



STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Consolidated Report on the Review of Sugar Research Institute of Fiji 2008 - 2015 Annual Report



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Acronyms

SRIF	Sugar Research Institute of Fiji
ASPAC	Asia Pacific Network of Science and Technology Centre
GIS	Geographical Information System
FSC	Fiji Sugar Corporation
EU	European Union

Chairperson's Foreword

The Standing Committee on Economic Affairs is pleased to report to Parliament, the Consolidated Review Report of the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji 2008 – 2015 Annual Reports.

The Sugar Research Institute of Fiji was established in 2006 and produced its first Annual Report in 2008. It was established with the intention of providing research, development and extension services in the Sugar industry. By national mandate, SRIF is responsible for the development and dissemination of information and technology which could enhance productivity, profitability and sustainability of the sugar industry in Fiji.

The Committee visited the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji Headquarters earlier this year to be able to better understand the developments that have taken place since 2015. The Members had the opportunity to meet with SRIF officials as well as visit some of its model farms.

The Committee, while deliberating, noted the need for strong collaboration between all stakeholders involved with the Institute, especially FSC, as well as acknowledges the importance of timely funding received by SRIF to facilitate their research and experiments.

Keeping in mind that SRIF is involved with developing new varieties amongst other important roles it plays, the Committee feels that SRIF must engage in vigorous outreach programs to raise awareness and educate farmers on the various services provided by SRIF. They must also consistently educate, guide and motivate farmers on benefits of diversifying into projects like intercropping and its impact on soil health.

The Committee appreciated the key achievements over the years which included the commencement of technology transfer, setting up of disease control and productivity unit and GIS pilot project. However, the Committee noted the need for qualified personnel in these specialized areas and recommended proper staff facilitation to be explored.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to all Stakeholders for their valuable input. The Committee would like to acknowledge Acting CEO of SRIF and his team for being prompt in answering the various queries and questions raised by the Committee.

Finally, I would like to thank our Committee Members who were part of the team that produced this report: - Deputy Chairperson Hon. Veena Bhatnagar and Hon. George Vegnathan as well as Hon. Inosi Kuridrani and Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau for being a part of the Site Visitation. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Parliamentary Staff who have given us invaluable support.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I commend the Consolidated Review Report on Sugar Research Institute of Fiji 2008 – 2015 Annual Reports to Parliament.



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Chairperson – Hon. Vijay Nath

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Sugar Research Institute of Fiji (SRIF) was constituted under the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji Act 2005, and officially founded on the 1st of October 2006. Under the Act, the Institute is financed equally by the Government of Fiji, the Fiji Sugar Corporation and the Sugar Cane Grower's Council.

The functions of the Institute are outlined under the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji Act 14 of 2005, which includes promoting by means of research and investigation, the technical advancement, efficiency and productivity of the sugar industry, and to provide its functions, powers, administration and finance for related matters.

Some of the tasks undertaken by SRIF include Plant Breeding, Seed cane Production, Pest and Disease Control, Advisory Services and Soil testing.

Committee Remit and Composition

The Committee is made up of five (5) Members of Parliament, three (3) of which are Government members and two Opposition members. According to Section 109(2) (a) the Standing Committee is responsible to look into matters related to economic development, finance, banking and taxation.

1.3 Key Developments/Achievements

1. 2014 was a milestone for SRIF as it received its independent status from the government as well as received certification under ASPAC quality control assurance scheme.
2. 2014 also saw commencement of Technology Transfer and Meet Individual Growers meeting as well as the set-up of Disease Control and Productivity Unit.
3. After a long period of research, the release of Qamea and Viwa varieties in 2014 was a significant achievement for SRIF as well.
4. The various forms of support and collaboration with international agencies throughout the years played an integral part in SRIF's development.

2.0 Findings and Recommendations

1. The Committee noted the need for strong collaboration between all stakeholders involved with the Institute, especially FSC. The Committee recommends that a long-term joint crop development plan be pursued for the sustainability of the sugar industry.
2. The Committee acknowledges the importance of timely funding received by SRIF to facilitate their research and experiments and believes that consistent and reliable funding is essential to maintain stability for the institute and its objectives.
3. The Committee believes that Farmer Outreach Programs play a vital role in raising awareness and educating farmers on the benefits of the various services provided by SRIF and therefore recommends SRIF to better plan and conduct vigorous outreach programs to further assist farmers for enhanced productivity.
4. The Committee further recommends consistency in educating, guiding and motivating farmers on the benefits of intercropping and its impact on soil health.
5. The Committee appreciates the key achievements over the years which includes the commencement of technology transfer, setting up of disease control and productivity unit as well as the GIS pilot project. However, the Committee notes the need for qualified personnel in these specialized areas and recommends proper staff facilitation to be explored.
6. The Committee identified the need for a stronger administrative vision for SRIF which must prioritize the development of a Corporate Plan and a Staff Performance Evaluation System which will foster proficiency, better productivity and improved staff performance.
7. The Committee recommends that SRIF engage in dialogue with Ministry of Waterways and other donor partners such as EU to do a feasibility study and explore the benefits of irrigation to the sugarcane farmers.
8. The Committee is of the view that SRIF in consultation with FSC, must engage with farmers, to vigorously advocate adoption of new tested varieties which have been proven to be of better quality.

3.0 Gender Analysis

The Committee was made aware that during the period of the report, SRIF had not collected disaggregated data on gender when they were conducting their workshops and meetings with the Farmers. The Committee feels that it is imperative for SRIF to consider collecting gender related data to be able to gauge the number of women and male farmers using their services. These data could be an indicator for SRIF to develop tailor-made programs for female farmers and encourage them to acquire maximum benefits from their services.

4.0 Conclusion

To conclude, the Committee acknowledges and appreciates the importance of SRIF's contribution and efforts towards the progression of the sugar industry. However, the Committee is of understanding that during the period of the report, SRIF faced a number of challenges which hindered their ability to achieve their maximum potential.

The Committee looks forward to receiving recent Annual reports to be able to determine the current position of SRIF and is of the view that its recommendations will further assist SRIF in enhancing their performance.

Members Signature



Hon. Vijay Nath (Chairperson)



**Hon. Veena Bhatnagar (Deputy
Chairperson)**



Hon. George Vegnathan (Member)