheries both during and upon completion of the project. The new approaches and consultation strategies engaged under SAMBIO will be able to be replicated throughout Fiji, the Pacific Islands region, and across SIDS.

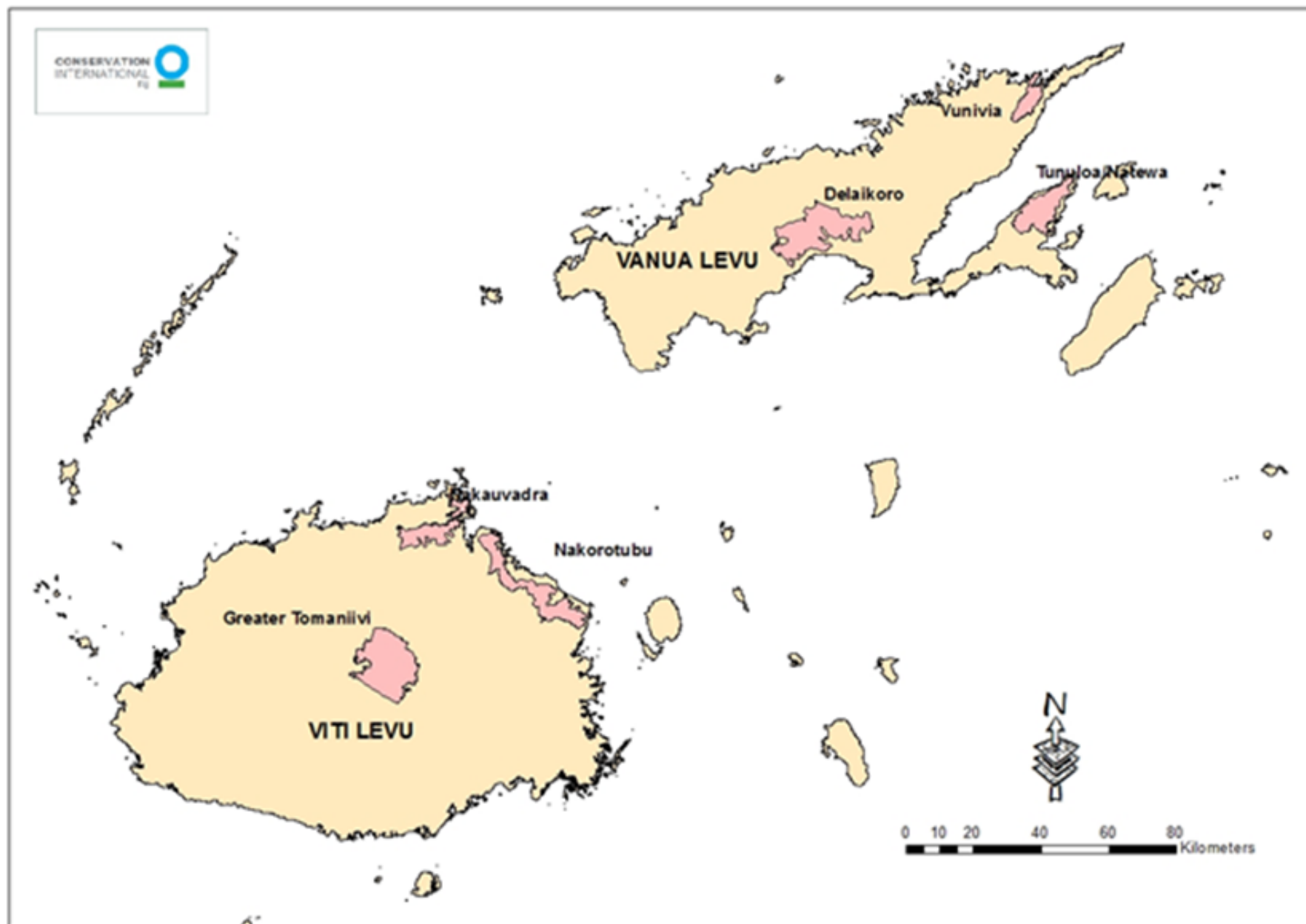
[1] CI is co-leading the GEF funded Inclusive Conservation Initiative (GEF ID: 10404) and will establish internal inter-project channels to make certain that the inclusive conservation dimension of the proposed project will be benefitted by global good practices and lessons learned (and vice versa)

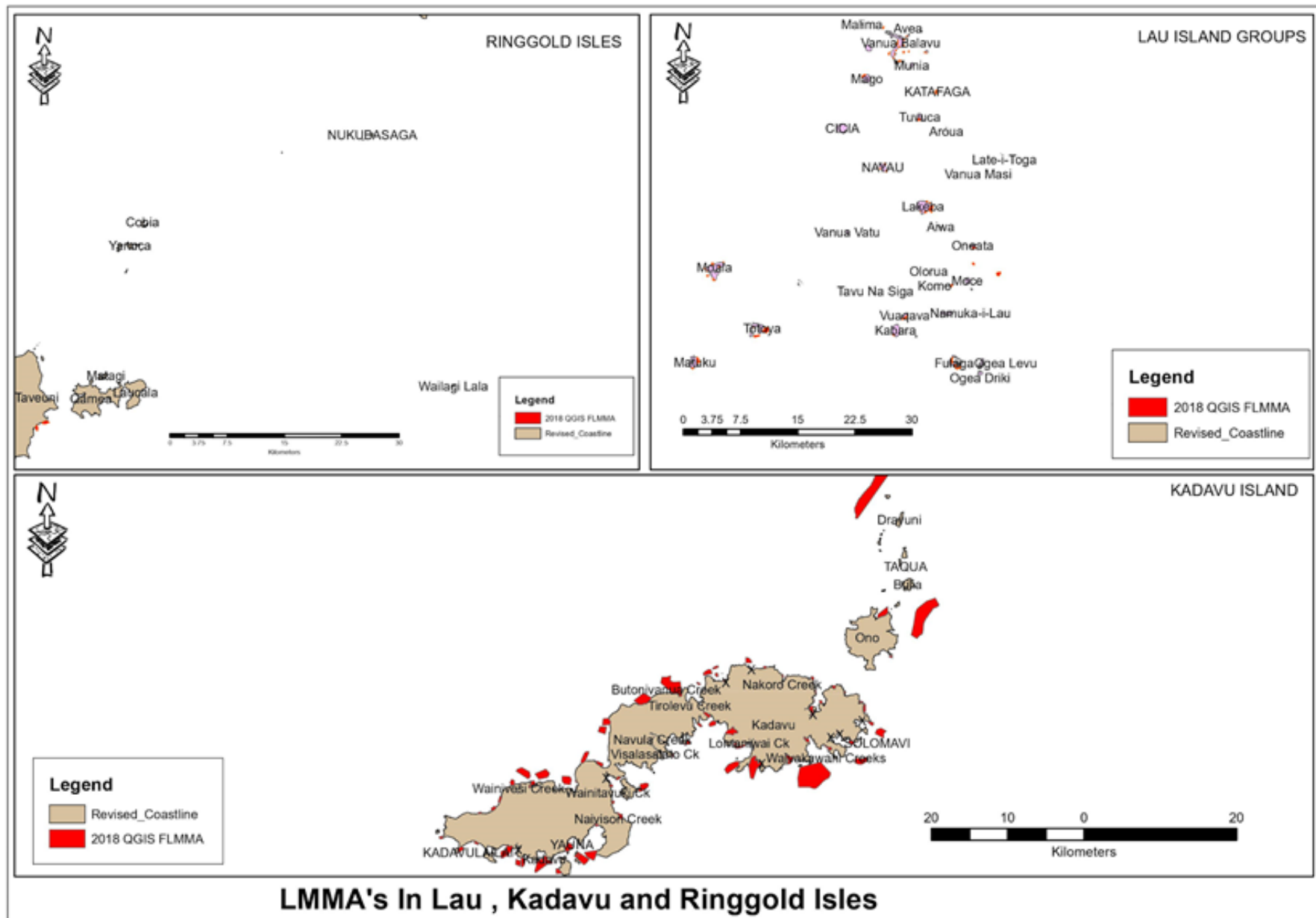
[2] The project will build on results of BIOFIN to promote investment in biodiversity conservation and facilitate the expanded uptake of the eco-tourism strategy within or in areas adjacent to the selected project sites.

[3] In complete alignment with Fiji's NBSAP (GoF, 2020)

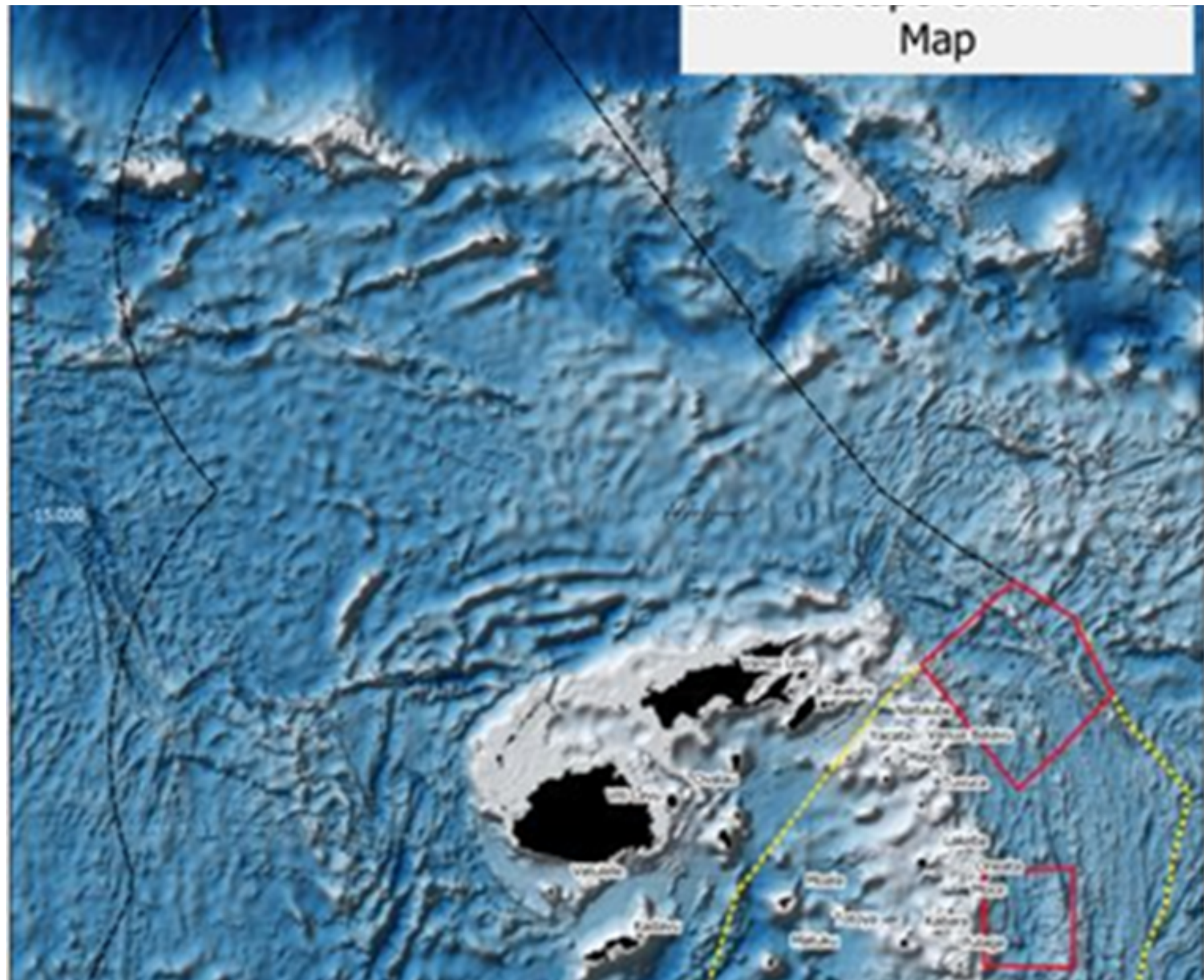
1b. Project Map and Coordinates

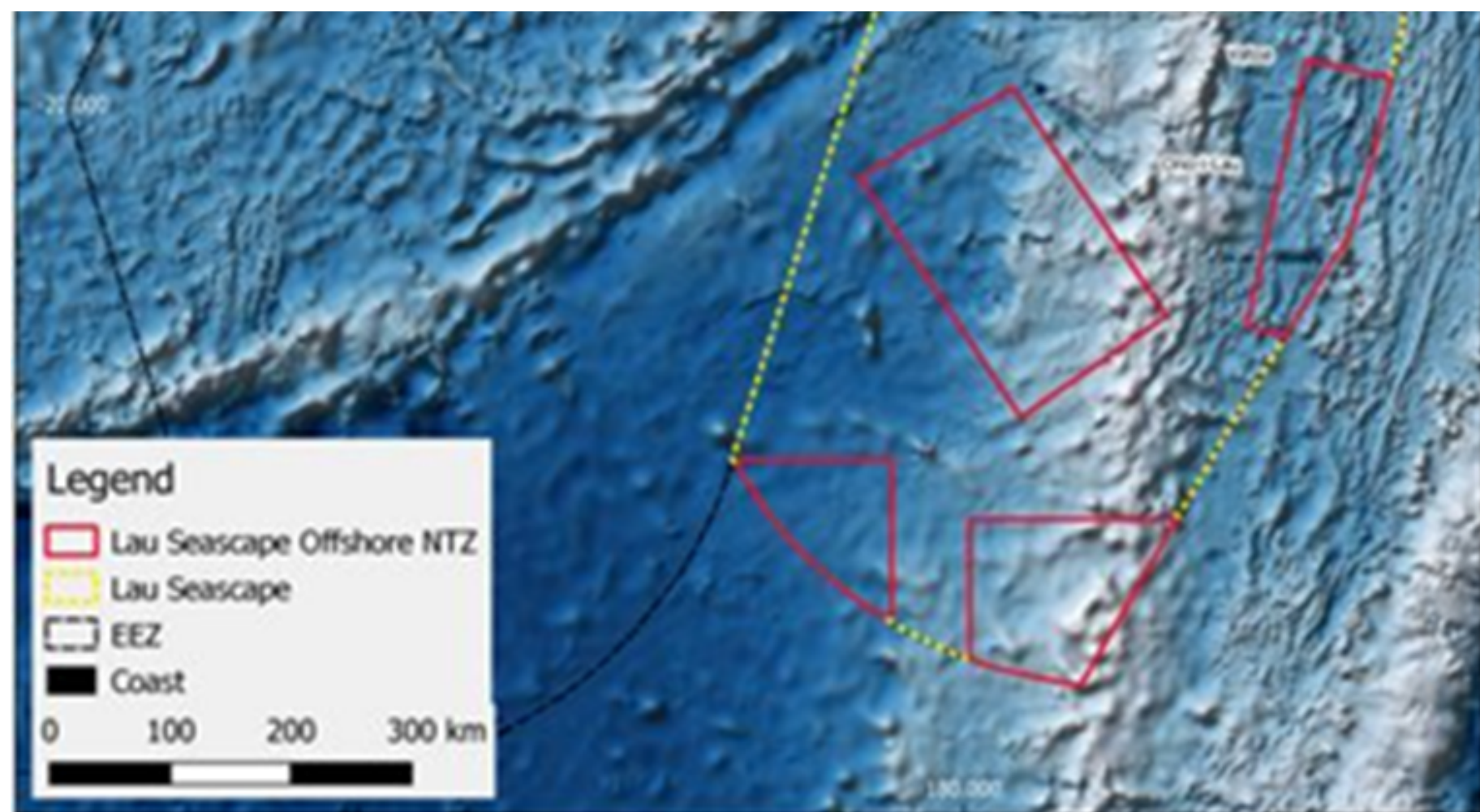
Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.





Map





2. Stakeholders

Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Yes

Civil Society Organizations Yes

Private Sector Entities Yes

If none of the above, please explain why:

The GEF7 National Dialogue for Fiji took place in December, 2018, where negotiations and initial consultations began related to Fiji's biodiversity programming, and CI originally submitted a project idea for consideration by the Fiji Department of Environment.

Key stakeholders engaged in the development and design of the PIF include representatives of the Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Forests, Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs (Ra, Lau and Kadavu Provincial Offices). In addition, key technical experts from Fiji's NGO community were also consulted, including representatives from the Protected Areas Committee Bird Life International, and the statutory body the National Trust of Fiji. In addition, a traditional representative of the Lau Seascape was thoroughly consulted in the design of the activities under the Lau Seascape, in alignment with the Lau Seascape 2030 Strategy, developed in partnership with all of Lau's traditional leadership. To date, these consultations have been conducted through stakeholder meetings and interviews in which the PIF narrative and results framework were shared, and critical feedback, inputs and suggestions gathered and integrated into the PIF.

At the initiation of the PPG stage, CI will develop a stakeholders engagement plan using a systematic approach for the selection and involvement of multi-level and multi-disciplinary stakeholders. During this phase, a more thorough stakeholder engagement and consultation plan is envisioned. First, the proposed project will be recirculated to all relevant technical working groups, including Fiji's Protected Areas Committee under the National Environment Council, as well as Fiji's Marine Technical Working Group under the Ministry of Environment. Second, indigenous leaders and community representatives from all proposed sites will be thoroughly consulted through site-based workshops, focus group discussions and other stakeholder discussions. CSOs and NGOs working within the project geographies will be invited to attend to strengthen their site-based engagement in the detailed project design. CI will use structured local workshops at site level, and a structured validation workshop at national level, to increase local ownership and align activities to the consensual direction of all stakeholders. As noted above, project activities will further support delivery of the Lau Seascape Strategy, which has been endorsed by all relevant parties under the Lau Seascape MOU.

In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.

Key stakeholders engaged in the development of the project include representatives of the Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Forests, Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs (Ra, Lau and Kadavu Provincial Offices). At the PPG phase of the project, indigenous leaders and community representatives from all proposed sites will also be included in stakeholder discussions, as well as CSOs and NGOs working within the project geographies. Project activities will align with delivery of the Lau Seascape Strategy, which has been endorsed by all relevant parties under the Lau Seascape MOU.

Stakeholder	Means of consultation/involvement during project execution	The means and timing of engagement	The means of information dissemination
Government agencies – Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Forests, Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment, and Ministry of iTaukei Affairs	Inter-agency project steering committee meetings with key government focal points represented	Scheduled consultations upon approval by the GEF Secretariat	Dedicated communication through the usual govt correspondence like email, social media, etc.
Civil Society Organizations, including local and international NGOs	FGDs or roundtable discussion	Scheduled consultations upon approval by the GEF Secretariat	Dedicated communication through the usual govt correspondence like email, social media, etc.
Academic and research institutions (University of the South Pacific; Fiji National University)	FGDs or roundtable discussion	Scheduled consultations upon approval by the GEF Secretariat	Dedicated communication through the usual govt correspondence like email, social media, etc.
Private sector companies, including tourism sector representatives	FGDs or roundtable discussion	Scheduled consultations upon approval by the GEF Secretariat	Dedicated communication through the usual govt correspondence like email, social media, etc.
Local Government Units	Area visits or community gatherings on-site	Scheduled consultations upon approval by the GEF Secretariat	Awareness-raising activity and information sharing during the area visit.

Traditional communities	Area visits or community gatherings on-site	Scheduled consultations upon approval by the GEF Secretariat	Awareness-raising activity and information sharing during the area visit.
Marginalized groups, including women, and youth	Dedicated visits and separate FGDs at community gatherings on-site	Scheduled consultations upon approval by the GEF Secretariat	Face-to-face interactions and group activities during the area visit; email and phone calls as appropriate

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis).

Fiji is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and has committed to addressing issues of discrimination against women and achieving social and economic rights for women in Fiji. In recent years, Fiji has made progress towards commitments under CEDAW, progress which will be further advanced under the project to address priority gaps. The Fiji Country Gender Assessment 2015 (ADB, 2016) highlights that rural women in Fiji have fewer economic opportunities and that women across Fiji are subject to high levels of violence from men. The Country Gender Assessment recommends strategic analyses of gender-based roles and control of access to resources, promoting equitable access to economic opportunities for both women and men as a central component to addressing the high prevalence of Gender-based Violence (GBV) in Fiji.

The project will work closely with traditional communities within their islands and qoliqolis (traditional fishing grounds) to formally establish or strengthen the protection of high biodiversity areas (KBAs) and to secure long-term provisioning of ecosystem services that have been lost or degraded as a result of unsustainable use or overharvesting. The project will specifically engage marginalized groups, including women and youth, in project activities, by developing a gender strategy with a specific gender mainstreaming and monitoring plan in alignment with the standards of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the Rights-based Approach (RBA) to Conservation. In designing this plan, the project will follow the guidelines of *CI's Gender Policy*, *CI's Guidelines for Integrating Gender and Social Equity into Conservation Programming*, and finally, the recently published guidelines entitled *Gender-based violence: recognizing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) in community conservation*. The project will subsequently contribute directly to the generation of information needed for the analysis recommended from the 2015 Country Gender Assessment.

In addition to strengthening the engagement and participation of women in community-based natural resources decision-making, the project will develop an economic empowerment strategy grounded in improving sustainable livelihoods in which women are engaged. Evidence demonstrates that when women are engaged in income generating opportunities, including through increased access to markets, this enables them to receive more economic gain for their current effort and can address societal inequalities (Fleming et al, 2019). This often contributes to reductions in over-harvesting of resources for cash income, delivering improved health and protection of island ecosystems. Similarly, when women's entrepreneurship contributes to household and village income and food security, this improves women's societal standing and breaks down systems of inequity, including gender-based violence. Finally, working with traditional leaders to increase the role of women in environmental decision-making further improves ecosystem management outcomes and reduces conflict and gender-based violence within communities.

At the community level, the project will follow gender transformative approaches rooted in respect for and cooperation with traditional clan chiefs and leaders to foster culturally appropriate and inclusive community enrichment and change. When the project is further developed during the PPG phase, a gender analysis will inform specific activities being proposed which include women and youth (e.g. training, capacity building, the development and implementation of the co-management model). In using the gender analysis, the project will seek to address any gender gaps regarding access to and control over natural resources, supported by specific budget lines and measured by specific gender disaggregated indicators^[1], all of which will be delivered under the umbrella of the gender strategy. As a result of these interventions, women will be empowered to make significant contributions to the process of establishing PAs/MPAs,

extending the PAN, the co-management model, and the monitoring of priority sites. During project implementation, the role of women in decision-making relating to access to traditional knowledge associated with the management of natural resources will be carefully documented and analyzed for greater understanding on the dynamics of gender and power, as related to natural resources decisions in specific community settings. The gender strategy, apart from guiding project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, will also be embedded in the PA/MPA management plans as a gender strategy for Fiji's PAN.

Moreover, project approaches will be aligned to the FLMMA network values and aspirations, as well as regional fisheries (e.g. Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Fisheries, A New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathways to Change: The Noumea Strategy) and gender (e.g. Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, Pacific Plan for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights) commitments. Gender and social inclusion training will be provided to key project staff and partners engaging to training modules developed for the SPC Pacific Handbook for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Fisheries and Aquaculture.

[1] Gender disaggregated indicators will be part of the Project Results Framework. Furthermore, additional data will be collected such as: (i) total number of male and female full-time project staff; (ii) total number of male and female Project Board members; and (iii) number of jobs created by the project that are held by women and men.

Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes

closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; Yes

improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or Yes

generating socio-economic benefits or services for women. Yes

Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

4. Private sector engagement

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.

The private sector will be engaged in the project in several ways and at site, national, and regional levels. Specifically in the post-COVID-19 global economic context, private sector engagement will be critical to secure enhanced and sustained livelihood benefits for island communities within forest and coastal areas, recognized as an underlying factor necessary for sustainable use of natural resources and maintenance of ecosystem services provisioning. During activities at site level, private sector actors will be engaged to bolster these livelihood interventions, such as by providing technical assistance to specific communities on product value-addition or improving community access to profitable markets. Key stakeholders will include Talanoa Treks and other members of the Duavata Collective, as well as social enterprise entities such as Loving Islands. Where applicable, private sector tourism partners will be engaged to support delivery of the co-management model such as through site-level data collection and monitoring, and for active participation in raising awareness. More specifically the project will engage tourism sector representatives that seek to enhance the shared values of cultural heritage and the environment, including both smaller-scale (Duavata Collective) and corporate operators. Active engagement with private sector partners will specifically support, among others, outputs 1.1.2 (co-management model), 1.1.3 (agricultural livelihoods), 2.2.3 (coastal community livelihoods), and 3.3.1 (sustainable financing strategies), which collectively advance the blue and green economy in Fiji and contribute to the sustainability of project interventions. Private sector partners will also be represented on the Project Steering Committee (PSC), to ensure participatory and inclusive decision-making that leverages and advances public-private sector partnerships. Building upon initial discussions and dialogue conducted with private sector partners to inform the development of the PIF, the project will deepen discussions with private sector entities in a structured approach during the PPG phase.

5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the Project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the Project design (table format acceptable)

The project has been categorized as Category A

Risks	Risk Mitigation Measures	Risk Rating
Uncertainty due to government shifts in priorities and policy changes	The project will work with national and subnational leaders to ensure alignment of activities with national priorities. The project will also strengthen the country's ability to conserve key species and habitats as well protect natural resources to increase climate resilience of rural communities.	Low
Limited coordination/communication between sectoral agencies and/or ministries	The project will work in close coordination with key Ministries and local leaders to ensure alignment and close coordination on the design and implementation of the project.	Moderate
Issues with project internal administration, coordination, and timeliness of work to be delivered between the different non-jointed marine and terrestrial areas.	The project sites were selected based on biodiversity importance as elaborated in sections above. Acknowledging and understanding the limitation of geographies the project will explicitly factor in this dimension by elaborating a robust work plan that addresses the different limitations for the administration of work. The project governing mechanisms such as the PSC will take this into account for every decision made.	Low
Partner organizations do not follow proper procedures for project implementation, which could cause delays in project implementation.	Conduct due diligence of all partner organizations prior to signing agreements. Ensure, through CI grant agreements and monitoring, that all reporting requirements cascade to our partners. Provide additional capacity support and propose other remedies if gaps in compliance with agreements are observed with our partners during implementation monitoring.	Moderate

Effects of Climate Change have a negative impact on the outcome of project activities and project communities	<p>In the event of a natural disaster, the project will work directly with communities and government to support ecosystem and community recovery. This will include providing training and resources to communities to conduct post-disaster restoration support activities to maximize species survival rates, including propping up of downed trees and propagules to maximize recovery.</p> <p>In addition, the project will integrate climate change monitoring and adaptation protocols to build climate resilience of marine and terrestrial protected areas. This will include integrating learnings from climate change projections and predictive modeling for Fiji within the project approach.</p>	Moderate
Low level of inclusiveness in project decision-making and governance	The project will include traditional representatives, leaders and traditional authorities in decision-making around project activities. The project will further uphold non-discrimination in all actions, ensuring even hard-to-reach communities are engaged in project activities within their geography, with a priority focus on vulnerable populations and groups.	Low
Intercultural and gender sensitive approaches to project activities	The project will consult, train and collaborate with traditional leaders on project activities, to ensure the integration of culturally appropriate approaches and platforms to the project design. Any intercultural response should be gender-responsive and based on awareness of the different needs and roles of men and women in the community.	Low
Women may face barriers to participating in project training and decision-making processes, and therefore may not be able to engage in, influence, and benefit from the project as planned. Gender inequality within the household or producer organizations can inc	Implement training processes with a gender focus (proactively encourage women's participation through understanding the barriers they face and implementing mitigation measures) Promote the participation and enrollment of women as project beneficiaries, working both with women themselves and their spouses in support of this.	Low

rease risks of sex and gender-based violence.		
COVID-19 and other possible pandemics. In a COVID-19 context, it is also envisaged that the project will contribute to enhancing these regulating ecosystem services that prevent the spill over of viruses from one species to the other, as increased biodiversity can act as a bio-buffer and provide increased resilience to potential shocks like the current pandemic.	As a Small Island Nation Fiji closed its borders immediately at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, Fiji has counted only 32 confirmed COVID-19 cases and two related deaths. Given Fiji's positive handling of the COVID-19 outbreak, no COVID-related impacts are anticipated to affect initiation of the project. Particularly during the PPG Phase, given that the proposed project is national in scope and CI, as an Implementing Agency, has a national presence in Fiji, the project will not be impeded by travel restrictions. However, as uncertainty vis-a-vis the pandemic is the only constant, COVID-19 related risks are classified as moderate. emergency response plan will be developed with procedures and guidelines being followed in alignment with Fiji Government protocols	Moderate

Climate Risk:

Most climate change models for Fiji suggests an increase in the proportion of high intensity tropical cyclones, increase in temperature, sea level rise, and an increase in precipitation and floods over time with a degree of variance. Fiji is already vulnerable and prone to floods and tropical cyclones, and these will become increasingly detrimental as climate change impacts increase over time. With the current limited adaptive capacity, the impact on the population and economy could include increased poverty and decreased food security, displacement from sea-level rise, increased prevalence of water-borne diseases and sensitivities of non-communicable diseases exacerbated by temperature increases, variable freshwater supply, and negative impact on the tourism sector. The project will contribute to reductions in flooding, landslides, and coastal erosion, as well as improve sustainability of community-based agriculture to enhance socioeconomic resilience by legally securing protection and improving management of forests, secure food security benefits for coastal communities that rely on productive coastal fishing grounds for subsistence and cash income by protecting and improving the management of marine ecosystems, and build institutional capacity and strengthen coordination mechanisms for delivery of Fiji's Protected Area Network with specific attention to tracking and adapting to climate risks. During the PPG Phase, the project will conduct a detailed climate vulnerability assessment and identify risk management options which are to be incorporated into the design of the project.

Climate Risk Screening attached.

6. Coordination

Outline the institutional structure of the project including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level. Describe possible coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.

The project will be executed by the Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment, under the oversight of the CI GEF Agency. CI Fiji and the Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment will work collaboratively to establish the Project Management Team that will work with the Implementing Agency to ensure that all the key components of the Project are realized within the indicated budget and timeframe articulated in this PIF.

The Project Management Team will consist of two governance layers at policy and operational level. At the policy level the Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Waterways and Environment will Chair the PSC, which will be the project's primary governance mechanism and will consist of high level representatives from key line agencies on project components, namely the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Fisheries, the Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Ministry of Rural and Maritime Areas and the Fiji Navy. The PSC may establish project working groups or subcommittees (such as the Knowledge Management (KM) committee) assigned to assess, review, analyze and make recommendations on different aspects of the project PSC.

Under Fiji's NBSAP and governed through the 2005 Environmental Management Act (EMA), a number of thematic committees are already in place that assess, review, analyze and make recommendations to the Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment, including the Protected Areas Committee, Integrated Coastal Management Committee, Species Committee, and Wetlands Committee. Given that the above committees operate under the Ministry of Waterways and Environment, the PSC may well task the above subcommittees to support its decision-making process with specific tasks appropriate to their thematic expertise. The PSC will also ensure alignment with and leverage the National Environment Council (NEC), which was established under EMA, and is composed of high-level representatives from key ministries, including those present on the PSC. In addition to and alignment with the PSC, this will be a central platform for strengthened coordination and information sharing under the project.

Key government agencies will further be directly engaged in implementation of project activities. These include the Ministry of Forests, in support of outcome 1.1 and outcome 1.2, as well as the Ministry of Agriculture, in support of output 1.1.3. Similarly, the Ministry of Fisheries will provide critical support for delivery of outcomes 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3, while the Fiji Navy will serve as a key implementing partner in output 2.3.3. In addition to supporting and providing oversight to overall delivery of the project, the Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment will be strongly engaged in delivery of outcomes 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, as well as outcome 4.1.

7. Consistency with National Priorities

Is the Project consistent with the National Strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions

Yes

If yes, which ones and how: NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc

-X NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN (NBSAP)

- X CBD NATIONAL REPORT

- CARTAGENA PROTOCOL NATIONAL REPORT

- NAGOYA PROTOCOL NATIONAL REPORT

- UNFCCC NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS (NC)

- UNFCCC BIENNIAL UPDATE REPORT (BUR)

- UNFCCC NATIONAL DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION

- UNFCCC TECHNOLOGY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- UNCCD REPORTING

- ASGM NATIONAL ACTION PLAN (ASGM NAP)

- MINAMATA INITIAL ASSESSMENT (MIA)

- STOCKHOLM NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (NIP)

- STOCKHOLM NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE

X- NATIONAL ADAPTATION PROGRAMME OF ACTION UPDATE

- OTHERS

Fiji has committed—through its NBSAP and as signatory to the CBD—to establish and better manage a network of protected areas, achieve greater biodiversity data availability and information access, improve monitoring and enforcement of laws and policies protecting biodiversity, and to reduce threats impacting its terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems. Fiji has undertaken several initiatives to progress biodiversity conservation, as outlined in **Fiji's Fifth National Report to the CBD** (GoF, 2014) and the **2013 State of Conservation in Fiji**, which outlines key achievements in conservation with focus on the size and type of protected areas and governance initiatives in the country (SPREP, 2013). Fiji also identified a preliminary register of important sites in the 1992 National

Environment Strategy, including 32 KBAs, 28 IBAs, and two Endemic Bird Areas (EBA). There are currently five recognized Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) areas in Fiji, as well as 16 Forest Reserves (22,214 ha), six Nature Reserves (5,373 ha) and 15 Parks (16,912 ha) located on the three largest islands (Viti Levu, Vanua Levu and Taveuni).

Building upon these efforts, this project is fully consistent and advances delivery of multiple of Fiji's plans, strategies and global commitments. The SAMBIO project aligns with the Fiji Green Growth Framework (GoF, 2014a), which aims to support sustainable development into future planning at national level with a focus on ten thematic areas, four of which will be strengthened under the project, including: sustainable islands and ocean resources, building resilience to climate change and disasters, food security, and inclusive social development. This project aligns with Fiji's 5&20-year National Development Plan that aims to establish MPAs across 30% of Fiji's marine area in alignment to SDG 14.2, as well as the long-term conservation of 5% of critical forest habitat by 2021. This project will expand protection and improve management of previously identified KBAs and IBAs on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, including through formal protection of roughly 4% of Fiji's forests within these areas as Forest or Nature Reserves. This project also advances delivery of Fiji's commitments under SDG 14, by establishing and improving management of MPAs across roughly 8% of Fiji's EEZ, focusing on the Eastern Division.

The SAMBIO project will further support assessments under relevant conventions and deliver an aligned and focused response to Fiji's 2020–2025 NBSAP. While the project contributes to all six priority focus areas in Fiji's 2020–2025 NBSAP, its main focus is on developing protected areas and the associated enabling environment and mainstreaming conditions for success. Importantly the mainstreaming of establishment of protected areas within a matrix of better managed landscapes will involve a community co-management model which is considered sustainable without the need for external funds. Also linked to Fiji's NBSAP, the project will also advance implementation of key actions under the Fiji Wetlands Policy on the Conservation and Management of Fiji's Coral Reefs and supporting implementation of Fiji's Conservation and Protection Policy to protect Fiji's endangered Iguana Species.

The SAMBIO project also aligns with implementation of Fiji's climate change policies, strategies and frameworks, including the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) 2018-2030, the National Adaptation Plan Framework, and Fiji's Low Emissions Development Strategy 2018-2025 (LEDS). The project aligns with the NCCP in recognizing the important role of nature-based solutions to increasing ecosystem protection and seeks to advance establishment of large-scale marine managed areas and locally managed coastal fisheries. In alignment with Fiji's National Adaptation Plan Framework (GoF, 2018), the project will align with climate change adaptation objectives, actions and investments, namely those focused on nature-based solutions, to reduce climate change and anthropogenic impacts on the environment. Similarly, the LEDS recognizes the need to invest in preservation and restoration of critical biodiversity habitats to build resilience to current and future climate-change impacts.

The SAMBIO project activities will further align with Fiji's important sectoral policies in Forestry and Agriculture. Fiji's National Forest Policy 2007 recognizes the potential for natural forests to provide greater socio-economic and environmental benefits to current and future generations through sustainable forest management, conservation of forest biodiversity, water catchments and soil fertility. The project will support implementation of the National Forest Policy by strengthening consultations with customary landowners around protected areas establishment and management and developing land use and management

plans for key sites. This is further aligned with the National Rural Land Use Policy 2005. The SAMBIO project will support on-going effort by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Forestry to develop District/Provincial and national land use plans that designates conservation of KBAs, wetlands, and mangroves and ensure no net loss of these habitats by 2030.

As itemized in Fiji's NBSAP (GoF, 2020) there are many important sites for marine biodiversity conservation in Lau archipelago as well as the adjacent Kadavu archipelago, which together are the geographic focus of Component 2. In Fiji (2020) Kadavu and the Southern Lau Region are listed as EBSAs and SUMAs and prioritized for conservation and protection. At the national scale, supporting sustainable development in Lau is a priority of the Fiji Government. In June 2017, at the United Nations Oceans Conference for Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14), the Fiji Government declared the Lau Seascape as one of its 17 voluntary commitments. As the largest maritime province in the country, establishing protection and management in the Lau Seascape will help Fiji achieve its commitment to the United Nations Committee on Biological Diversity (CBD) to protect 30% of its seas by 2020, as well as other commitments to conserve 10% of inshore areas. The approach on maritime island encapsulates an integrated coastal management of island systems from ridge to reef to oceans. The Lau Seascape initiative also aligns with the national Green Growth Framework (Thematic Areas, 3 and 6), as well as sectoral policies in Fisheries, Land Use, Forests, Integrated Coastal Management and Sustainable Development.

The project is wholly compatible with Fiji's international environmental commitments, as per its most recent 5th CBD National Report, its long-term climate action plan under the Paris Agreement to the secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its adoption of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) national action programs, both in 2019, and the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols.

In addition to the priorities strategies and plans outlined above, the project will further align with the following national plans, strategies and policies:

- Land Conservation and Improvement Act 1953
- Protection of Animals Act 1954
- Forest Decree 1992
- Endangered and Protected Species Act 2002
- Environmental Management Act 2005
- iTaukei Affairs Act 2006
- iTaukei Land Trust Act 2006
- Women's Plan of Action 2009 – 2020
- Fiji National Gender Policy
- Fiji Climate Change Policy 2019
- Fiji National Oceans Policy 2020

8. Knowledge Management

Outline the Knowledge management approach for the Project, including, if any, plans for the Project to learn from other relevant Projects and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.

Knowledge Management Approach: The SAMBIO project will aspire to generate and communicate knowledge on Fiji's terrestrial and marine biodiversity, both at the site and national level, including Fiji's entire PA and MPA network. The project's knowledge management (KM) approach will focus on ensuring an enabling environment, institutional arrangements and management instruments for sharing data/information. This will include focus on information gathering and assessment, strategic planning and strengthened cooperation, as well as dissemination of important information, as key cross-cutting elements. The approach recognizes that all project stakeholders possess knowledge that is important to project success. The project will aim to develop the capacity of these stakeholders on knowledge sharing to promote a dynamic communications culture that contributes to improved management of protected areas and community resilience to climate change.

A KM committee will be established under the PSC, consisting of key executing partners engaged in the gathering, management and dissemination of important information. The KM committee will guide KM efforts under the project, including identification and production of key knowledge products to be developed and disseminated under the project.

The project will also capture key information on terrestrial and marine protected areas (existing, new and planned) including location, area, ecosystems and species conserved, management arrangements, and monitoring and enforcement considerations. Specific data will be housed within a data management platform established under the project (output 3.3.1) and maintained through a tracking system also established under the project (output 3.3.2). Establishing data management and tracking tools will improve information available for reporting on Fiji's NBSAP, maintained through a co-management approach among community and government stakeholders.

Relevant information will be made publicly available through a simple information system on the Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment website. Key documents on each of Fiji PAs and MPAs, as well as associated landscape and seascape-scale management and corridor/linking initiatives, will also be made available through the Ministry website. For inshore marine conservation efforts, FLMMA will continue to maintain its database of locally managed marine areas and share information and lessons learned through its website (<http://www.fijilmma.org/>) and social media outlets, including its Facebook page, as well as through FLMMA network partners.

To disseminate information broadly to the public, the project will engage and collaborate with Nature Fiji Mareqeti Viti (NFMV)—a leading local NGO for endangered species conservation in Fiji—to share species recovery plans, experiences, lessons learned for management interventions at site and national level. Key information on Fiji's species will be made publicly widely available through the Ministry and NFMV websites.

Where possible, the project will also enhance global understanding of protected areas in Fiji by contributing to existing knowledge sharing and data management platforms, such as the Pacific Islands Protected Area Portal, which aligns with the World Database on Protected Areas, and others. Decision-making related to broader data and knowledge sharing will remain with the KM committee under the PSC.

Contribution of KM to the project's overall impact: The project's overall impact will be considerably magnified through sharing of lessons learnt amongst project staff and collaborators, including ministry staff and extension officers, NGOs, private sector partners and local communities. This will be done both actively through exchange visits to project sites and sharing of experiences, as well as passively by making key information publicly available online. In addition, overall awareness of the general public will be improved through delivery of targeted communications outreach using radio, print, social media, and other forms of digital media. Finally, lessons learnt from the project partnership with the Fiji Navy related to monitoring and surveillance of offshore MPAs in Fiji, mainly foreign-registered vessels, will be collated and shared for amplification at national level.

Plans for reciprocal learning between relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations: It is envisaged that the project will contribute to the existing community of practice for community-based biodiversity conservation in Fiji. This community of practice is fostered through frequent exchange of information, the sharing of ideas and lessons among Fiji's conservation and academic professionals and is vital for sustainable biodiversity conservation in Fiji. Equally vital is the meeting of minds and cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches when traditional iTaukei conservation practitioners are engaged in these discussions, leveraging traditional and customary knowledge alongside Western science. Building on this foundation, the project will aim to strengthen private sector engagement in this community of practice, to develop both economically viable and environmentally sustainable approaches to biodiversity conservation in Fiji.

The project will also maintain close contact, share relevant information and learn from other relevant projects. This will occur formally, under the PSC subcommittees and associated working groups under the NEC, as well as informally, through frequent dialogue and exchange between the KM committee and relevant stakeholders in Fiji. As outlined in the KM approach, the project will improve awareness, communications, and education and ensure that project processes, experiences and results are properly recorded, collected and disseminated to in-country stakeholders and partners, but also sister initiatives and projects globally. The proper management of knowledge will require transparent and timely sharing of data, and other information through proper communication means, including the IW:LEARN (GEF's International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network), Fiji's GEF 5 STAR Ridge to Reef project, and the GEF 7 IUCN/CI Inclusive Conservation Initiative. IW:LEARN can serve as a great platform to disseminate the innovative work on LMMAs and the involvement of the Navy in environmental and conservation monitoring and control, through its established mechanisms on collecting and sharing best practices, lessons learned, and innovative solutions to common problems on water.

9. Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's ESS systems and procedures

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification*

PIF

CEO Endorsement/Approval MTR

TE

High or Substantial

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

Provide preliminary information on the types and levels of risk classifications/ratings of any identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project (considering the GEF ESS Minimum Standards) and describe measures to address these risks during the project design.

The EA will be required to undertake the following measures:

I. Environmental & Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)

The project is required to conduct ESIA's for each of the areas where new PAs and MPAs will be created to determine potential environmental and socio-economic impacts, to identify alternatives, and to propose mitigation measures where negative impacts are unavoidable. (Refer to Appendix II of the ESMF for guidance on ESIA's).

Correspondingly, the project must prepare an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) that addresses how each of the safeguards triggered has been or will be addressed. The safeguards triggered include Resettlement and Physical and Economic Displacement, Indigenous Peoples, Cultural Heritage, Climate Risk and Related Disasters, and Private Sector Direct Investments and Financial Intermediaries, if determined to be triggered during the PPG Phase. (Refer to Appendix III of the ESMF for guidance on ESMP).

Other Plans

Apart from the Safeguards policy, the project will be required to comply with the CI-GEF's Accountability and Grievance Policy, Gender Policy, and Stakeholder Engagement Policy. The project is required during the PPG Phase to develop and submit to CI-GEF/GCF for review and approval, the following plans:

II. Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM)

To ensure that the project meets CI-GEF Project Agency's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism Policy, the EA is required to develop an Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (template provided) that will ensure people affected by the project are able to bring their grievances to the EA for consideration and redress. The mechanism must be in place before the start of project activities, and disclosed to all stakeholders in a language, manner and means that best suits the local context.

In addition, the EA is required to monitor and report on the following minimum accountability and grievance indicators:

- 1. Number of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism; and*
- 2. Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism that have been addressed.*

III. Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP)

The GMP (template provided) should include a gender analysis including the role of men and women in decision-making, and appropriate interventions with gender-related outcomes to ensure that men and women have equal opportunities to participate and benefit from the project.

Further, the project should examine the extent of Gender Based Violence (GBV), the likelihood of project activities contributing/exacerbating GBV, and proposed mitigation measures as needed.

In addition, the EA is required to monitor and report on the following minimum gender indicators:

1. Number of men and women that participated in project activities (e.g. meetings, workshops, consultations);
2. Number of men and women that received benefits (e.g. employment, income generating activities, training, access to natural resources, land tenure or resource rights, equipment, leadership roles) from the project; and if relevant
3. Number of strategies, plans (e.g. management plans and land use plans) and policies derived from the project that include gender considerations.

IV. Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

To ensure that the project complies with the CI-GEF's Stakeholders' Engagement Policy, the EA is required to develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (template provided).

In addition, the EA is required to monitor and report on the following minimum stakeholder engagement indicators:

1. Number of government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector, indigenous peoples and other stakeholder groups engaged in the project implementation phase;
2. Number persons (sex disaggregated) engaged in project implementation phase; and
3. Number of engagement (e.g. meeting, workshops, consultations) with stakeholders during the project implementation phase

All plans must be submitted to the CI-GCF/GEF Project Agency for review and approval during the PPG Phase.

Supporting Documents

Upload available ESS supporting documents.

Title	Submitted
20201015 Climate Risk Screening Fiji SAMBIO	
20200918 SMTB Fiji Preliminary Safeguard Screening Analysis Results	

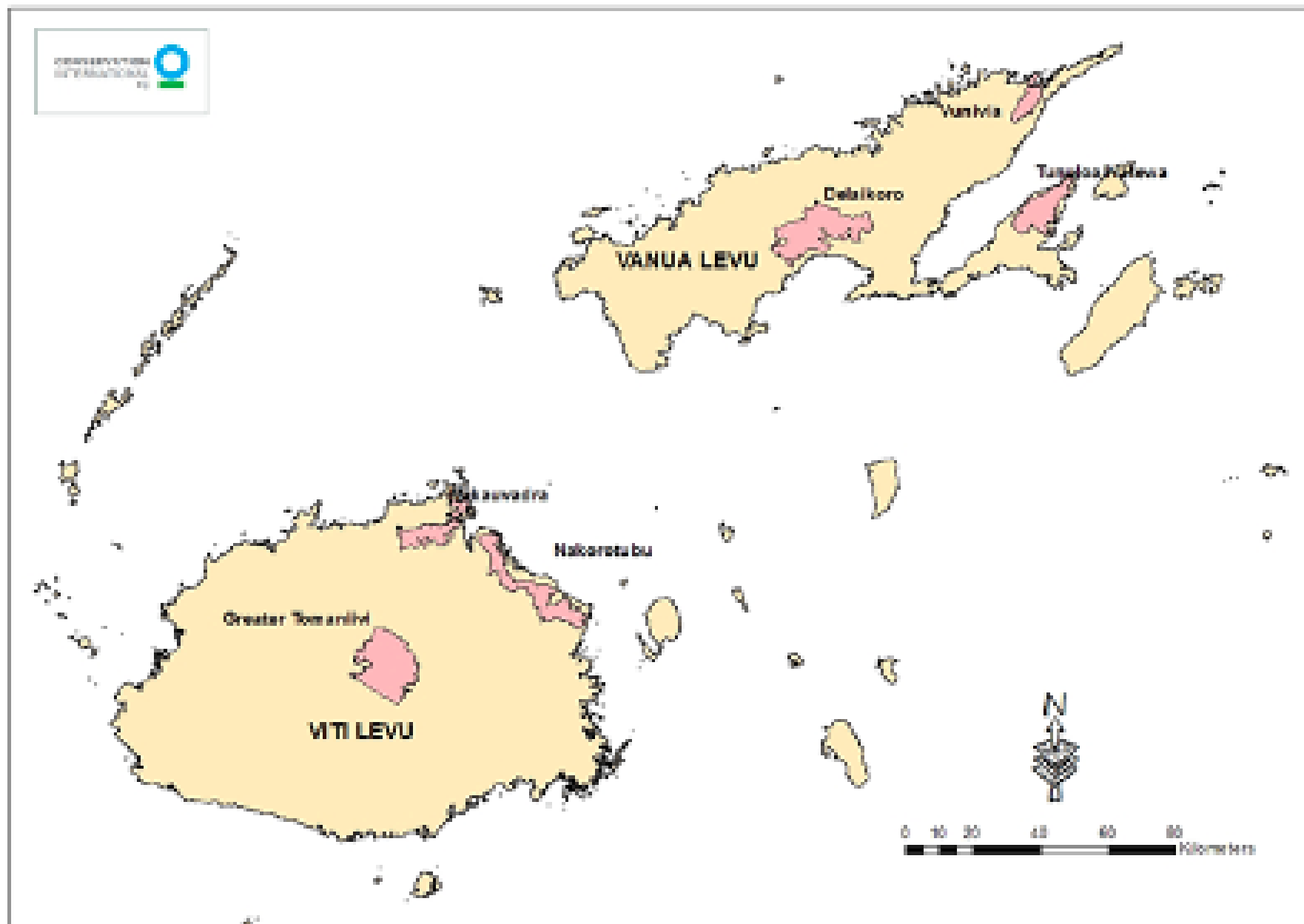
Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And Gef Agency(ies)

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter with this template).

Name	Position	Ministry	Date
Joshua Wycliffe	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Environment	9/24/2020

ANNEX A: Project Map and Geographic Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project intervention takes place



Lau Seascape Offshore NTZ Map

