



## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

### **Consolidated Review Report of the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports**



**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI  
Parliamentary Paper No. 78 of 2024**

July 2024

Published and Printed by the Department of Legislature, Parliament House, SUVA

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Chairperson's Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Committee Membership</b>	<b>5-6</b>
<b>Committee Secretariat</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 Background	8
<b>2.0 Findings</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3.0 Recommendations</b>	<b>11-12</b>
<b>4.0 Sustainable Development Goals</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>5.0 Conclusion</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>6.0 Committee Members' Signatures</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>7.0 Annexures</b>	<b>16</b>

## **List of Acronyms**

AES	-	Agriculture Experiment Station
CSR	-	Colonial Sugar Refinery
FNU	-	Fiji National University
FSC	-	Fiji Sugar Corporation
IDM	-	Integrated Disease Management
IPM	-	Integrated Pest Management
KPIs	-	Key Performance Indicators
SDGs	-	Sustainable Development Goals
SO	-	Standing Order
SRIF	-	Sugar Research Institute of Fiji
UoF	-	University of Fiji
USP	-	University of the South Pacific

## Chairperson's Foreword

The Standing Committee on Economic Affairs hereby submits to Parliament the Consolidated Review Report of the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports.

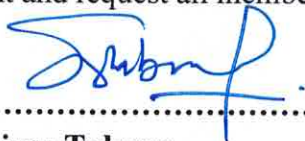
Sugar Research Institute of Fiji (SRIF) was established in 2006 as the premier provider of research, development and extension services in the sugar industry. SRIF has the national mandate for the development and dissemination of technology and information needed for increased productivity, profitability and sustainability of the sugar industry in Fiji.

During the scrutiny of the Annual Reports, extensive communication was made with the officials from SRIF through public hearing and site visit. This review report highlights some of the pertinent findings emanating from the scrutiny of the SRIF 2016-2021 Annual Reports are as follows:

- absents of KPIs and Strategic Plan;
- unapproved sugarcane species which are widely used by farmers;
- SRIF has not been fully engaged with the farmers in crop diversification;
- aged cane varieties and ratoons that are less productive and susceptible to diseases; and
- Overlapping of roles carried out by SRIF and FSC regarding the extension services.

At this juncture, I would like to thank our Committee Members and Alternate Member who were part of the team that produced this report: - Deputy Chairperson Hon. Sashi Kiran, Hon. Premila Kumar, Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna, Hon. Semi Koroilavesau and Hon. Alikia Bia. I also thank the secretariat for their invaluable support.

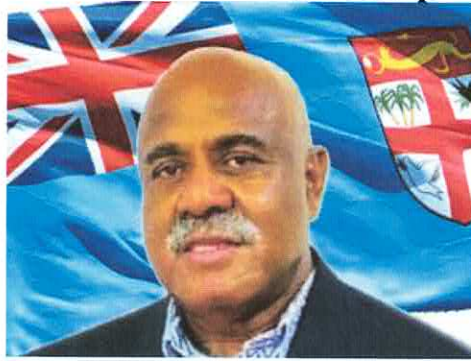
On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I commend this Review Report to Parliament and request all members of this august House to take note of the report.



.....  
**Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna**  
**Chairperson**



## Committee Membership



Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna  
**Chairperson**



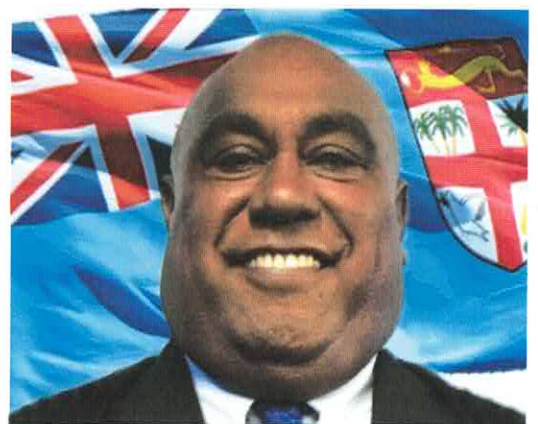
Hon. Sashi Kiran  
**Deputy Chairperson**



Hon. Premila Kumar  
**Member**



Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna  
**Member**



Hon. Semi Koroilavesau  
**Member**



Hon. Aliko Bia  
**Alternate Member**

## Committee Secretariat

### Secretariat Staff

- Ms. Marica Tuisoso
- Ms. Awantika Raj

Committee contact details.

**Address:** Standing Committee on Economic Affairs Committee.  
Parliament of the Republic of Fiji  
Government Buildings  
SUVA, FIJI

**Phone:** +679 322 5600/ +679 8925 223

**Web:** <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-economic-affairs/>



## **1.0 Introduction**

The Standing Committee on Economic Affairs was referred the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji 2016-2021 Annual Reports in accordance with the Standing Order (SO) 38(2) of the Standing Orders of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji. The Committee was tasked to review the Annual Reports and table its findings back to Parliament.

## **1.1 Background**

Sugar Research Institute of Fiji (SRIF) is the principal research institution dedicated to sugarcane research, development and technology transfer. The first ever basic scientific station for Sugarcane was established by the Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) in the 19th Century (1890s) as an entomology station in Nausori. The research station was later shifted to Rarawai, Ba in 1904 and known as the Agriculture Experiment Station (AES). This was the beginning of what was to become an ever-advancing sugarcane breeding station in the world with the establishment of a leaf and soil analytical laboratory in 1950. It was relocated to Lautoka during 1958. In 2006 it gained independence from Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) through an Act in the Parliament and was renamed from Sugarcane Research Center to Sugar Research Institute of Fiji (SRIF). The areas of research that SRIF undertakes includes:

- Sugarcane conventional breeding
- Soil and leaf analytical services
- Cane analysis for research and investigation purposes
- Pests and diseases screenings
- Crop diversification
- Management of estate commercial farms
- Effective land utilization
- Production of disease-free seed-cane
- Conduct donor financed projects for the benefit of the farmers.

The Institute was successful in securing research grants from the European Union between 2007 and 2018. In this period, SRIF was able to establish its head office and offices at other sub stations located in the four mill areas. The new organogram of SRIF was implemented in July 2021.

## **1.2 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. Pursuant to SO 109(2)(a), the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs is mandated to look into matters related to economic development, finance, banking, and taxation.

## **1.3 Procedure and Programme**



The Committee began its review of the Annual Reports in June 2024. The review process adopted by the Committee was agreed upon through consensus by the Members to review the report and a summary of this is as follows.

The Committee read through the Annual Reports and discussed matters noted by individual Members. From these discussions, a variety of issues were identified, which the Committee resolved and sought clarifications through public hearing, site visit and phone call.

At the end of the review, the Committee made recommendations based on the discussions with stakeholders and on the content of the Annual Reports. Furthermore, major findings of the Committee were identified in the 2021 Annual Report.

## 2.0 Findings

The annual reports were extensively considered and deliberated upon by the Committee with various findings highlighted below:

- 2.1 The Committee noted that KPIs do not exist for all sugar industry stakeholders including SRIF.
- 2.2 Disconnect between the research undertaken by SRIF and the transfer of technologies and knowledge on good farming practices through:
  - (i) low level of communication of research finding to farmers;
  - (ii) poor adoption of farming technologies; and
  - (iii) lack of coordination to extend the farming practices by extension officers.
- 2.3 There's no clear demarcation on the role of SRIF & FSC in the extension work carried out. The Committee noted that there seems to be overlapping of responsibilities between the two sectors in communicating the best practices to farmers.
- 2.4 SRIF has not been fully engaged with the farmers in crop diversification resulting in poor soil health and limited stream of income. One of the reasons sugar sectors is not profitable could be due to lack of technical support and handholding of farmers.
- 2.5 The industry is still using older varieties that are less productive and susceptible to diseases. The use of ratoons does not comply with the 5-year rule and have been found to be more than 15-20 years.
- 2.6 SRIF continue to undertake research in sugarcane diseases and pests which poses a significant threat to production. However, the information is not widely disseminated through mainstream and social media.
- 2.7 The Committee noted that SRIF's outreach programs for farmer training and education was captured only in the 2021 Annual Report. However, from 2016-2020, SRIF did not report on the outreach programs. We have been informed that the pandemic disrupted research, trials and SRIF's outreach programs for farmer training and education.
- 2.8 The Committee noted with concern that FSC owed large amount of money from SRIF which potentially limiting the Institute functions. The amount owed as of 31 December 2021 stands at \$5.6 million.
- 2.9 The Committee noted that the Reports did not include SDGs.

### 3.0 Recommendations

The Committee recommends the following:

- 3.1 That SRIF develop proper KPIs and Strategic Plan to measure performance and ensure the targets are achieved.
- 3.2 The Committee noted that there is limited interaction between SRIF and farmers and therefore recommends that SRIF to utilize mass media to communicate research findings in a digestible, practical and language can be understandable to the farmers at a grassroots level.
- 3.3
  - (i) That FSC should focus on milling and transfer all field officers to SRIF so they could help in the dissemination of the research information to farmers for its implementation of good practices. This will allow SRIF to handhold farmers and build capacity, this is to assist farmers plant approved cane varieties using best farming practices.
  - (iii) The science team can concentrate on sugarcane farming research including crop diversification, pest/diseases management, and soil management practices.
- 3.4 SRIF to intensify its effort in researching alternative crops and farming system, better sugarcane varieties suitable to our climatic condition that will provide good quality of cane that will subsequently generate more income to farmers.
- 3.5
  - (i) That SRIF invest time with farmers for effective technology transfers of a new knowledge that has evolved from the research.
  - (ii) New varieties of cane with high sugar contents must be adopted by the farmers. This can be achieved through the introduction of quality-based cane payment system.
- 3.6 SRIF needs to vigorously engage in training more farmers to adopt Integrated Pest Management and Integrated Disease Management to control and eradicate pests, diseases, and weeds.
- 3.7 SRIF needs to invest in social media for outreach programs and have contingency plan should there be any future pandemic to ensure business continuity.
- 3.8 SRIF must consistently pursue outstandings amount of \$4.8 million which has been owed by FSC since 2016 and ensure that payments terms are observed without delay.

- 3.9 SRIF must report on Sustainable Development Goals in their Annual Reports, especially on SDGs 5 on Gender Equality.



#### **4.0 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The Committee noted that Sugar Research Institute of Fiji Annual Reports for the period under review does not capture any elements of SDGs so as the SDG 5 on Gender Equality on the staff composition and promotions.

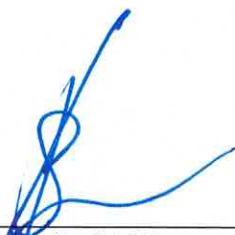
## **5.0 Conclusion**

The Committee is not satisfied with the Annual Reports during the review period. The Committee, however, commends SRIF for its thorough Research work. It is imperative that the technology transfer is used by the farmers as research could only be useful if the farmers are able to use new innovative knowledge to improve productivity. We hope in the coming years the extension offers from FSC could join SRIF to help facilitate knowledge and technology transfer to farmers.

## 6.0 Committee Members' Signatures



Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna  
**Chairperson**



Hon. Sashi Kiran  
**Deputy Chairperson**



Hon. Premila Kumar  
**Member**



Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna  
**Member**



Hon. Semi Koroilavesau  
**Member**

## 7.0 Annexure

### Published evidence

---

Written evidence, transcripts and supporting documents can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link:

<https://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-economic-affairs/>