



STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Consolidated Review Report of the Ministry of Forestry 2019 – 2020, 2020 – 2021 & 2021 – 2022 Annual Reports



Parliamentary Paper No: 54/2024

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

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Chair's Foreword



review period.

As the Chair of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, I am pleased to present the Committee's consolidated report on the three Annual Reports of the Ministry of Forestry, that cover the period from 2019 to 2022. Through these annual reports, we gain valuable insights into the various activities and achievements of the Ministry during the

The Committee has noted with concern the overreliance on imported forest products and the decreasing export of such forest products.

Amidst global concerns about climate change and environmental degradation, Fiji has continued to demonstrate its commitment to responsible forest management and conservation. The Ministry of Forestry has been at the forefront of these efforts, implementing policies and initiatives aimed at preserving our rich biodiversity, mitigating climate change, and fostering socio-economic development.

In the face of evolving threats, it is essential that the Ministry remains vigilant and proactive in its efforts to safeguard our natural resources for future generations. It is imperative that we acknowledge the work that lies ahead. The sustainability of our forests is not merely a goal but a shared responsibility that requires ongoing commitment and innovation.

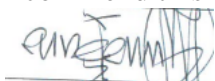
The Committee noted that the importance of collaboration and partnerships, both domestically and internationally, in addressing the complex challenges facing our forests, cannot be understated.

From reforestation, sustainable logging practices, community engagement to capacity building, the reports provide a comprehensive overview of the Ministry's multifaceted approach to forestry management.

The Committee acknowledges the staff of the Ministry of Forestry and stakeholders for their dedication and support during the site visit.

I take this opportunity to thank Hon. Jone Usamate (Deputy Chairperson), Hon. Isikeli Tuiwailevu, Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu and Hon. Joseph Nand (alternate) Member for the compilation of this bipartisan report.

I commend this Report to Parliament.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tomasi Tunabuna', written over a horizontal line.

.....
Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna
Chairperson

ACRONYMS:

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LOU	Land Owning Unit
MP	Member of Parliament
30MT15Y	30 Million Trees in 15 Years
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
RDF	Refused Derived Fuel
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SP	Strategic Priorities
SG	Strategic Goals

Overall Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources has conducted the review of the Ministry of Forestry Annual Reports for 2019 – 2022 and recommends that Parliament take note of its recommendations as stated in the report.

1.0 Introduction

The following Ministry of Forestry annual reports were referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, pursuant to Standing Order 38 (2), by Parliament.

- 1) Ministry of Forestry – 2019 -2020 referred to the Committee on 01st September 2022
- 2) Ministry of Forestry – 2020 – 2021 referred to the Committee on 17th February 2023
- 3) Ministry of Forestry – 2021 – 2022 referred to the Committee on 15th September 2023

The following Standing Orders of Parliament specify the role of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources;

- **SO, 109 (c)** that the mandate of the Committee is to investigate matters that relates to agriculture, forests, fisheries, land, minerals, environment, water and marine services.
- **SO, 110 (1)(c)** further authorizes the Standing Committee to scrutinize the government departments with responsibility within the committee's subject area, including by investigating, inquiring into, and making recommendations relating to any aspect of such a department's administration, legislation or proposed legislative program, budget, rationalization, restructuring, functioning, organization structure, and policy formulation.

Over the three-year period covered by the three Annual Reports the Ministry of Forestry navigated a landscape fraught with environmental uncertainties, a global pandemic, and socio-economic upheavals. Yet, in the face of adversity, the Committee noted that the Ministry has remained steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding Fiji's invaluable natural heritage and fostering sustainable forest management practices.

The Committee noted that the Ministry of Forestry faced challenges during the years under review, but the staff performed to the best of their ability that resulted in the achievement of the Ministry's target outcomes for the stated years.

1.1 Background

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The Ministry of Forestry is responsible for the national forestry sector with the following functions:

- 1.2.1** Formulate and implement forest strategies and policies;
- 1.2.2** Provide and administer regulatory functions under the Ministry's respective legislation and regulations;
- 1.2.3** Monitor and evaluate current strategies, policies and deliverables.
- 1.2.4** Develop and promote effective training, communication, awareness and extension advisory services;
- 1.2.5** Strengthen community and industry networks and support frameworks;
- 1.2.6** Maintain international bilateral and multilateral commitments and
- 1.2.7** Undertake applied research for sustainable forest resource management practices and product development

1.3 The Ministry has 6 Strategic Priorities (SP), and they are as follows;

- 1.3.1** SP 1 - Cohesive legislation, regulation, policy, guidelines and compliance. SP1 is geared towards articulating a consistent, long-term approach to legislation, regulation, policy, and compliance mechanisms associated with forests and forestry.
- 1.3.2** SP 2 - Enhance sustainable forest management frameworks and implementation of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). SP 2 is about establishing clear, sustainable implementation mechanisms for forest strategies to be effective over a long period of time.
- 1.3.3** SP 3 - Capacity building (Ministry & Stakeholders). SP 3 focuses on bringing theory into practice. The Ministry will lead the way in analysing the capacity and capabilities necessary to achieve the desired outcomes of the sector; engage its personnel, infrastructure, partners and communities in developing research and knowledge necessary to achieve the best outcomes for now and the distant future.

- 1.3.4** SP 4 - Stewardship. SP 4 is about commitment to stewardship of national resources and the moral obligation towards global environmental responsibilities and commitments.
- 1.3.5** SP 5 - Forest financing. SP 5 is all about looking at, developing, improving and/or implementing financial strategies and mechanisms to support the sustainable management of forests.
- 1.3.6** SP 6 - Organisation effectiveness. SP 6 focuses on the Ministry itself. It looks at the capacity and the capability of the Ministry to be able to produce what it has set as its goals. It looks at efficiency in terms of personnel and processes and includes information management. It ensures that the Ministry is positioned to attain what it has set out to achieve within the context of people, information and infrastructure.
- 1.4 The Strategic Goals (SG) of the Ministry are as follows.**
 - 1.4.1** SG 1 Establish sustainable life cycle management of forest resources in Fiji
 - 1.4.2** SG 2 Improve the socio-economic impact of forests.
 - 1.4.3** SG 3 Contribute positively to the global environment.
 - 1.4.4** SG 4 Substantially improve service delivery.

1.5 Committee Remit and Composition

The Parliament *Standing Order 109 2 (c)* mandates the Standing Committee on Natural Resources to look into matters that relate to forestry, agriculture, mining, environment, fisheries, water and marine services.

1.5.1 Committee Membership



Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna
Chairperson
Assistant Minister for Agriculture



Hon. Jone Usamate
Deputy Chair
Opposition MP



Hon. Ratu Isikle Tuiwailevu
Assistant Minister for i Taukei



Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu
Assistant Minister for Education



Hon. Joseph Nand
Opposition Alternate MP

1.6 Procedure and Program

The Committee met on Tuesday 19th March 2024, discussed and agreed its approach to reviewing the 3 Annual Reports.

The Committee commenced by undertaking a review of the 2020-2021 Annual Report. It then broadened focus by covering the other two Reports. Issues that required clarification were identified and posed as questions to the Ministry of Forestry. The Research Unit of Parliament was commissioned to review trends of the Ministry's performance from 2019 to 2022.

Senior staff of the Ministry met with the Committee on 30th April to discuss their responses to questions sent to them on the overall operations. Copies of written and oral submissions were received from the Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources Officials.

A 5-day site visit to the Central, Western and Northern divisions was undertaken in May to provide insights into the challenges the Ministry faced, the achievement of targeted programs, the issues faced by the divisions and the overall performance of the Ministry during the period under review.

A draft report was prepared after returning from the site visit during the week of the 06th of May 2024. Further clarifications were then sought from the Ministry during the finalising of the Committee's Report. The Committee's Report outlines key findings, identifies challenges faced and how these are mitigated, reviews the utilization of budget, identifies the gender perspective, identifies relevant SDGs and how they are being addressed and proposes several recommendations.

2.0 Committee Deliberation and Analysis

2.1 Committee Findings

The Committee reviewed the Annual Reports from 2019 to 2022, and its findings are listed below.

2.1.1 Review of Legislations. Regulations and Polices

- 2.1.2** The Ministry has been working on several legislative and policy changes from 2019. There has been progress in the amendments to the Forests Act. These need to be finalised to commence work on the Sawmill Regulations, Preservative Timber Treatment Regulation and a new Forest Harvesting Regulation. The Sandalwood Strategy has been completed and has been enforced, the Planted Forest policy is under progress, the Rural Forest Strategy is awaiting Cabinet approval, and the Mangrove Management Guideline was completed in 2022.
- 2.1.3** The Committee noted that the REDD+ Policy was on the verge of being submitted to Cabinet.

2.2 OVERALL MINISTRY PERFORMANCE

On the Ministry's overall performance, the following was noted.

- 2.1.1** The Ministry has been able to achieve performance levels above 70% in five (5) out of its six (6) Strategic Priorities (SP). Whilst this is not outstanding it is a worthwhile performance given that the period in question was when COVID 19 ravaged our country.
- 2.1.2** The Committee has noted the Ministry has only been able to achieve a performance level of 42% for SP 5 on Forest Financing in 2021 – 2022. This is a critical area for the Ministry and this relatively low score is a key concern. SP 5 is a challenging long-term project focussed on financial tools and strategies needed to ensure sustainable forest management and will require external technical advice. The Trust Fund model is being reviewed currently by the Ministry.
- 2.1.3** There has been good progress in the Ministry's target to plant 30 million Trees in 15 Years (30MT15Y Programme). In 2021 to 2022, the Ministry planted 5.5million trees, and we have noted that as of 2024 a total of 19.1million trees have already been planted, with 14million of these being planted by Fiji Pine.
- 2.1.4** The Ministry has completed the National Forest Inventory, and the integration of the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) has been enforced.
- 2.1.5** The Ministry had moved from manual licensing systems to online digital ones in areas such as exports, imports and harvesting. This improvement has led to process time being reduced from weeks to 24 hours.
- 2.1.6** The Ministry had an unqualified audit opinion through all the years of the Annual Reports being looked at.

- 2.1.7** The Forestry Training Centre was used to support the Government's response to COVID-19, and this impacted on the availability of the Centre to conduct training.

The Ministry conducted training for 14 Forest Wardens to help them monitor harvesting operations, provide awareness on conservation activities, and assist in policing forestry laws.

- 2.1.8** Carefully targeted training for the Ministry was conducted and feedback on the quality and usefulness of training was done through Transfer Evaluation Forms, sent out three months after training for completion by supervising officers.
- 2.1.9** The Committee noted that there is a difference in export figures provided by the Ministry's Trade Division at Nasinu, and that sourced from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics. This is because the two agencies use different timeframes.
- 2.1.10** The Committee also noted that there was insufficient data on Gender Equality for the Forestry Sector.

2.3 MINISTRY RESOURCES

- 2.3.1** There was a decline in budget from 2019 to 2022 from M\$16.5227 to M\$13.2304. This represents a 20% reduction in the total Budget.
- 2.3.2** There has been a concern raised about the quality and quantity of staffing and research facilities and abilities within the Ministry. The Committee noted for instance that Xinfra, a private sector sawmiller and forester, is already utilising tissue culture to address the shortage of raw materials for their sawmills, while the Ministry has not progressed in this area yet.

2.4 FORESTRY SECTOR PERFORMANCE

- 2.4.1** There was a decrease in log production from 2019 to 2020 by 451,264.4 cubic meters to 60,817.0 cubic meters from 2020 – 2021 and increase in 2021 – 2022 to 545,208 cubic meters. This shows the impact of COVID 19.
- 2.4.2** The forestry and logging industry contributed \$34.1 million (0.4%) to Fiji's real GDP in 2021, a 28.2% increase compared to the \$26.6 million (0.3%) contribution in 2020. The forestry sector contributes \$162.5 million (1, 9%) to the national GDP by the end of 2021. The significant contribution of \$55.3 million was from the sawmilling and planning of wood activity, followed by the forestry and logging industry, which contributed \$34.1million.
- 2.4.3** There is a lack of raw material for sawmills. The Committee noted for example, that Tropic Woods is now sourcing logs from Vanua Levu and the Maritime islands for its Drasa facility, and this is incurring substantive transportation

costs. Fiji Pine Limited has indicated that this shortage of raw materials will worsen in the future.

2.4.4 As expressed in 2.13 above, the Committee noted that the sawmilling company XINFA is investing in tissue culturing of Acacia and Eucalyptus as future raw material for their sawmills.

2.4.5 The Committee noted that the Mahogany Industry Development Act (MIDA) does not come under the Ministry but under the Public Enterprise. The Chairpersonship of the Mahogany Industry Council has now changed from the Prime Minister to the Minister of Forestry.

2.4.6 The Committee noticed a rise in the imports of wood products such as plywood and particle boards. In the most recent figures, there was an increase in imports from \$18.4 million to \$36.3 million. This rise indicates the shortage of local supply and is a worrying trend.

2.4.7 Exports of wood products in 2021 were valued at \$100 million. In 2022 it was projected that exports would decrease to \$93 million. This decrease in exports is also a worrying trend.

2.4.8 A critical finding and serious concern for the forestry and sawmilling sectors is therefore, that imports are increasing while exports are decreasing.

2.5 MAJOR CHALLENGES:

2.5.1 A major challenge facing the sector is that there is lack of trees to be harvested. Data provided by Fiji Pine Ltd, has highlighted that this problem will worsen in the future.

2.5.2 There is a major concern on the low survival rate of indigenous trees planted under the 30MT15Y initiative.

2.5.3 The Committee noted that performance on its KPIs was satisfactory despite the redeployment of resources to address COVID 19. The Ministry had utilized 60% of its staff, vehicles and other resources to battle COVID 19 in 2020 – 2021.

2.5.4 The lack of expertise and equipment for value adding products to make use of timber residue.

2.6 MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES:

- 2.6.1** The Ministry is looking to improve the percentage of seedlings that have survived replanting. The Research Division has established permanent sample plots.
- 2.6.2** The Ministry is looking forward to increasing the range of agencies and stakeholders such as LOU's that it partners with to rectify the problem of low survival rate of seedlings.
- 2.6.3** The Ministry has increased its forest subsidy funding to purchase value adding machines that can help utilise wood residues from the forest and from the sawmills.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 Review of Legislation, Regulations and Policies

The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry prioritize the review of Legislations, Policies and Guidelines in the Ministry i.e. Forest Act, Sawmill Regulations, Preservative Timber Treatment Regulation, Forest Harvesting Regulation, Planted Forest policy and the Rural Forest Strategy.

3.2 Overall Ministry's Performance

- 3.2.1** That Committee recommends that the Ministry improves its performance in all the Strategic Priority Areas especially on SP 5 (Forest Financing) which is currently sitting at only 42%.
- 3.2.2** Given that the Ministry has already achieved 60 percent of the 30MT15Y program, the Ministry needs to review and re-align its targets.
- 3.2.3** The Committee recommends that training of Ministry staff and others within the Forestry sector including refresher training for Forest Wardens, Harvesting Supervision, Nursery Establishment, Basic Portable Sawmill and so forth are strengthened.
- 3.2.4** The Committee recommends that the Ministry reflects the data on Women involvement in the Forestry sector in its future report to Parliament.

3.3 Ministry Resources

The Committee recommends that the Ministry upgrade its Research and Development to meet current needs of the sector. This will include the sourcing of appropriate facilities and expertise.

3.4 Forestry and Sector

The Committee recommends that the Ministry needs to re-strategize its approaches to address the decrease of exports and over reliance on imports.

3.5 Mitigating the Challenges

3.5.1 The Committee recommends the strengthening of partnerships with LOUs and other stakeholders to rectify the problem of the low survival rate of seedlings.

4.0 Gender Analysis

SO 110 (2) states that “Where a Committee conducts an activity listed in clause (1) the Committee shall ensure that full consideration will be given to the principle of gender equality so as to ensure all matters are considered with regard to the impact and benefit on both men and women equally”.

The Committee noted that the overall percentage of female staff were as follows.

- In 2019 – 2020 was 20%
- In 2020 – 2021 was 18%
- In 2021- 2022 was 20%

Of the Executives, the female percentage was as follows.

- In 2019 – 2020 was 33%
- In 2020 – 2021 was 50%
- In 2021 – 2022 was 50%

The Committee noted with appreciation that the Ministry was also conducting training for women including harvesting supervision training, nursery establishment and management, use of portable sawmill and utilization of wood residues.

5.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL (SDG)

The Committee noted that the Ministry had a total of three (3) SDGs incorporated into its programs in line with the goals of the NDP during the year under review. The SDGs are:

5.1 Sustainable Development Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth - Economic growth

The forestry and logging industry contributed approximately \$31.1 million to GDP (0.3%) in 2021.

5.2 Decent work

The Committee noted that those employed in the formal forestry sector were provided with Decent Working conditions, however, the Committee has concerns on employees in the informal forestry sector who were deprived from decent working conditions.

5.3 Sustainable Development Goal 13 – Climate Change – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact

The predominant contribution to SDG 13, Climate Action is through the Ministry's goal of sustainable forest management i.e., the 30MT15Y programme, Rehabilitation of Degraded Forests Project (RDF) and the LOU's Incentive payments for landowners.

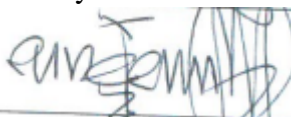
5.3.1 Sustainable Development Goal 15 – Life on Land - which aims to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”.

The Ministry's activities on Life on Land are seen in the work of its Parks and Reserves unit for maintenance of forest and nature reserve boundaries. Recent activities have included the marking and maintenance of the Colo-i-Suva Forest Reserve and reconnaissance exercise were carried out for the Tomaniivi Nature Reserve and Wabu Forest Reserve.

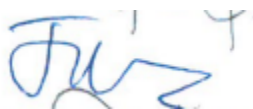
7.0 Conclusion

The Ministry's overall performance has been satisfactory in the period under review, given the significant challenges that it faced during COVID 19. There are significant challenges faced by the Ministry and the Forestry sector that need to be addressed.

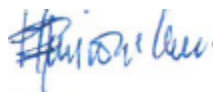
Members Signature:



.....
1. Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna,
Chairperson



.....
2. Hon. Jone Usamate.
**Deputy Chairperson
Opposition MP**



.....
3. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu
Government MP



.....
4. Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu
Government MP



.....
5. Hon. Joseph Nand
Opposition Alternate MP

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Appendix 3

Appendix 4

Appendix 5

Appendix 1

Written Response by the
Ministry of Forestry



MINISTRY OF FORESTRY

HEADQUARTERS

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26 April 2024

The Honourable Tomasi Tunabuna
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Natural Resources
Parliament Complex
Constitution Avenue
Government Buildings
Suva

Dear Sir,

Re: 2019-2020, 2020-2021 & 2021-2022 Ministry of Forestry Annual report scrutiny

1. In response to the request from the Standing Committee under Parliament Standing Order 112 (b) for a submission on the questions raised by the Standing Committee on Natural Resources regarding the Ministry of Forestry's Annual Reports 2019-2020, 2020-2021 & 2021-2022.
2. The Ministry would like to submit the following presentation containing responses to the questions raised by the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.
3. The Ministry will support the proceedings and deliberations on the process of scrutiny on our Annual Report through appearing before the Committee to present the responses to the questions raised on Tuesday 30th April, 2024 at 09.30 a.m.
4. The Ministry is looking forward for further collaborations and wish the Committee members well in their deliberations.

Thank you.


Rovereto Nayacalevu (Mr.)

Acting Permanent Secretary for Fisheries & Forestry



Ministry of Forestry Responses to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources

Questions on the Ministry of Forestry's 2019 - 2022 Annual Reports

No.	Question	Ministry of Forestry's Response
1.	<p>P6 – Permanent Secretary's Foreword</p> <p>There seems to be incoherence between the Ministry achieving 78.8% of its deliverables, whilst utilising 90.6% of its budget.</p> <p>a) Can the Ministry explain this?</p> <p>b) Can the Ministry please provide an explanation of the effectiveness of the "Say No to Illegal Logging" Pledge that was launched in the Northern Division?"</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry's approach to assessing performance takes into account that KPIs can be challenging and therefore progress should be measured in stages. The Ministry takes into account that that progress against KPIs can be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial stages of implementation (25% score) Partially completed (50%) More than 70% achieved 100% achieved Moving forward, we will re-strategise performance indicators to account for long term projects. For example, in the Forest Financing area (Strategic Priority 5), the activities require inter-agency inputs. Some activities need multi-year phasing such as the development of Forest Trust Funds. <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAY NO TO ILLEGAL logging is an initiative by the Ministry to curb illegal logging in the Northern division. The curbing of illegal logging is very challenging. The initiative was launched in February 2022 with a target of 1000 people to give their pledge including landowners, logging contractors, business houses and the public as a whole. The duration of the pledge was only for a year and ended in February 2023. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pledge had a high impact: before the Pledge (2017-January 2021) there were 29 cases of illegal logging, but only 3 cases after the pledge (February 2022), A few cases are under investigation and are still with the Police, All contractors involved in illegal logging will be fined up to the maximum \$10,000. If a company continues to repeat illegal logging, the Ministry will revoke the contractor's licence. The future of the pledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Northern division is planning to revive awareness on 'say no to illegal logging' since a few cases have come up again connected to illegal logging. The Ministry is currently reviewing processes and procedures to manage illegal logging, Introducing new technologies such as drones and GIS to monitor illegal operations, Increasing manpower in hot spot areas for illegal logging.
2	<p>Can the Ministry provide an overview of the Ministry's performance during the period between 2019 to 2022, specifying in particular, what you see as the:</p> <p>a) Greatest Ministry performances improved upon or achieved?</p> <p>b) Greatest shortcomings and challenges?</p> <p>c) Changes you have made to ensure that the</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry has continued to deliver on its mandate over the past three years despite challenging circumstances. The Ministry's greatest achievements include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The continuation of the 30 Million Trees in 15 Years (30MT15Y) programme. In the period 2021-2022, 5.5 million trees were planted under the initiative. Growth of exports: In 2021, the Fiji Bureau of Statistics data showed that wood related exports exceeded \$100 million for the first time, with the value more than doubling between 2019 and 2021, The launch of the Emissions Reduction Programme, The development of Maritime Pine projects and the rehabilitation programme, The commencement and completion of the National Forest Inventory. This will help underpin activities such as the Emissions Reduction Programme. Completion of the integration of the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS),

No.	Question	Ministry of Forestry's Response
	<p>shortcomings do not reoccur?</p> <p>d) How did the Ministry mitigate those challenges?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Moving from a manual to an online digital licencing system for exports and imports, helping to facilitate exports, ○ Online harvesting licence system, ○ Signing of three Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Fiji Police Force to curb illegal logging, with the Fiji Revenue and Customs Services to share data on companies licenced to export or import forest products, and with the Fiji Bureau of Statistics on the sharing of accurate information for the forestry sector, ○ Unqualified audit opinions for all years in the timeframe. <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the major challenges faced by the Ministry over the period have included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The survival of indigenous trees planted under the 30MT15Y initiative, ○ Redeployment of staff and Ministry resources as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and natural disasters. <p>c) & d)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To attempt to mitigate some of the major challenges faced over the time period, the Ministry has implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The beat up of seedlings that did not survive under the 30MT15Y programme, ○ Additionally, our Research Division has established permanent sample plots to monitor the growth of each species and their survival to help determine which species to plant in different sites in the future, ○ Establishing inter-agency collaboration for co-operatives.
3	<p>Page 15 – Table 5: Forestry Sector Contribution (2019-2021)</p> <p>The committee noted with appreciation the increase of GDP contribution of the sector from 1.4% in 2019 to 1.9% in 2021.</p> <p>Can the Ministry please provide the contribution of the Forestry Sector to GDP in 2022?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In its latest release, The Fiji Bureau of Statistics stated that National GDP stood at \$10.1 billion in 2022. • The forestry and logging industry contributed approximately \$31.1 million of this. This is equivalent to 0.3% of Fiji's real GDP. • However, it is important to note that the contribution and promotion of economic activities go beyond forestry and logging itself. Forestry also enables other value-adding processes to occur. • These value-adding processes and products are classified and captured, for instance, within the Manufacturing industries. • The Fiji Bureau of Statistics valued this contribution at \$109.0 million, which is equivalent to 1.1% of Fiji's real GDP. Thus the combined forest sector contribution is valued at \$140.4 million or 1.4% of Fiji's real GDP.
4	<p>Page 15 – Table 6: Formal Employment in Forestry</p> <p>The committee noted with appreciation the increase of employment opportunities in the Forestry sector outlined. It is noted, however, that no data has been provided for 2021-2022.</p> <p>a) Can the Ministry please provide this now?</p> <p>The Committee further noted that the Ministry's 2020-2021 Annual Report listed the total staffing strength of the Ministry as 247, whilst the Table 6 reports Government Employees as totalling 150.</p> <p>b) Can the Ministry please explain?</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal employment in the forestry sector is provided by the Fiji Bureau of Statistics. • Unfortunately, they have not provided more recent years of employment data. <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 247 figure provided by the Ministry includes both established and unestablished GWE workers, which are not included in the Fiji Bureau of Statistics report.

No.	Question	Ministry of Forestry's Response																																
5	<p>Page 16 – Table 7: Exports of Wood Products (2019-2021)</p> <p>a) Can the Ministry please explain more on the figures highlighted in each row in Table 7?</p> <p>b) What does Total Domestic Export mean and what products are listed under the Total Domestic Export?</p> <p>c) The Committee noted that figures for 2022 were not been provided for in Table 7 of the Annual Report? Can the Ministry please explain?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">‘Total Domestic Export’ is a trade statistics term referring to all the Commodities grown, produced or manufactured in Fiji, including commodities imported from foreign countries that have been significantly changed or enhanced in value. This excludes commodities which have entered into Fiji which are then re-exported without being significantly changed or enhanced in value.<ul style="list-style-type: none">‘Wood and articles of wood’ then refers to wood related exports.‘Wood in chips or particles’ and ‘Mahogany’ are two sub-types of ‘Wood and articles of wood’ that the Fiji Bureau of Statistics provide. For example, this can include pine chips and sawn timber.Overall this means that ‘Wood and articles of wood’ provided \$118.5m out of Fiji’s total export value of \$1,251.4m (9.5%) in 2021.The 2022 figures will be provided in our forthcoming Annual Report and are shown below. <table><tr><th colspan="4">Domestic Exports of Wood Products</th></tr><tr><th>Product</th><th>2020</th><th>2021p</th><th>2022p</th></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="3">Value FJ\$ Million</td></tr><tr><td>Total Domestic Export</td><td>1,146.2</td><td>1,251.5</td><td>1,373.8</td></tr><tr><td>Wood and articles of wood</td><td>76.6</td><td>118.5</td><td>93.0</td></tr><tr><td>Of which</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>- Wood in chips or particles</td><td>55.4</td><td>74.8</td><td>49.0</td></tr><tr><td>- Mahogany</td><td>9.2</td><td>14.8</td><td>22.4</td></tr></table> <p>Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2023 p - provisional</p>	Domestic Exports of Wood Products				Product	2020	2021p	2022p		Value FJ\$ Million			Total Domestic Export	1,146.2	1,251.5	1,373.8	Wood and articles of wood	76.6	118.5	93.0	Of which				- Wood in chips or particles	55.4	74.8	49.0	- Mahogany	9.2	14.8	22.4
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6	<p>Page 16 – Table 8: Imports of Wood Products (2019 – 2021)</p> <p>a) Can the Ministry please explain more on the figures highlighted on Table 8?</p> <p>b) What does “Total Import” means wand what products are listed under import of wood products?</p> <p>c) The committee also noted that figures for 2022 were not provided for in Table 8 of the Annual Report. Can the Ministry please clarify?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Total Imports refers to the total value of all of Fiji’s imports in the given year. This includes all products and goods that Fiji imports.‘Wood and articles of wood’ then refers to wood related imports and includes products such as plywood and particle boards.Overall this means that ‘Wood and articles of wood’ provided \$17.8m out of Fiji’s total import value of \$4,489.9m (0.04%) in 2021.The 2022 figures will be provided in our forthcoming Annual Report and are shown below. <table><tr><th colspan="4">Imports of Wood Products</th></tr><tr><th>Product</th><th>2020</th><th>2021p</th><th>2022p</th></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="3">Value FJ\$ Million</td></tr><tr><td>Total Imports</td><td>3,754.3</td><td>4,484.9</td><td>6,598.6</td></tr><tr><td>Wood and articles of wood</td><td>19.4</td><td>18.4</td><td>36.3</td></tr></table> <p>Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2023</p>	Imports of Wood Products				Product	2020	2021p	2022p		Value FJ\$ Million			Total Imports	3,754.3	4,484.9	6,598.6	Wood and articles of wood	19.4	18.4	36.3												
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7	<p>Page 21 – Summary of Operational Plan Achievement</p> <p>The Committee noted that the achievement percentage rate for SP 5 was low at 42%. Can the Ministry please clarify why the achievement on SP 5 has been consistently low from 2019-2022.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The overall output for SP5 is to establish Forest Trust Funds.This will help develop forest financing mechanisms.This is a challenging long term project that will require external technical advice.Work has continued on reviewing and assessing cost models of existing terrestrial protected areas.																																
8	<p>Page 21 – Ministry Support and Policy</p> <p>Can the Ministry please provide an update on the current status of the 11 drafts of Cabinet Papers highlighted in the 2021-2022 Annual Report?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Some of the key cabinet papers are still a working in progress, awaiting legislation to be passed. For example the Forest Act cabinet paper and the REDD+ Policy cabinet paper discussed below.																																
9	<p>Page 22 – Table 11: Development & Review of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>REDD+ Policy</u>: The policy has been developed and is currently with the Solicitor General’s office for their review. The policy will then be reviewed by the Ministry once the Act is amended as advised by Solicitor General’s Office.																																

No.	Question	Ministry of Forestry's Response
	Legislations, Regulations, Policies & Plans Can the Ministry please provide an update on the status of the 2011 REDD+ Policy, Forest Bill and Climate Change Act?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Forest Bill</u>: The process of reviewing the Forest Act 1992 continued in the financial year and draft submission made to the S.G.'s office for vetting. Once the amendment to the Act is endorsed, relevant regulations already drafted and reviewed will also be finalised. These regulations include the Sawmill Regulation and Preservative Timber Treatment Regulation. • <u>Climate Change Act</u>: The Ministry was part of the consultation on the draft Climate Change Act and provided its contribution as this Act is relevant to the work of the Ministry. The Climate Change Act No. 43 of 2021 was endorsed but has not come into force yet.
10	Page 23 – Drone Activities The Committee noted that the Ministry acquired four drones to assist in its operations by then decided to stop using its drones in 2021. a) Can the Ministry please update the committee as to when this policy was changed to allow drone to be used again? b) Are the 4 drones in full operation now? c) Does the Ministry have any future plans to acquire more drones?	a) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations were halted in 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions. Since the lifting of Covid-19 related restrictions, the use of drones for measuring, monitoring, reporting and verification have been ongoing whenever possible. b) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. The Ministry has 4 drones operating with 11 pilots currently licensed to operate the drones. c) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Given the success of drones in measuring, monitoring, reporting and verification, the Ministry plans to expand its drone fleet to cater for needs to enhance measuring, monitoring, reporting and verification of Fiji's forest resources.
11	Page 25 – Table 14: Harvested Areas per Divisions and Forest types The Committee is concerned that 60.49% of timber being harvested is from Native Forest rather than from planted species. Can the Ministry please explain how it will address this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 60.49% only includes the removal of approximately 1411 hectares. This figure excludes Fiji Pine Limited and Fiji Mahogany Limited which makes up almost 90% of harvested timber in Fiji. This means that in fact a much smaller proportion of total harvested timber is from native forest. • It is also important to note that the table refers to harvested areas rather than production volume. Selective logging is practiced in harvested areas in native forests – this means that not all trees in an area are harvested.
12	Page 26 – Table 15: NFI Field Assessment Results Can the Ministry please provide an update on the progress of the NFI assessments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The field assessment for the National Forest Inventory has now been completed for terrestrial sites only – the field assessment for mangroves is still pending. • The Ministry has also completed a quality assurance/quality control check for terrestrial. This will then have to be done for Mangroves. • The report is being finalised by the consultants. • This will support Fiji's implementation of the Emission Reduction Programme Agreement. • Tasks completed included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data collection ○ Trip Reports compiled. ○ Data input completed ○ Report submitted to REDD+ team.
13	Page 31 – Table 17: Sawmill Production by Division The Committee is concerned with the low recovery rate of saw mill production (42% in 2018 to 47% in 2022). Can the Ministry explain and elaborate more on this, and how this is compared to other countries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average recovery rate for sawmills is approximately 50%. This is in line with other countries however the Ministry of Forestry does not compare sawmill production recovery rate for a variety of reasons including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We use our own monitoring framework, legislation and licensing procedures, ○ We may use different log species, which can lead to different log sizes which impacts production, ○ We use different sawmilling machines and equipment. • The recovered commodity is sawn timber only. The 50% that is not recovered is not necessarily waste. We call this wood 'shorts' or 'shavings' and it can be used for a variety of purposes. We can use this wood for furniture or for chicken pens for example.

No.	Question	Ministry of Forestry's Response
14	Page 31 – Table 19: Treatment Plant Operations Can the Ministry please explain how the remaining timber treatment plants are being used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlicensed timber treatment plants are usually not operational during the year for a variety of reasons. This can include not being no raw materials to treat, inconsistent income to support the plant operation (for example the high cost of chemicals), not being OHS compliant or high repair or maintenance costs to meet licencing requirements. • Additionally, some of the treatment plants do not find it economically viable to stay in operation.
15	Page 32 – Table 21: Quality Control a) Does the Ministry have a strategy to address the high failure rate of treatment timber of 46%? b) Does the analysis also include tests on fencing posts (pine)?	a) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry conducts public awareness on timber treatment requirements on our local radio stations, advertisements on the local dailies, one to one consultation with treatment operators (low performing operators) and issues improvement notices, redress or remedial action notices or even suspension or revocation of treatment licences due to non-improvement • The Ministry conducts consistent monitoring on a quarterly basis and training across the whole value chain from forest site through to the sawmill to the treatment plant. • The Ministry focusses training on the timber plant operators. High turnover in timber plant operators has led to the Ministry conducting more training regarding plant operation. b) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. The analysis also includes tests on fencing posts. All poles used by EFL have to be tested and the Ministry conducts tests if requested by the buyer or end user.
16	Page 32 – Monitoring, Compliance, Surveillance (MCS) a) The Ministry's overall compliance rate for the review period stands at 71%. How does this compare to other countries? b) Can the Ministry please explain on the overall compliance of forest harvesting operations? c) Is the compliance rate of 71% accurate?	a) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Forestry in Fiji operates under its own monitoring framework, legislation, and licensing procedures. Therefore, it focuses on assessing compliance internally rather than making external comparisons. b) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The compliance of forest harvesting operations in Fiji is monitored based on a standard monitoring template that captures data as per the requirements of the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice. The information in the template is extracted from the Code of Practice. Logging contractors must fulfill the necessary requirements stipulated in the Code and the Forest Act 1992 to obtain a Forest Harvesting license. Once the license is issued and operations begin, the Ministry carries out monitoring regularly. Beat stations conduct monthly monitoring, divisions conduct quarterly monitoring, and the national monitoring team conducts biannual monitoring. All of this is included in the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice, and the objective of comprehensive monitoring is to minimize adverse impacts on the forest environment such as creek sedimentation and siltation that may affect downstream communities. c) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry's compliance rate of 71% is accurate, and this is determined through the utilization of a standard monitoring template designed to capture various aspects of logging activities. This template encompasses crucial elements such as planning, roading, landing, exclusion areas, and skidding. Each of these activities is meticulously documented and assessed against the established and mandated Fiji Forest Harvesting code of Practice to ensure that logging operations minimize their impact on the forests. • By employing this comprehensive monitoring approach, the Ministry can effectively evaluate compliance levels across different phases of logging activities. This not only helps in maintaining the integrity of Fiji's forests but also ensures sustainable practices are upheld in line with regulatory frameworks and environmental conservation efforts. Thus, the 71% compliance rate reflects the Ministry's commitment to responsible forestry management while striving to balance economic interests with environmental preservation.
17	Page 33 – Table 23: Average Score by Each Division a) Can the Ministry explain more on the total average	a) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Forestry conducts monitoring by each sawmill, by division and then the national recovery (average) was usually established.

No.	Question	Ministry of Forestry's Response
	<p>score of sawmill monitoring of 49% to 64%?</p> <p>b) Can the Ministry explain to the committee of the procedure to address the low compliance?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry scores based on different metrics. The different processes and types of machines in the sawmill are awarded different scores and then aggregated to form the overall score. If a major sawmill (eg. Tropik Woods Industries) recovery is low then the average for the Western division is seriously affected. For the Northern division, if Valebasoga and Houyilin production is low then all other sawmills are affected. <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The low compliance is usually addressed by the Ministry on a monthly basis when receiving individual sawmill production figures (again this is mainly due to log sizes as smaller logs will lead to more waste or due to old sawmill machines or new operators.) Once the gap/ poor performance is identified, the Ministry conducts relevant training tailored to suit each low performing sawmill.
18	<p>Page 34 – Research and Development – Silviculture – Seed Technology</p> <p>120kg Mahogany seeds was collected by the Ministry</p> <p>What will the total number of trees that will be produced from the 120kg of mahogany seeds that were distributed to the three Divisions of the Ministry and 80kg to Totoka Islands?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the fiscal year, a total of 120 kilograms of mahogany seeds were distributed. Among these, 80 kg were allocated to Totoka Island, while the remaining 40 kg were distributed across the three operational divisions. Following standard procedures, each kilogram of mahogany seeds underwent processing and necessary testing, confirming an average count of 2,000 seeds per kilogram, with an anticipated germination rate of 80%. The total number of seeds distributed amounts to 120kg multiplied by 2,000 seeds per kilogram, resulting in 240,000 seeds. Calculating the expected germination, 80% of the total seeds are projected to germinate, yielding 192,000 viable seeds. Once these seeds are planted, we expect a mortality rate of 20%. This yields potentially up to 150,000 trees.
19	<p>Page 38 – Forest Health Surveillance and Monitoring</p> <p>Can the Ministry please explain how sentinel plants are used?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routine health surveillance of forestry plantations in Fiji, under the Ministry of Forestry, primarily involves inspections from the roadside, along the planting lines, and on the ground to identify and map health issues caused by pests and diseases. A key goal of such surveillance is the early detection of exotic pests and diseases to mitigate potential threats. This routine activity includes ongoing collaboration with Fiji Ports Corporation Limited (FPCL) and Fiji Ports Terminal Limited (FPTL) to monitor Suva Kings Wharf and Lautoka Wharf, respectively. The global mass transportation of trade and people significantly contributes to the movement of biota into new regions and ecosystems. Some of these species thrive in these new environments and become invasive. A critical objective of invasion science is to predict which species may become invasive before an invasion occurs. Accurate prediction supports the risk assessment of potential invasiveness and the development of effective, targeted biosecurity measures, including surveillance. Effective surveillance for the early detection of invasive alien species in natural ecosystems or on valued plants in modified areas can prevent potentially devastating and costly impacts—whether environmental, economic, or cultural—of new invasions on the country. Surveillance technologies often face constraints due to various factors. Identifying species that pose a significant risk before they reach the border is a strategic approach to minimizing the possibility and impact of invasion. Monitoring sentinel plants is a crucial tool for strengthening biosecurity programs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detecting and identifying insect pests, nematodes and plant diseases that could potentially invade uncolonized countries. Developing pest risk analysis profiles to eliminate or mitigate the risk of arrival. To ensure accurate setup and assessment at the wharf, meetings and discussions are typically held between FPCL, FPTL, and the Ministry of Forestry to identify and share information on specific areas of interest within the Pacific Region and other overseas countries that frequently import wood and timber products into Fiji. These areas of interest may harbor pests and diseases that pose significant threats to Fiji's forest tree species and ecosystem.

No.	Question	Ministry of Forestry's Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on these discussions, sentinel plant species are selected, and the Forest Research and Development Division in Colo-i-Suva is responsible for seed collection, nursery germination, and propagation before they are placed in designated areas within the wharf vicinity. These sentinel plants undergo regular assessment, monitoring, and reporting as part of ongoing surveillance programs.
20	<p>Page 43 Table – Forest Technical Training</p> <p>The Committee acknowledges the Ministry's capacity building programs, however, the Committee is concerned with the gender imbalance amongst the participants. Can the Ministry please explain?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of women undergoing forestry training by the Ministry has increased gradually over the years. In 2022-2023, 49 women in total were able to undergo various types of technical training varying from harvesting supervision training to nursery establishment and management. Additionally, in 2022-2023 13 women were trained to operate the basic portable sawmill.
21	<p>Page 45 – Table 28: Forest Wardens Training</p> <p>The Committee is concerned with the low number of forest wardens trained in each of the 3 training programmes conducted in the year. Can the Ministry comment on this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Forestry Training Centre was used to support the Government response to Covid-19. This impacted the availability of the centre to conduct trainings. Nevertheless, the Ministry was able to conduct trainings for 14 forest wardens in total. This refresher training will enable wardens to monitor harvesting operations, provide awareness on conservation activities as well as assist in policing forestry laws among other aspects.
22	<p>Page 46 – Corporate Training</p> <p>How does the Ministry measure the impact of its staff training?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry carefully targets training to its employees and formally solicits feedback on the quality and usefulness of trainings through Transfer Evaluation forms which are sent out three months after training for completion by supervising officers. A return on investment from training report is produced on the results from these transfer evaluations. The Ministry is aiming to develop more comprehensive measures of the impact of training conducted.
23	<p>Page 47 – Strategic 4: Stewardship – Trade Facilitation</p> <p>The report states that Exports of wood products was \$101.2 million. Table 7 of the same annual report lists the exports for Wood and articles of wood at \$118.5 million.</p> <p>a) Can the Ministry provide an explanation on the above?</p> <p>Page 49 of the annual report states that Import of wood products was \$12 million. Table 8 of the same report lists imports of Wood and articles of wood at \$17.9 million.</p> <p>b) Can the Ministry provide an explanation on the above?</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total export values stated in page 47 and table 7 of the Annual Report are using two different data sources and timeframes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The export figures provided on Page 47 (value: \$101.2 million) are for the financial year 2021-2022. This data is sourced from the Ministry's trade division in Nasinu. However, the export figures provided in Table 7 (value: \$118.5 million) are for the calendar year 2021. This data is sourced from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics. Therefore the difference is as a result of slightly different calendar periods. <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per above, the difference is a result of two different data sources and timeframes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The import figures provided on Page 49 (value: \$12 million) are for the financial year 2021-2022. This data is sourced from the Ministry's trade division in Nasinu. However, the export figures provided in Table 8 (value: \$17.9 million) are for the calendar year 2021. This data is sourced from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics.
24	<p>Page 53 – GEF Ridge to Reef (R2R) project</p> <p>The Committee noted with appreciation the GF5 Ridge to Reef (R2R) Project planting in</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes. Table 24 does include the R2R planting. <p>b)</p>

No.	Question	Ministry of Forestry's Response
	<p>Ba catchment, Tuva Catchment, Tunulua and Labasa Catchment.</p> <p>a) The Committee would like to know if this has been reflected in Table 24 of the report</p> <p>360 hectares was allocated to replant in Tunulua and Labasa catchment areas. No data is provided on how much was reforested.</p> <p>b) Can the Ministry provide an explanation on the above?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The R2R project evaluation report provided online (https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/detail/21913) details the following statistics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tunulua Catchment: 98 hectares planted out of 90 hectares target (109% of target) Labasa Catchment: 210.70 hectares planted out of 270 hectares target (78% of target)
25	<p>Page 55 – SP6: Recruitment and Selection</p> <p>There were 8 non-renewable of contracts for staff which was due to employee non-performance.</p> <p>Can the Ministry explain how this is managed given that Contractual Employment is no longer in use?</p>	<p>The non-renewal of contracts for the 8 employees occurred between 31/08/21 and 05/04/22 when all civil servants were employed on contracts. Reasons were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 employees were paid from a casual allocation which was removed in the 2021-2022 budget for the Ministry. Contracts were not renewed due to lack of funding. 2 posts were no longer required and traded off to create higher positions, as such the contracts for the employees holding these positions were not renewed. 4 contracts were not renewed based on performance assessed at below 70%. Three of them were drivers who were involved in multiple vehicle accidents caused by their own negligence. <p>All employees whose contracts were not renewed were permitted to apply for vacant positions and 2 of them are employed again in the Ministry.</p> <p>Although contracts are no longer in use the Ministry continues to use approved policies to manage performance and discipline. Training on people management is continuing through in-house refresher training, Ministry of Civil Service training, and outsourced training.</p> <p>The Ministry conducts investigations on all reported complaints and as a result, disciplinary action has been implemented against employees. So far this has been in the form of warning letters which allows the employee an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and improve.</p>

Appendix 2

Supplementary Response
received from the Ministry of
Forestry



MINISTRY OF FORESTRY

HEADQUARTERS

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MEMORANDUM

From: Acting Permanent Secretary for Fisheries and Forestry

Date: 07 June 2024

To: Parliament Standing Committee on Natural Resources

File Ref: PARL/NRC/6/16

Re: 2019-2020, 2020-2021 & 2021-2022 Ministry of Forestry Annual Report Scrutiny

1. In response to the request from the Standing Committee under Parliament Standing Order 112 (b) for a submission on the questions raised by the Standing Committee on Natural Resources regarding the Ministry of Forestry's Annual Reports 2019-2020, 2020-2021 & 2021-2022.
2. The Ministry would like to submit the following presentation containing responses regarding the follow up questions on
 - a. Gender breakdown in Executive Officers and Officers on the ground
 - b. Progress against SDGs implementation on Ministry projects and programs
3. The Ministry is looking forward for further collaborations and wish the Committee members well in their deliberations.

Thank you

Rovereto Nayacalevu
Acting Permanent Secretary



Ministry of Forestry Responses to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources


1. Gender breakdown of Executives and Officers on the ground


The following table provides information on the total number of women employed by the Ministry of Forestry and their respective roles.


Female staff members					
Year	Established staff	Government wage earners and project	Total	Executives	Officers on the ground
2019/2020	52	17+ 5 = 22	74	2	72
2021/2021	52	18+3= 21	73	3	70
2021/2022	51	17+5=22	73	3	70

2. SDG progress

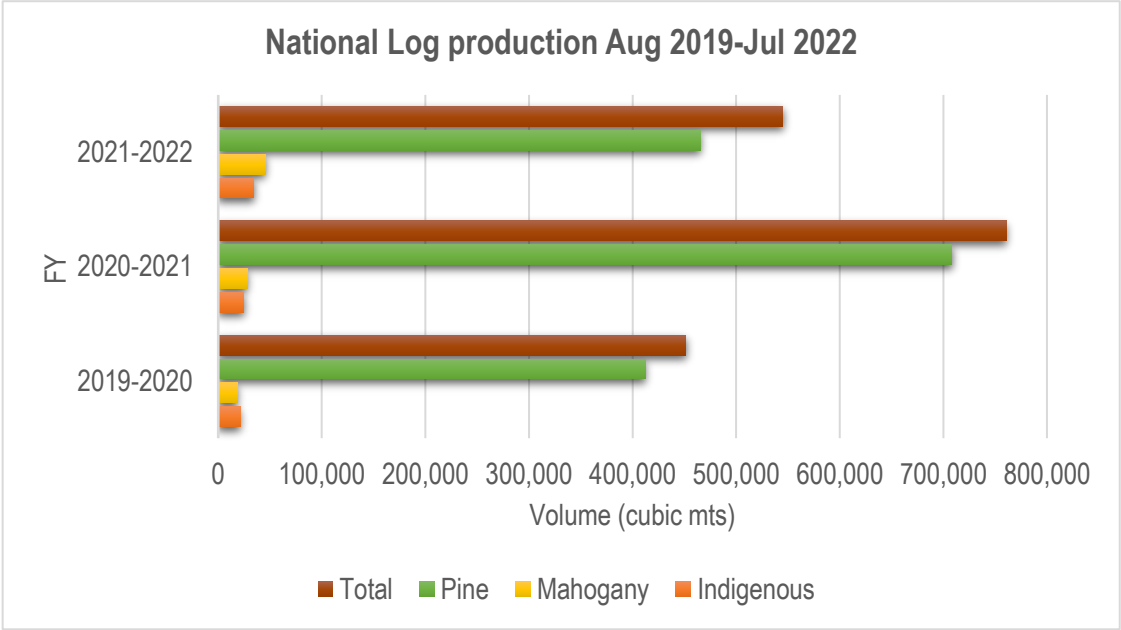
The following SDGs have been chosen as the Ministry believes that the programmes, projects and goals of the Ministry best align to the SDGs in the table below.

SDG	Progress on implementation
	<p><u>Economic growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The forestry and logging industry contributed approximately \$31.1 million of this. This is equivalent to 0.3% of Fiji's real GDP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> However, it is important to note that the contribution and promotion of economic activities go beyond forestry and logging itself. Forestry also enables other value-adding processes These value-adding processes and products are classified and captured, for instance, within the Manufacturing industries. The Fiji Bureau of Statistics valued this contribution at \$109.0 million, which is equivalent to 1.1% of Fiji's real GDP. Thus the combined forest sector contribution is valued at \$140.4 million or 1.4% of Fiji's real GDP. Additionally, the forestry sector is a growing source of export revenue for Fiji. The Ministry has continued to focus in areas of ease of doing business through streamlining the trading process with relevant training provided to relevant stakeholders seeking licenses or permits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Wood and articles of wood' provided \$118.5m out of Fiji's total export value of \$1,251.4m (9.5%) in 2021 during Covid.

SDG	Progress on implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry has also continued to support the development of small-scale cottage industries in Fiji. This has included helping the registration of a cooperative in Gaunavou, which also received the approval from the Ministry of Trade to sue the Fijian Made Brand. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support will include the handing over of value adding machines. • The Ministry has also worked to spread the benefit of Fiji's forestry sector through, for eg, maritime pine schemes. Working in Gau, Cicia and Kadavu, the project was introduced to support maritime pine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communities to utilize their mature pine plantation resources for the construction of their houses, including renovations. Since logging contractors from the mainland found it unprofitable to barge logs/timber across to the mainland and sell them, the Government has stepped in to support by subsidizing part of the operations through the purchase of portable sawmill machines. ○ The aim is to support commercial development, business and products related to the Forestry sector, while also encouraging the participation of youths and women in forestry. <p><u>Decent work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal employment in the Forestry Sector totalled more than 900 according to the most recent 2020 statistics from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics • Excluding government workers, there are more than 750 employed in the forestry sector. This covers workers operating across a range of forestry related activities including nurseries, tree cultivation and conservation, logging, log processing and sawmill operation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The predominant contribution to SDG 13: Climate Action is through the Ministry's goal of sustainable forest management. • We have continued our 30 Million Trees in 15 Years (30MT15Y) programme. In the period 2021-2022, 5.5 million trees were planted under the initiative. In total more than 19 million trees have been planted across more than 17,000 hectares. • Rehabilitation of Degraded Forests Project (RDF): The reforestation of degraded forest initiative is an attempt to utilize degraded forests to address broad thematic areas of need, including carbon stock enhancement, connecting forest corridors, coastal restoration, and food security, flood mitigation stabilization of riparian system, catchment restoration, enrichment planting, community woodlots, and industrial planting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incentive payments for landowners have enabled landowners to make a variety of investments. ○ Total of sixteen (16) Planting Incentive Payments paid out from the Ministry with 10 from the Central Division, 4 for the Northern Division and 4 for Western Division. ○ The Ministry was able to plant 410 hectare with 384,380 seedlings since 2023. • The outcome of this project is to enhance the implementation and adoption of sustainable management practices including maintaining and enhancing multiple forest values through human interventions.

SDG	Progress on implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities carried out under the RDF project include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Monitoring and Survival Assessment, Nursery establishment and maintenance, including purchasing seedlings from Community Nurseries. Emissions Reduction Program (ERP): An Emissions reduction program has been launched, aiming to reduce emissions from forest degradation and deforestation. This will result in Fiji achieving global participation in Forestry Initiatives and Standards (including carbon trading) as well as establishing a national performance-based system to monitor and report on the net emissions of the agriculture, forest and land use sector (AFOLU). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The REDD+ Readiness was completed in 2022, which supported the Fiji Government's engagement in a carbon trade agreement with the FCPF-Carbon Fund under the Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA). Fiji's ERPA is a pledge to reduce GHG emission from within the agriculture, forest and other land use sector by 2.5 million tons (tCO₂e) as its contribution to the global target of reducing global surface warming of 1.5degC under Paris Agreement. The ER Report for the first monitoring records an emission reduction of over 800,000 tons of Carbon dioxide equivalence (tCO₂e), which is being audited.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry also has several projects targeting the Life on Land SDG. The Ministry's Parks and Reserves unit is also responsible for two significant outputs of the Ministry covering the maintenance of forest and nature reserve boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent activities have included the marking and maintenance of the Colo-i-Suva Forest Reserve and reconnaissance exercise were carried out for the Tomaniivi Nature Reserve and Wabu Forest Reserve. The International Climate Initiative (IKI) partnership between FAO and the Ministry aimed to restore tropical dry forests in the Yasawa and Mamanuca Islands, promoting the protection and development of fragile ecosystems, while also assisting communities with alternative livelihood sources. This Project also contributes to the SDG on climate action. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since 2022, in Malolo a total of 5 ha of farms have been enriched through agroforestry practices using multipurpose species. In Naviti, since 2022, 24.95ha is under restoration. A total of 496 community reps have undergone 19 various forms of capacity building programs, 173 of whom a women and 155 are youths. Ministry nursery: The Ministry has also been developing and managing a nursery stock. This stock now stands at over 10,000 seedlings, comprising a wide variety of species, reflecting our commitment to biodiversity.

Column1	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Indigenous	21,072	24,560	34,248
Mahogany	18,137	28,051	45,446
Pine	412,054	708,206	465,446
Total	451,263	760,817	545,140



Appendix 3

Verbatim Report

[VERBATIM REPORT]

MEETING OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

ANNUAL REPORTS

- 1. Ministry of Forestry 2019-2020 Annual Report**
- 2. Ministry of Forestry 2020-2021 Annual Report**
- 3. Ministry of Forestry 2021-2022 Annual Report**

INSTITUTION: Ministry of Forestry

VENUE: Big Committee Room (East Wing)

DATE: Tuesday, 30th April, 2024

VERBATIM REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES HELD AT THE BIG COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON TUESDAY, 30TH APRIL, 2024, AT 9.30A.M.

Interviewee/Submittee: Ministry of Forestry

In Attendance:

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1. | Ms. Sanjana Lal | - | Conservator of Forest |
| 2. | Ms. Laite Cavu | - | Director, Corporate Services |
| 3. | Mr. Tevita Bulai | - | Executive Director (Research and Development) |
| 4. | Ms Shanti Devi | - | Senior Accounts Officer |
| 5. | Mr. Alivereti Tawake | - | Acting Principal Economic Planning Officer |
| 6. | Mr. Ruairi O'Donoghue | - | Senior Economic Planning Officer |
| 7. | Mr. Ilaisa Tulele | - | REDD+ Team Leader |
-

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, members of the media and the public, secretariat, dear viewers, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you all. It is a pleasure to welcome everyone, especially the viewers who are watching this session. I am privileged to chair this second submission meeting of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, which is being aired live on Parliament's Channel through the Walesi platform and livestreamed through the Parliament's Facebook page.

At the outset for information purposes, pursuant to Standing Order 111 of Parliament, all Committee meetings are to be open to the public, therefore, this submission is open to the public and media and will also be aired live as I had earlier mentioned. However, for any sensitive information concerning this submission that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the Committee either in private or in writing. But do note that this will only be allowed in a few specific circumstances which include:

1. National security;
2. Third party confidential information;
3. Personnel or human resources; and
4. Meetings, whereby the Committee deliberates on all issues before it and develops its recommendations and reports.

I wish to remind honourable Members and our invited submittees that all comments and questions to be asked, are to be addressed through the Chair. Also be mindful that only the invited submittees will be allowed to ask any questions or give comments to the Committee. This is a parliamentary meeting, and may I repeat that, this is a parliamentary meeting and all information gathered is covered for under Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act and the Standing Order of Parliament. Please, note that the Committee does not condone libel or slander on any allegation against any individual that is not present today to defend themselves.

In terms of other protocols of this Committee meeting, please be advised that whilst the meeting is in progress, movements within the meeting room will be restricted and there should be minimum usage of mobile phones, whereby, answering of phones should be done outside of this room, and all mobile phones to be on silent mode.

(Introduction of Committee Members)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- With us this morning we have the representatives from the Ministry of Forestry who have been requested to provide a submission on the Ministry of Forestry Annual Report for the period 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Now, I take this time to invite our submission guests to introduce themselves before we proceed with the submission. Please, note that if there are any questions by the Members of the Committee, we will wait until the end of the presentation to ask our questions.

MS. S. LAL.- Mr. Chairman, honourable Members of the Committee and the secretariat, on behalf of the honourable Minister and Permanent Secretary for Forestry we thank this Committee for the opportunity to respond to the questions that were raised on those annual reports that we submitted to Parliament.

The Permanent Secretary is unable to attend because he is on a fisheries meeting abroad. I as the Conservator of Forest have come in with our team from the Ministry of Forestry to present the submission as requested.

(Introduction of Ministry of Forestry Officials)

MS. S. LAL.- We are happy to present to you the questions that have been raised regarding the annual reports that were presented from 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

I also wish to mention right from the onset that from 2019 to the period of these three reports that we have presented, the country was under a pandemic (COVID-19) and the Ministry had re-strategized and redeployed 60 percent of its staff to assist with the COVID operations. So, basically in two years, we worked with only 40 percent of the staff on the ground and the rest, we thought of national needs, so they were redeployed. I will handover to our Planning Officer to go through the Report. We will be happy to answer any supplementary questions as we go along.

MR. R. DONOGHUE.- *Ni sa bula vinaka* everyone. I arrived in November and I will be here for two years in total. Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to some of your questions.

On Question No.1, the Ministry's approach to performance, we need to take into account that sometimes we would have made progress against KPIs without fully achieving the final deliverable. So, we take into account, for instance, we could be in the initial stage for implementation, we might have partially completed something, we can be nearly complete, or we could have a 100 percent completion which is what explains the slightly low percentage of total deliverables completed compared to the budget expenditure.

We would also say that currently our approach, we are looking to re-strategise a little bit, to take that into account that we have many long term challenging projects that require inter-agency help. So, for instance, the Development of Forest Trust Funds will require multi-year phasing approach and also assistance not only from the other ministries in the Fijian Government but also externally.

Moving on to part (b), the background, the 'Say No To Illegal' logging was an initiative by the Ministry to curb illegal logging in the Northern Division (Vanua Levu) where it was most prevalent. The curbing of illegal logging is very challenging. The initiative was launched in February 2022 with a target of 1,000 people giving their pledge, so it is not an illegal logged. For instance, with the pledge, we targetted landowners, logging contractors, business houses and the public as a whole.

The duration of the pledge was for one year, ending in February 2023. In our opinion, the pledge had a very high impact, so in the years coming up before the pledge, there were 29 cases of illegal logging. After the pledge in February 2022, the number of cases of illegal logging we have found decreased significantly, so only three cases. I have noted there are few cases still under investigation with the Police.

All contractors involved in illegal logging can be fined up to a maximum of \$10,000 and if a company continues to repeat illegal logging, then the Ministry can revoke the contractor's licence, as to stop them from logging entirely.

On the future of the pledge, we are looking to, sort of, revive awareness on the 'say no to illegal logging', since a few cases have come up and have been investigated. We are currently reviewing our processes and procedures to manage illegal logging. For instance, we have introduced new technologies, such as drones and the use of GIS to monitor illegal operations as far as looking to increase manpower in hot spot areas.

On Question No. 2, the Ministry, despite the challenge in circumstances over the past few years has continued to deliver on its mandate and we feel that we have some significant achievements. This includes the –

- continual progress against the 30 Million Trees in 15 Years (30MT15Y) Programme. So in the year 2021 to 2022, we planted 5.5 million trees.
- We have seen significant growth in our exports. In 2021, for the first time ever, wood-related exports exceeded \$100 million.
- We have launched our Emissions Reduction Programme.
- We developed Maritime Pine projects.
- We have commenced and completed the National Forest Inventory.
- We have completed the integration of the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS).
- Additionally, we have moved from manual licencing systems to online digital ones, including for exports, imports and harvesting.
- We have signed several Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with other agencies in Fiji, such as the Fiji Police Force.
- We have had unqualified audit opinion through all the years of the Annual Reports being looked at.

Some of the major challenges we faced include the:

- Survival of indigenous trees that were planted under the 30MT15Y initiative. So, once we have planted, how much have actually grown to trees.
- Obviously, the redeployment of staff and Ministry resources, such as vehicles and facilities, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sir, to attempt to mitigate some of these challenges:

- We are looking at improving our beat up of seeds, so that is going over areas that have been planted to see how many seedlings have survived in replanting.
- Our Research Division has established permanent sample plots.
- To increase a range of agencies in collaboration for co-operatives, so that is where we plant additional seedlings in areas where the survival rate is not what we have hoped.

On Question No. 3, Sir, in the latest release, the Fiji Bureau of Statistics stated that the National GDP stood at \$10.1 billion. The forestry and logging industry contributed approximately \$31.1 million of this, which is equivalent to 0.3 percent of Fiji's real GDP.

We think it is important to note that forests and logging provide a contribution that goes beyond what is just classified as forests and logging to value-adding processes and products that can be done in person to things, like manufacturing. So, once we include manufacturing industries that rely on wood products, forestry and the combined forest sector contribution is valued at more than \$140 million, which is 1.4 percent of Fiji's real GDP.

On Question No. 4, formal employment in the Forestry sector is provided by the Fiji Bureau of Statistics. However, we have not received more recent years of employment data other than the ones that were provided in our Annual Reports.

As the discrepancy between the Fiji Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry that is due to our inclusion of Unestablished Government Wage Earners in the figures that were not included in the Fiji Bureau of Statistics Report. There is also a slightly different timeline - the Fiji Bureau of Statistics use a calendar year, whereas we use the financial year which runs from August to May.

Question No. 5 on export of wood products, 'Total Domestic Export' is a trade statistics term common to all trade statistics. So far, it is only to the export of commodities that were produced or manufactured in Fiji, including commodities where there has been a significant value add in Fiji, so it excludes commodities that might be imported into Fiji and then re-exported without any significant change or enhancement and value and so it has a bad reflection on Fiji's true exports.

In terms of the sub-categories, wood and articles of wood refers to wood related products and we divide these into wood in chips or particles and mahogany. For instance, these can include things like pine chips and sawn timber. In total, in 2021, it exceeded \$100 million worth of exports. The 2022 figures will be forthcoming in our Annual Report and there is a slight decrease to \$93 million worth of exports.

Next question on the imports of wood products. Again, the wood and articles refers to wood-related imports and includes products such as plywood and particle boards. In the most recent figures, we had an increase of imports from \$18.4 million to \$36.3 million which is still a very small proportion of Fiji's overall imports. The 2022 figures will be forthcoming in our Annual Report as well.

Question No. 7 on our Strategic Priority 5 is to do with Forest Financing. The overall output that we are really looking at for this Strategic Priority of the development of Forest Trust Funds, this will help us develop proper forest financing mechanisms. It is a challenging long term project that will require external technical advice and we are focussed on reviewing and assessing cost models of existing terrestrial protected areas, the trust fund model.

In terms of the Cabinet Paper in the next question. Some are still work in progress, and some are awaiting legislation to be passed which is covered in the next question, a bit more detailed on things like the Forest Act Cabinet Paper and the REDD+ Policy Cabinet Paper. The REDD+ Policy, this has been developed and is currently with the Solicitor-General's Office for their review. Once it has been reviewed by them, it will then be re-reviewed by us, and we will amend as advised by the Solicitor-General's Office.

The Forest Bill, the process of reviewing the Forest Act 1992 continued in the financial year and again draft submissions have been made to the Solicitor-General's Office for vetting. Once the amendment to the Act is endorsed, relevant regulations have already been drafted and reviewed and this will be finalised. These regulations include things like the Sawmill Regulation and Preservative Timber Treatment Regulation. The Climate Change Act, the Ministry was part of the consultation on the draft Climate Change Act and provided its contribution where it was relevant to the work of the Ministry. The Act has been endorsed but has not yet come into force.

Moving on to Drone Activities. These were halted in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Since the lifting of COVID-19 related restrictions, the use of drones for measuring, monitoring, reporting and verification has been ongoing wherever possible. We currently have four drones operating with 11 pilots currently licensed to operate them. We feel that given the success in measuring and monitoring, we would like to expand our drone fleet in the future to cater for our needs to enhance measuring and monitoring.

On Question No. 11, to clarify on this figure, the 60.49 percent only includes the removal of approximately 1,411 hectares. This excludes the work of Fiji Pine Limited and Fiji Mahogany Limited, they make up almost 90 percent of harvested timber in Fiji. This means that there is a much smaller proportion of total harvested timber. Additionally, we would like to clarify that this is harvested area and not production volume. We practise selective logging in native forests so this means that we would not remove all the trees in the native forest, so it would not be completely deforested.

Moving on to Question No. 12, the field assessment for the National Forest Inventory has been completed for terrestrial sites, the field assessment for mangroves is still pending. We have also completed a quality assurance/quality control check for terrestrial sites. This will also have to be done by mangroves. The report is being currently finalised by consultants and this overall project will support the implementation of our Emission Reduction Programme. Some of the work includes data collection, trip reports, data input and report submitted to the REDD+ team.

On sawmill production, the average recovery rate for sawmills is approximately 50 percent. While we feel this is in line with other countries, we do not actually compare sawmill production rate to different countries for a variety of reasons including that we use our own monitoring framework, legislation and licensing procedures. We use different log species lead to different log sizes, which impacts production; and we use different sawmilling machines and equipment.

It should be clarified that that 50 percent refers to sawn timber, so the other 50 percent is not necessarily waste. We call this wood "shorts" or "shavings" that can be used for a variety of different purposes, for instance, in the past it has been used for furniture or chicken pens.

Moving onto the Treatment Plant Operations, unlicensed timber treatment plants are usually not operational during the year for a variety of reasons. This can include being no raw materials to treat, inconsistent income to support the plant operation, for instance, due to the high cost of chemicals, not being Occupational Health and Safety compliant or high repair or maintenance costs. Some of the treatment plants do not find it economically viable to stay in operation.

In terms of Quality Control, we conduct a variety of public awareness on timber treatment requirements including on local radio stations, advertisements on local dailies, one to one consultation with treatment operators, especially low performing operators, and issue improvement notices which specifies redress or immediate actions. The final stage of this could even be suspension

or revocation of the treatment licences. We conduct consistent monitoring on a quarterly basis and training across the whole value chain from forest site through to the sawmill to the treatment plant.

We focus training on timber plant operators. We note the high turnover in timber plant operators, there needs to be even more training in this area because there are lots of new staff. We also include tests on fencing posts, which means that all posts used by EFL have to be tested and the Ministry will conduct tests if requested by the buyer or end user.

On Monitoring Compliance and Surveillance Project, we do not compare the compliance rate because, as I said, we use our own monitoring framework and legislation. We focus on assessing compliance internally rather than making external comparisons. The compliance of forest harvesting operations in Fiji is monitored based on a standard monitoring template that captures data as per the requirements of the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice.

Logging contractors must fulfil the necessary requirements as stipulated in the Code and the Forest Act 1992 to obtain a Forest Harvesting Licence. We carry out monitoring regularly, our beat stations do monthly monitoring, the divisions themselves do quarterly monitoring, and our national monitoring framework conducts biannual monitoring. The objective of all these comprehensive monitoring is to minimise adverse impacts on the forest environment.

We confirm that compliance rate of 71 percent is accurate, and this is determined through the utilisation of that standard template that includes crucial elements such as planning, roading, landing, exclusion areas and skidding. By employing this comprehensive monitoring approach, the Ministry can effectively evaluate compliance levels across different phases of logging activities. We feel that the compliance rate reflects our commitment to responsible forestry management.

In terms of the scoring for each Division, we conduct monitoring by each sawmill, by division and then the national recovery rates as a grander approach to the scoring. We scored different processes based on different matrix so these can look at the types of machines, they would be awarded different scores and then we aggregate them to form an overall score. Sometimes when we have a very major sawmill or industry, for instance, Tropik Woods, if their recovery rate is lower than the average, the whole division can be seriously affected just because of the size of that particular contractor. In terms of where there is low compliance, we address this on a monthly basis when we are receiving individual sawmill production figures, we note that this is mainly due to log sizes, smaller logs can lead to more wastes. Once the gap, all the reason for poor performance is identified, we will conduct relevant training tailored to suit each low performing sawmiller.

Moving onto the question on Research and Development-Silviculture and Seed Technology, a total of 120 kilogrammes of mahogany seeds were distributed. These were distributed in the quantity of 80 kilogrammes to Totoka Island and 40 kilogrammes to the other three operational divisions. We estimate that there were approximately 2,000 seeds per kilogramme, and we anticipate a germination rate of about 80 percent. This, in total means that we would see about 240,000 seeds from 120 kilogrammes, and we expect to reaching 192,000 viable seeds. There will be a mortality rate of around 20 percent, so we are probably looking at approximately 150,000 trees in total.

In terms of Forest Health Surveillance and Monitoring, so the global mass transportation of trade and people have contributed to the movement of new biota into new regions and ecosystems. Sometimes, new species can thrive in new environments and become invasive.

This is part of effective surveillance for the early detection of invasive alien species. We have sentinel plants at borders and ports so these can help detect and identify insect pests and plant diseases

that could potentially invade Fiji. The purpose of sentinel plants is for effective early detection so they will see if there is an invasive species in the sentinel plants fast and that will allow us to identify potential problems early.

Moving on to Forest Technical Training, over the past few years, the number of women undergoing forestry training by the Ministry has increased gradually over the years. In our next Annual Report, if look at the figures of 2022-2023, 49 women in total were able to undergo various types of technical training, varying from harvesting supervision training to nursery establishment and management, so across the whole value chain of forestry. In addition, 13 women were trained to operate the basic portable sawmill that we use.

On Forest Wardens Training, the Forestry Training Centre was used to support the Government's response to COVID-, so this impacted the availability of the Centre to conduct trainings. Nevertheless, we were able to conduct trainings for the 14 Forest Wardens in total.

The refresher training is aimed at how wardens understand how best they monitor harvesting operations, provide awareness on various conservation activities, as well as assist in policing forestry laws, among other aspects.

On corporate training, we carefully target trainings for our employees, and we formally solicit feedback on the quality and usefulness of trainings through our Transfer Evaluation Forms which are sent out three months after training for completion by supervising officers.

We do return on investment studies based on our training reports and the Transfer Evaluations. In the future, we are aiming to continue to develop more comprehensive measures on the impact of the training that we conduct for our corporate staff.

Moving back to trade facilitation, so the trade export values are in the Annual Report. They are using two slightly different dates, sources, and timeframes. So, the export figure is provided later on in the report where we have a value of just over \$100 million for the financial year 2021-2022. This data is sourced from the Ministry's Trade Division at Nasinu. The earlier export figures which were slightly higher for the calendar year 2021-2022 cover different months and are sourced from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics.

This is a similar story for the imports. The import figures provided later on are based on the financial year and provided by our team in Nasinu and the other import figures are for the calendar year, sourced from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics.

On the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Ridge to Reef (R2R) Project, yes, the table does include R2R Planting.

In terms of the two locations on how much area was reforested, it is based on the R2R project evaluation report with the link provided. In the Tunuloa Catchment area, 98 hectares were planted out of the 90 hectares target, so it exceeded the target. In the Labasa Catchment area, 210 hectares were planted out of the 270 hectares target. So, approximately 78 percent of the target was reached.

On the final question on recruitment and selection, the non-renewal of contracts for the eight employees were for various reasons and these ranged from –

- Two employees who were paid from the casual allocation which was removed in the 2021-2022 budget for the Ministry, their contracts were not renewed due to the lack of funding.

- Two posts were no longer required and traded off to create higher positions. As such, the contracts for the employees holding these positions were not renewed.
- Four contracts were not renewed based on performance assessment. Three of them were drivers who were involved in multiple vehicle accidents caused by their own negligence.

All employees whose contracts were not renewed were permitted to apply for vacant positions and two of them are employed again in the Ministry.

Although contracts are no longer in use, the Ministry continues to approve policies to manage performance and discipline, continue training on people management including conducting in-house refresher training, and Ministry of Civil Service trainings and outsourced training.

We conduct investigations on all reported complaints and as a result, disciplinary actions sometimes are being implemented against employees. So far, this has been in the form of warning letters which allows an opportunity for the employee to learn from their mistakes and improve.

Thank you very much. That is our response to all your 25 Questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much for the responses to the questions that were submitted to the Ministry of Forestry. I think the Committee Members will agree with me and thank the team from the Ministry of Forestry for the timeliness of their Reports, with few areas that have been addressed very well in the response that you have given.

I know Members of the Committee will want to ask few questions, and I will start off. We have been looking at the Report and this may not be in the Report, but I want to just have an idea on how we normally assess losses, especially in planted forests due to natural disasters, including fire. You have plans for the number of the trees that you will plant - the 15 million trees but also, time and again, we have losses which I have not actually seen reported. So, how do you assess those damages?

MS. S. LAL.- Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman. The reforestation project is actually called reforestation of degraded areas. So, a lot of the trees that we are planting, the seedlings, they are planted on *talasiga* land on grassland. As you know that there is drought in the West quite often - once a year or at least twice a year, and in some parts, we have a lot of flooding as well and there are instances of fire, so these are some of the reasons why most of our plants do not survive.

We have noticed that pine and mahogany do very well in any environment, but native trees are difficult to grow. So, we are trying to re-strategise by trying to plant native trees more closer to forest areas or when we are actually restoring forests.

Mr. Chairman, I mean, if you look at our environment, you do not see *dakua* and *kaudamu* growing anywhere. They are just selectively growing in forest areas. So, we have to understand that although we were very ambitious and we wanted to bring the forests closer to us, it is not as easy to achieve, there is some more research needed.

In the meantime, there is a term that we call 'pitting-up' in forestry which means we replace the trees that have not survived by either another species or the same species, but with much more maintenance and care. As I have said, if you plant cabbage a lot of it will grow, but if you plant trees, you expect mortality.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- My second question is, again, in relation to Question No. 15 that was sent to you, especially on Page 32. I have raised this because of some concern. In the Report, you have treated timber but with livestock, they use pine posts where there are some requirements for standards of treatment on pine posts.

The high failure rate that we have here has a lot of effect on people who normally buy pine posts that are not well treated. Because of the high cost of pine post, I think a lot of livestock farmers are actually facing problems of having to replace their pine posts within less than 10 years which is proving too costly for farmers. What are your strategies on pine posts if it has been a concern from livestock farmers or even some of those who buy pine posts for dwelling houses?

MS. S. LAL.- Mr. Chairman, I will allow my colleague to respond to that question.

MR. T. BULAI.- Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, we do have our forest preservation treatment regulations in place, and we do license and monitor all timber treatment plants that we license in Fiji. At the moment, in terms of quality control, we are actually collecting 10 samples on a monthly basis from each timber treatment plant. We do admit that we also receive a lot of complaints from the public in terms of the quality of the timber products that are entering the market, especially, the pine posts.

Our strategy now is to work very closely with the timber retailers. These are people who are actually selling the products to the consumers. We are working very closely with them and we are developing awareness materials for them to use. We have done a number of consultations throughout Fiji and together with that, we are focusing on all the timber retailers.

We have also improved on our monitoring. Before we used to do a biannual monitoring, now our monitoring of treatment plants and sawmills is done on a quarterly basis. Lately, we have also seen an improvement in compliance, but having said that, the team is still working very closely, especially with our timber retailers, who are the key people in terms of connecting the products to the consumers.

HON. J.N. NAND.- Mr. Chairman, I think you have partially covered this and is in regards to the mortality rate. The 20 percent is quite high, and we understand that. The Committee wants to know, has there been any research on why the mortality rate is high, and how you plan to mitigate that? In other jurisdictions, if you compare or contrast, is there any reason why the mortality rate is high? Let us say in Australia and New Zealand, and other Pacific Island countries, how they are mitigating that. How are you going to mitigate that and bring that percentage down?

MR. T. BULAI.- Mr. Chairman, similar to what the Conservator of the Forests has mentioned, the replanting of native forests on a large scale is also a new thing for the Ministry. In the past, we have focused our research on mahogany and pine (*Pinus caribaea*), which has resulted in the establishment of our two big plantation species that we currently have in Fiji.

In terms of native plantation, as you have mentioned, there is more scientific research involved in this process. It is not just a matter of going in and putting it on the ground, but more research needs to be done in terms of the site index, the weather, may be the altitude. Even in some places, we thought that we can just plant species that are already existing at that site, but when we planted the same species, the survival was also affected. We thought it was going to survive, but it was also affected in terms of the mortality rate.

Having said that, our research team have been tasked to develop permanent sample plots in areas that we have planted. For these permanent sample plots, we will then monitor the growth rates of these different species that we have planted so that we can use this for future planting to help us in identifying the right species for the sites.

HON. I.S. VANAWALU.- I have a very simple question to ask this morning based on your economic growth of the Ministry. While going through your report, it clearly dictates that the Forestry Sector always record a lowest contribution to GDP at around 0.2 percent. A way moving forward, what are the Ministry's strategy to improve on this rate?

MS. S. LAL.- Mr. Chairman, if I may respond to that question, as you know, honourable Member, the GDP that is measured from forests is actually based on the primary product which is the logs only - the amount of production from our forests. The value adding component which is the manufacturing component is not added into that, so that is why we have two figures - 0.2 percent is just what is sourced from the forest and the other is what those products are actually value added into.

Our production may not increase from native forests, but we do have mahogany and pine, which we hope that there will be higher production, but again we are working with FBOS to ensure that they also measure the wood manufacturing into the forestry contribution to GDP. They are also giving us different figures.

Another thing I wish to mention here is that we are just measuring our GDP based on trees, but if you really look at the environment, payment for ecosystems service which we have not even started yet. The forests, we are only looking at the value of the trees, but there are other services that the water that comes out of forest, the enhancement of soil, those were not measured as they also contribute indirectly. I hope that that, sort of, answers your question unless anyone else wants to elaborate.

The expertise, Sir, we do not have that expertise yet. We are trying to work with FAO to get a consultant to come and start costing the payment for ecosystem services that are provided by forests. We have done carbon already.

HON. J. USAMATE.- The GDP that you had in 2021 was up to \$1.7 million. All of a sudden, it just jumped, and I do not think there was much change in what you did. But in 2021 the GDP just jumped up to \$118.5 million, but that is a straight determination for what you have done in the past. But you do not have a holistic assessment of everything that comes out of forestry, water catchment and all that stuff?

MS. S. LAL.- Exactly Sir, so payment for ecosystem services is in our strategic plan and we will be getting a project next year to fund that study. That study should probably take a few years, three years at most, and then we will have to see how the Ministry of Finance will be able to cost that into our tax.

One of the outputs is also the Forest Trust Fund, so payment for ecosystem services can be one of our sustainable financing mechanisms where we have returns from our forests going into our Trust Fund.

HON. I.S. VANAWALU.- Mr. Chairman, my next question is based on the downstream processing and value adding of our timber and logs at ends. We believe that the Ministry have been trying your best to manage avoid lifting the ban on log export. It is a huge advantage that Fiji has

banned the export of logs. While looking at the value adding aspect part of it, how does the Ministry look at how best they can accommodate the value adding of these logs?

MR. T. BULAI.- Mr. Chairman, to respond to that question, right now, the Ministry is under the Sawmill Regulations 1992. We also license and monitor all sawmills in Fiji.

One of our aim right now by the Ministry is to improve the recovery rates of these sawmills. I know there was also a question on sawmill recovery and that is one of our major aim, to improve the recovery of all these sawmills. Our aim is to have a 50 percent recovery sawn timber from logs.

Having said that, we will have 50 percent as waste from the sawmills, but it is not actually waste, I believe there should be a better term for that maybe wood residues from the sawmills. Now, we are targeting that.

I believe you have heard one of initiatives that is currently going on which is helping our resource owners through the cottage industry. Our wood utilisation project, we are actually training our people to utilise these wood residues from the forest and also from the sawmills.

What we are lacking now is the expertise and also the equipment for value adding. We are working towards that, we are glad that we have increased our forest subsidy funding which has enabled us to purchase value adding machines that can help us utilise these wood residues from the forest and also from the sawmills.

You rightly said, Sir, that is an area that I believe the Ministry should also focus on in regard to value adding. I believe that it is also an area that will help us improve our contribution towards our GDP. However, the Ministry is working very hard with our people in trying to help them, train them and utilise these waste or wood residues from the forests and the sawmills.

HON. I.S. VANAWALU.- Mr. Chairman, just a comment, I thank the team for the updated report up to 2022 from 2019. I believe you will continue with that momentum so that we are talking on relevant data and issues of concern. In some other Committee that we are Member of, reports are like 10 years back, so I thank you for this marvellous job and the push has to come from the top.

Hopefully, come sometimes next year, we will have the latest report again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Just a few questions, Sir, and one is on harvesting licences. Before it used to take two to three weeks and, I think, with your new digital platform, it is done for one to two hours. Are you able to maintain that?

MS. S. LAL.- Sir, the online licence, with harvesting, as long as all the documentations are in place, it should be quite easy within 24 hours. We have been maintaining that, and the same with export and import licence.

HON. J. USAMATE.- So, you are able to do that, that is good.

Some of the data that I have is that, there about 400 forestry companies but only 200 are paying tax. Is that correct according to your assessment? Would you have any data around that?

MR. I. TULELE.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, it depends on the type of companies we are talking about. Some of them might be manufacturing companies that do not come under our ambit.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Because they do value addition?

MR. I. TULELE.- Yes, that is why we cannot record those. It depends on the figures that you have and the type of companies that we are talking about.

HON. J. USAMATE.- So, if it was straight logging?

MR. I. TULELE.- That will come under our jurisdiction.

HON. J. USAMATE.- So, you do not have those kinds of numbers under your jurisdiction?

MR. I. TULELE.- We might have records of the timber yards, the timber outlets.

HON. J. USAMATE.- A very interesting exercise to have a look at because there are a lot of grey money all over the place.

The other thing that I am interested in is replanting. There is a lot of talk about it. During Ratu Mara's time, there was a lot of replanting but is it still happening well under Fiji Pine and Fiji Hardwood Corporation? Is this replanting happening well? How does the Ministry look at that?

I know we have the 30 million trees, but I have been to Vanualevu a lot of times, a lot of those pine forests are not replanted. So, what is your reaction to that?

MS. S. LAL.- Mr. Chairman, through you, honourable Member, since 2019, Fiji Pine have really turned around in their planting. Out of that 19 million that we have planted to-date, about 14 million is from Fiji Pine figures. So, from 2019 to now, that is how much they have planted. Fiji Hardwood Corporation had actually stopped for a while, but they are catching up now, they are replanting.

HON. J. USAMATE.- So, you have targets that you expect them - if you cut x number percentage of trees, this percentage should be replanted?

MS. S. LAL.- Yes, Sir, they will have to do it according to the rotations.

HON. J. USAMATE.- And that is monitored?

MS. S. LAL.- Yes.

HON. J. USAMATE.- How about scientific research, are you looking into any other new species that will be economically feasible, going into the future, including non-timber species?

MR. T. BULAI.- Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, yes, right now there are two potential species that our research team is looking at. We are looking at propagating these species for the new financial year - one is raintree, and another one is teak. Raintree, for your information, the market that is out there is really huge. It is a big market, and that is the species that we are targeting to propagate to become an industry on its own, and also for teak.

However, for non-timber, we are looking at six logwood forest products. We have the cattlenut (*sikeci*), *yasi*, coconut, *dilo*, bamboo and argwood. Right now, for coconut, there is potential for manufacturing coconut into engineered wood products, such as panel boards and plyboards, so we are looking at utilising senile coconut palms.

HON. J. USAMATE.- The old ones.

MR. T. BULAI.- Yes, the old ones that no longer bear fruits. So, we are working with Asia, and we are now into the third phase of this project and we are hoping that this is a potential species that we can use either as a core species for our plywood, or even as a phased add back species.

The other one is bamboo. If you are aware, it has been included in our draft National Building Code. For bamboo, we are also working with FNU and the Ministry of Works in looking at the properties and potential of our local grown bamboo. So, our part from the Ministry, we are looking at the treatment of bamboo.

HON. J. USAMATE.- It can be value added.

MR. T. BULAI.- Yes.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Just one question on your research. I have noticed that you used about \$40 million in research work but so far, you have only produced one published Report on coco wood. Do you have a process to produce peer review reports on all the research that you are doing?

MR. T. BULAI.- Yes, Sir. We produced a number of papers through Fiji Agriculture Forum. We work very closely with them.

HON. J. USAMATE.- That is out of that \$40 million?

MR. T. BULAI.- Yes. We have published a number of research papers with them.

HON. J. USAMATE.- I want to congratulate the Ministry for getting unqualified audit reports, I think for the past three years. So, congratulations. Being a former Minister, I know how hard it is sometimes to get that.

Now, the other thing is the distribution of wealth from the Forestry Sector. There is a part that goes to the private sector, goes to Government and a part goes to the landowners. Looking at the percentage breakdown of all that, how does the Ministry look at this? Is it in-keeping with what you wanted? Wealth creation is how the wealth is shared. What are your thoughts on that as a Ministry? Are you happy with the way it is going? Are you having some reconsiderations and all that?

I know most of it goes to the private sector which, by right, they invest into the sawmilling, et cetera. So, the percentage breakdown of where the wealth goes, how does the Ministry look at that?

MS. S. LAL.- Mr. Chairman, through you, if I may, honourable Member, we did a study - an economic analysis and it was not very favourable for the resource owners because it was mostly to the contractors. They are the ones that make most of the money because they bring in investments.

This is one area that the Ministry has really started looking at. Since we all constantly say that resource owners are resource rich and cash poor, they do not have enough capital to be involved in investing in machines to be able to actually work in the sector, the Ministry is trying to work out a Loan Scheme for them so that they are able to access loans to be able to start their own companies. It is long overdue; I must admit that. It is not only the Ministry alone, I think the whole of Government should try and see...

HON. J. USAMATE.- Are you coming up with the new strategic plan or something like that where some of these things might be articulated into your targets?

MS. S. LAL.- Yes, we need more investments of resource owners into the sector. What they need is capital. They need business acumen. They need some sort of training, and I am sure they will do well and I think an interagency effort would be what we need to get that through.

HON. J. USAMATE.- My last question, REDD+, Climate Change Act, et cetera, I have noticed in your books for a long time. When are they going to be all finished? I know, it is a difficult question, but it has been there for a few years. I am sure your Minister will want to see all these policies changes because when we were Ministers, that is what we want to see.

The Climate Change Act, I could not understand. You said that it has been endorsed but not implemented. What does that mean? REDD+ is it finally about....

MR. I. TULELE.- Honourable Member, I think it should probably be reenacted but enforced because of the regulations.

Currently, the Climate Change Division had advised us that they would bring the Act into operation by Parts. There are more than 10 Parts within the Act.

HON. J. USAMATE.- So, it has gone through Parliament.

HON. I. TULELE.- I think it has already been passed in Parliament in 2021.

HON. J. USAMATE.- But the implementation....

HON. I. TULELE.- The regulations have not been developed. So, what Climate Change is doing right now is approaching it in Parts. Certain parts of the regulations can be developed, they will develop it as soon as.

HON. J. USAMATE.- And the RED+?

MR. I. TULELE.- In terms of the RED+, first of all, for the RED+ Policy review, we had submitted a paper to the Solicitor-General and we had cited parts of the Forest Act 1992 because we were also reviewing the Act. We were advised that we should not pre-empt, from the legal perspective. So, we had to shelf the review of the RED+ Policy 2011.

Basically, the review in the Policy is just looking at establishing a national system for monitoring emission reduction within the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector because in the current RED+ Policy, it was basically on a project level, to introduce the RED+ concept. Now, that we are moving into a national system, through that Policy is to establish a national monitoring system for emission reduction.

Just to update, honourable Members, we have finished our readiness. In fact, we have been supported by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and they offered us two tranches of funding. The first was for our readiness which we have completed in December 2022, readiness in the sense that we are going to test the system that we have developed over a decade of working.

Under the FCPF, we are one of 47 countries that have completed readiness. Out of those 47 countries we are only one of 15 that have actually pledged to reduce emissions. So, that is what we

are currently going through under the Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA) that we signed with the second tranche of the FCPF, which is the carbon fund. They have allocated us \$12.5 million, as a result of this payment to reduce emissions over the next five years from 2019 to 2024 - to reduce the emissions by 2.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalence.

We have completed and submitted our first monitoring report which is currently being audited by an independent third party that is assigned by the market. So, this is the third series. It is quite technical, it is new to a lot of us going through the technical aspects of the report itself, and that includes a lot of mathematics, a lot of forest ecology and a lot of science. Once our system is vetted for endorsement or certified by the auditor, then we would be ready for whatever the government decides.

HON. J. USAMATE.- One last thing, I cannot remember what it was....

HON. I.S. VANAWALU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, one last question for the Ministry. While looking at your staff turnover in terms of your human resources, your expertise, technical skills that you have, are you in the standard to meet the current demands from the market in terms of your staffing? Secondly, was there any job exercise done for the Ministry? I am not sure which year was it and are there any implementation?

MS. L. CAVU.- Thank you, honourable Member. Through you, Mr. Chairman, in terms of the Ministry staffing, yes, we were part of the Job Evaluation Exercise in 2017 that was conducted for whole of Government and that has all been implemented within the Ministry.

In terms of our staffing strength, at the moment, we have contained our staffing strength, we have not grown. In fact, our establishment has been reducing because we have been working within our establishment in order to create high level positions.

In terms of turnover of our staff, we only had a high turnover when New Zealand was recruiting Foresters and there was quite an increase but that seems to have subsided now, so it is quite stable at the moment. Fortunately, we have a lot of graduates coming out from Fiji National University studying in forestry, but I must say probably the area that we have scarce skill is in our research area for research of wood and timber, and also in wood processing. Expertise in wood processing is one of the areas, but we are happy to see that we have been included as one of the scarce skill areas from the Ministry of Civil Service.

(Inaudible)

MS. L. CAVU.- They have not put a level, but we have seen that we have been included for retirement beyond 62 as part of the retention for expertise.

(Inaudible)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- There is one question from honourable Usamate and one last question from honourable Nand and this is because of the interest of time that we have.

HON. J. USAMATE.- (Inaudible)

But that is the point, *vinaka vakalevu*.

HON. J.N. NAND.- Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for a very good presentation. My question is basically on drones. I think we discussed that at length in our Committee deliberation. We are interested to know how you acquire it and what are some of the SOPs? Do you plan to acquire more drones? It is a new initiative and innovation, and I am proud that the Ministry is venturing into that.

MR. I. TULELE.- Mr. Chairman, through you, thank you for bringing that up, honourable Member. We are quite excited ourselves; it is something that we are taking through the institution. We are planning to have that out in Field Divisions, to help them with their surveillance, that is basically the use of drones. It saves a lot of time but me, being an old forester, I always tell them, “Now, you will not get to the forest, you will look through the lens of that drone to tell you what is out there.” But it helps a lot with the current age that we are in now, the technology.

The drones, I believe, are procured overseas but I do not have the details. We have also developed Standard Operating Procedures for using drones. We have gone through all the legal authorities. Now, when you fly a drone, you need to have a pilot’s licence and you need to have hours under your belt before you become a pilot.

We actually went through all these processes to be able to have our drone unit that we are planning to set up within the Ministry as part of our resource assessment work. Thank you for bringing that up, honourable Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, team Forestry. We are honoured this morning that we could meet with you.

Before I close, let me again thank you for not only the submission this morning, but as previously mentioned, your up-to-date report. It means a lot to us on how you handle the work at your workplace. It is easier for the Standing Committee to scrutinise reports that are current, and we are also able to talk on the very current issues. We are going to provide some recommendations back to the Ministry, and because of their current reports, our recommendations would be very current.

When we present to Parliament, we will be presenting them the current issues including those that are of very urgent and importance to the Ministry. For that, we would want to thank the Ministry of Forestry for your previous year’s updated reports.

Finally, I wish to thank you all for availing yourselves to this meeting and for your time. That brings to the end of our meeting this morning.

The Meeting adjourned at 10.42 a.m.

Appendix 4

Site Visit Program



Parliament Standing Committee on Natural Resources



Site Visit Report

From	Standing Committee on Natural Resources
To	Hon. Speaker , Committee Members

Type of Activity	1 week of site visit 1) Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources and 2) Ministry of Forestry
Starting Date	Monday 06th May
End Date	Friday 10th May, 2024

1.0 Brief background:

The Committee currently has the following Annual Reports on which deliberations have commenced;

- a) Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources Annual Report 2018-2019, 2019- 2020, 2020-2021
- b) Ministry of Forestry 2019 – 2020, 2020- 2021, 2021 – 2022

The Members agreed to simultaneously conduct a site visit for the Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources and the Ministry of Forestry for the 3 major divisions, Central, West, and North of Fiji. The Committee Members proposed that the site visit be conducted for 1 week from Monday 06th May to Friday 10th May 2024.

This report will only cover the visit to the Ministry of Forestry sites

The program was developed to allow face-to-face meetings and briefings with Ministry staff at district levels and stakeholders including the private sector. This was also an opportunity for the Committee Members to :

- physically witness areas of operations, to determine areas that needed improvements and to develop recommendations to Parliament for endorsement.
- identify capital projects that have been completed, or not completed, and to learn the reasons for the delays of incomplete projects.
- Identify resource constraints faced by the Ministry and the Forestry Sector.
- Review targets that were achieved and reasons for those that were not achieved.

Observations made and information learned have contributed immensely to the Committee's report to Parliament.

2.0 Purpose:

Annual report scrutiny includes reading and analyzing the contents of the Annual Reports, identifying issues that need clarification, submitting the written questions to the Ministry for their response, inviting the Senior officials to appear for public submission, and commissioning further analysis by the Parliamentary Research Department

2.1 For Verification:

The final verification of what is occurring on the ground was carried out through the site visit.

2.2 For Evidence Collection:

The Committee has gathered evidence that allowed it to identify its findings, which then appeared in its final report to Parliament.

2.3 Committee Members.

The Committee Members are as follows:

- a) Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna (Chairperson – participated fully in the planning of the site visit but was on duty abroad during the site visit itself)
- b) Hon. Jone Usamate (Deputy Chairperson)
- c) Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu (Member)
- d) Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu (Member)
- e) Hon. Joseph Nand (Alternate Member)

2.0 Details of the actual site visit:

Date	Time	Sites to be visited
Monday (6.05.24)	8.00am-9.00 am	FTG Forestry, Nasinu
	9.30am – 10.30 am	Coloi Suva – Briefing
	12.05pm – 1.35pm	Ministry of Forest HQ- Takayawa Building – for Briefing
	2.30pm – 3.00 pm	Ministry of Forestry, Vunimaqo (Lomary)
		Yarawa Sawmill Navua (the Committee was informed by the Forestry Officer that the Mill was not in operation)
	7.30 pm – 8.30 pm	Community consultation at Semo, Sigatoka
	9.30 am	Check In – GrandWest , Nadi

9.30 am – 9.45 am	Visited the model farm for uvi,tivoli, kawai farm that was developed after the cutting down of the vaivai trees. Explanation was provided by Ministry of Forestry staff
	MLMR sites visited by the Members between 10.00am to 4.30 pm
4.30 pm – 6.00pm	Fiji Pine in Drasa, Lautoka
8.00pm	Arrive in Vatukoula Executive Villa Members visited MLMR sites from 9.00am to 4.00pm
4.10 pm – 4.45 pm	Briefing by the Rakiraki Forestry Officer
5.30pm	Board the Boat from Elligton Wharf to Nabouwalu
10.30pm	Arrival at Nabouwalu and Check-in at the Lote's accomodation

Thursday (9.5.24)	9.00am - 10.30 am	Briefing at Nawailevu Bauxite Reforestation site (the company has planted a total of 160,000 pine trees currently valued at \$6million). Then visited Xinfa Nursery, Laboratory and Office in Dreketi
	1.20 pm	Nagigi, Labasa (Current sites of schedule A and B reversion)
	2.00 pm	MLMR Labasa Office for briefing
	8.00pm	Check in at Savusavu HotSpring
Friday (10.5.24)	5.00am	Depart for Vatuyalewa Jetty
	7.30 am	Taveuni
	9.30am	Visit the VSAT Site in Mua, Taveuni
	11.00am-11.45am	Visit to freehold buy back by the people of Naselesele in Mua , Taveuni
		Briefing by Forestry staff in Taveuni
	1.00 pm	Break for Lunch
	2.00pm	Depart Taveuni
	4.00 pm	Arrive at Vatuyalewa
Saturday (11.5.24)	10.00pm	Arrive at Lote's Inn, Bua
	1.00am	Hon. Vanawalu departs for Natovi
	10.00am	Rest of the Team departs Nabouwalu for Natovi
	1.00pm	Arrive at Natovi – Team proceed to their residences
END PROGRAM		

SUMMARY OF BRIEFING:

STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

SITE VISIT FINDINGS

06th May – 10th May, 2024

Day 1

Forestry Research and Training Nasinu 9 miles

- There are 14 mahogany stations, and the sector is focused on making use of the residues of timber after it has been processed
- The Ministry of Forests deal only with forests that are licensed to be harvested
- In 2024, there was 48% sawmill recovery. This had improved from the 41% achieved in 2019
- The Ministry has a desire to build a Mahogany town at the Saivou junction.
- GWE's are trained to have expertise in the technical fields. Research staff lacks technical expertise

Forestry Research Unit—Colo i Suva

Difficult to get good people

- Research in the Ministry is not at the level desired. Laboratory facilities are not at the level required so the Ministry is not able to achieve its level of potential
- To construct a Research Lab in Coloi- Suva (Recommendation for MO Forestry)
- More Mahogany and Pine needs to be planted
- There are 81.9 % of natural forest and this covers 1.1 million hectares

MINISTRY OF FORESTRY, TAKAYAWA BUILDING

- Forest reserves needs assessment
- It was suggested that Community should receive direct fees from investors and that Government funds be issued to LOU's.

Vunimaqo Forestry Station

- 2 out of 3 staff positions at the stations were filled. We were informed that this station used to have a total of 6 staff. This indicates a shortage of personnel physically present in the field to conduct monitoring activities. Insufficient staff on the ground can hinder the department's ability to oversee operations effectively, leading to potential gaps in monitoring compliance with regulations or addressing environmental concerns.
- **Concern Raised by the Forester:** The Forester has expressed worries regarding the monitoring of native trees, particularly in the mahogany field designated for Fiji Hardwood. The primary concern revolves around the alleged non-payment of stump rate, royalty, and associated fees. This raises issues of compliance with financial obligations and potentially signifies a breach of contractual or regulatory agreements.
- There is a need to look into Mahogany Industry legislation, policy and its implementation

- Noted that people who have broken the law were fined—the two people involved were working in tandem with some individual landowners.

DAY 3

Fiji Pines Ltd.

- Fiji Pine is owned 99+ % by the Fiji Government
- Less than 1% of the shareholding is owned by the landowners. (Pine Trust)
- Dividends are paid only to landowners
- Landowners get money from stumpage, landowners 5.5%, plus 2 other payment types
- Biggest problem now is lack of trees
- Tropic Woods is owned by Fiji Pine Ltd
- Fiji Pine Ltd almost went bankrupt in post 2000 .At that time Tropic Woods had to basically run Fiji Pine . It has now recovered
- Major payments were made during the Bainimarama and Fiji First Government time—that rescued this industry
- Nowadays, they do not have enough logs on Viti Levu to run Tropik Woods, so they are sourcing from Vanua Levu—and looking to get raw materials from the maritime zone.
- **No Matured Forest in Viti Levu.** This situation arises because there was no planting of trees twenty years ago. As a result, there's a lack of mature forests on Viti Levu, Fiji's largest island, which could have provided a sustainable timber resource.
- **Plantations in Viti Levu Unable to Meet Mill Demands-** Despite existing plantations in Viti Levu, they are insufficient to meet the demands of the mill.
- **Saw Logs in Viti Levu Unable to Sustain Mills-** The saw logs available in Viti Levu are inadequate to sustain the operations of the mills.
- **Setting up Carriage Sawmill and Harvesting Other Species-** In response to the challenges, the company is considering establishing a carriage sawmill and harvesting other species of trees.

Forestry Office Rakiraki

- 2 staff only manning the office. They feel staffing level is adequate
- They used to have only 1 license for harvesting. Currently there are none—but 1 is being processed. These licenses are for indigenous timber
- 1 vehicle in the office
- They have the highest amount of seedlings produced by the communities in Ra
- **Landowners Not Consulting Ministry on License Issuing and Procedures -**This indicates a lack of communication or collaboration between landowners and the ministry responsible for issuing licenses and regulating procedures.
- **Awareness on the Impact of Illegal Activities-** This refers to efforts aimed at educating communities and stakeholders about the negative consequences of engaging in illegal activities.

Valebasoga Ply Wood Mill

- Production has declined over the years for a number of reasons including access to raw materials, weather and other issues
- Their biggest concern now is access to raw materials
- They complained about the heavy fines charged by LTA on their loading vehicles, and furthermore these vehicles could not be used until fines are cleared.

Forest Guard in Taveuni Peni Bari

- No forest harvesting is taking place in Taveuni
- Big project going on now is the reforestation in Bouma—where each mataqali is planting 2k trees
- They are looking to get more yavusa and mataqali involved in then replanting of trees
- He talked about the Blue Line—which is the line which demarcates the place where tree felling should stop
- Hon. Vanawalu expressed concern about the effect of cutting too many trees which could harm the ecology and the water in the area

Challenges faced by the Ministry of Forestry

- 1) Vast areas of operations – needed more resources such as technical expertise in the outer stations, transportation and staff quarters
- 2) Old Machinery – needs new machinery to ease workload
- 3) Old Acts – needs to be fast track and be reviewed
- 4) Awareness on the fully utilization of funds for LOU's
- 5) More Police engagements on the thefts of logs in the forest
- 6) Ministry to Strengthen Monitoring of the cutting of timber in the forest

Any other important admin comments for the site visit

Challenges:

- 1) **Transportation** – The Committee found that the parliament bus could not reach a few rural sites. Members had to transfer to other 4-wheel drive vehicles provided by the Department of Lands & Mineral Resources. Engagement of twin cabs/ 4-wheel drives for future site visits for the Committee. This is considering the bad road conditions in the rural stations. /Areas of site visit.
- 2) Discussions/ debrief to be held after every visit upon return where Members contribute. Secretariat to note and prepare draft reports at the same time.
- 3) **PPEs- Personal Protective Equipment** – PPE's to be provided by Secretariat for Members for Safety reasons. For instance, umbrellas be issued to Members when conducting site visits during rainy weather. Safety Boots to be worn during visits to Mines, Quarries and Forests

Recommendations for improvement of service from the Secretariat:

- 1) **Debriefings** - Discussions/ debrief to be strengthened by the Secretariat. This is to be held after every visit upon return where Members contribute. Secretariat to note and prepare draft reports at the same time
- 2) **Transportation** - Engagement of twin cabs/ 4-wheel drives for future site visits for the Committee. This is considering the bad road conditions in the rural stations. /Areas of the site visit.
- 3) **PPE- Personal Protective Equipment** – PPE's to be provided by Secretariat for Members for Safety reasons. For instance, umbrellas be issued to Members when conducting site visits during rainy weather. Safety Boots to be worn during visits to Mines, Quarries and Forests

Way Forward :

The Committee looks forward to more visits and collaborations between the Ministry of Forestry, the Forestry sectors and the Committee in terms of improving services provided and suggesting ways of Improvement /Recommendations to Parliament for the Ministry of Forestry to implement

Commendations:

The Committee Members acknowledged the office of the Hon. Speaker for giving the green light to conduct the site visit with the full budget endorsement.

The Committee is Thankful to the Executive of the Ministry of Forestry, the Conservator and the Team Team for their overwhelming support.

Secondly, a big Vinaka Vakalevu to the Forest Sector agencies in the Central, Western and Northern Divisions for their wonderful support in terms of coordinating the meeting with relevant agencies in the districts. Briefed the Committee on the daily activities and the challenges faced daily in their operations whilst on site is appreciated and commendable.

Overall, the site visit was a Successful one.

Committee Members;



Hon. Jone Usamate
Deputy Chairperson, Opposition MP



Hon. Isikeli Tuiwailevu
Government MP



Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu
Government MP



Hon. Joseph Nand
Opposition MP

SITE VISIT PHOTOS:

Committee Members with the staff of Forestry in Nasinu



**Briefing at the Forestry Office
in Colo-i – Suva**



Yavuna in Lautoka - sites of latest frequent



Ministry of Forestry HQ brief



An of the Fiji Pine Ltd Lautoka



Lautoka Forestry Officer



Staff of Fiji Pine Ltd in Lautoka with the Committee Members



Staff of the Ministry of Forestry with Committee Members in the Rakiraki Forestry Office



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Appendix 5

Research Papers



Annual Report Summary – Ministry of Forestry 2018/2019 – 2019/2020

Standing Committee on Natural Resources

	2018-2019	2019-2020
Vision	To be a Leader in Sustainable Forestry	Sustainable Forests, Our Future
Mission	Sustainable Forests, Our Future	To be a Leader in Sustainable Forestry
Background	<p>The Ministry is a regulatory and service organisation responsible for the national forestry sector through the following functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate and implement forest strategies and policies; • Provide and administer the regulatory function under the Ministry's respective legislation and regulations; • Monitor and evaluate current strategies, policies and deliverables; • Develop and promote effective training, communication and awareness and extension advisory services; • Strengthen community and industry networks and support frameworks; • Maintain international bilateral and multilateral commitments; and • Undertake applied research for sustainable forest resource management practices and product development. 	
Acts in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Act 1992 • National Research Bill • Environment Management Act (EMA) • Biosecurity Promulgation • Native Land Trust Act 2012 (amended) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Act 1992 • National Research Bill • Environment Management Act (EMA) 2005 • Biosecurity Act 2008 • Native Land Trust Act 2012 (amended)
Organization Structure	On page 11 of the annual report.	On page 9 of the annual report.
Key Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Allocation - Total budget of \$17.07 million, utilised \$14.87 million • Total log volume produced in 2018-2019 financial year amounted to 439,780.0 m³ • The 4 Million Trees in 4 Years (4MT4Y) initiative was launched in January 2019 by the President, His Excellency, Jioji Konrote. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Allocation - \$14.8 million; Utilised - \$13.3 million (89.9%) • 30MT15Y Initiative: 1.5 million trees planted, Launch of Ministry's revamped website and tree planting dashboard • Log production: 451,264.4m³, Timber/Wood product Export: \$50.0 million • MOU signed with Biosecurity Authority of Fiji



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the royal visit of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex to Fiji, the hosting of the Duke of Sussex to the Colo-i-Suva (CIS) Park and the official opening of the upgraded CIS Park, which received the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy Award. Memoranda of Understanding - 3 MOUs were signed locally with Ministry of Employment, Productivity & Industrial Relations, Fiji National Provident Fund and the Fiji Development Bank and iTaukei Affairs Board. The finalisation of the Ministry's Strategic Development Plan. Implementation of MOU with Indonesia - Wood carving training was sponsored by the Indonesian Government representatives who visited the country as part of the implementation of the MOU with Indonesia. A total of 20 wood carvers from the Western Division participated in the programme, with the guidance of two wood carving experts from Bali, Indonesia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank extends REDD+ Readiness Phase to another 18 months 2019-2020 Operational Plan Implementation - 82.7%
Major Highlights/Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiji has a forest cover of 1.1 million hectares which accounts for 60% of Fiji's landmass. Natural forests account for 86.6% of the 1.1million ha forest cover, followed by softwood plantations at 6.8% and hardwood plantations at 6.6%. They also protect the environment and its biodiversity, prevent soil erosion and enhance air and water quality. In combining the contributions of forest related activities, the forestry sector contributed \$158.7 million (1.4%) to national real GDP by the end of 2018. The major contribution of \$68.6 million was from the sawmilling and planning of wood activity, followed by the forestry and logging industry, which contributed \$26.1 million. The details are provide on page 7 of the annual report. Employment in the Forestry Sector - Due to the nature of the work in the forestry sector, a significant amount of informal employment is created in which people, particularly resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The combined forest-related activities within the forestry sector contributed \$154.1 million (1.4%) to national real GDP by the end of 2019. The major contribution of \$68.7 million was from the sawmilling and planing of wood activity followed by the forestry and logging industry which contributed \$24.7 million. Employment in the Forestry Sector - a total of 865 people were employed in the sector in 2019. Exports - wood and wood products contributed \$59.0 million in export revenue for the year 2019 . The major export commodity was woodchips which generated \$37.6 million. Domestic exports of wood products accounted for 5% of total domestic exports. Imports - wood and wood products contributed \$23.5 million in import bill for the year 2019.



	<p>owners, are employed as casuals in forest-based operations. Through its Annual Employment Survey, FBOS captures only the formal employment statistics, a total of 880 people were employed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exports - In terms of exports, and using the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System (HS2) classification adopted by FBOS, wood and wood products contributed \$94.6 million in export revenue for the year. The major export commodity was woodchips, which generated \$78.5 million. Domestic exports of wood products accounted for 8% of total domestic exports.• The Ministry finalised its Strategic Development Plan (SDP) this financial year which highlights the four strategic goals and six strategic priorities. The SDP is aligned to the National Development Plan (NDP) requirements and global commitments. This Plan will guide the work of the Ministry until 2030, and initiatives channeled for implementation within the Ministry's annual operational plans. Details on page 15 of the annual report. <p>Strategic Priority 1: Cohesive legislation, regulation, policy, guidelines and compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finalisation of Forest Bill and Relevant Regulations - the Ministry continued to pursue the finalisation and endorsement of the Forest Bill [Bill No. 13 of 2016], which was a review of the Forest Act 1992. The Bill has been read twice in Parliament.• Sandalwood Strategy and Regulation - Ministry worked on developing drafts in collaboration with stakeholders.• Planted Forest Policy - Ministry continued work on the Planted Forests Policy, with assistance from the Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The aim of the Policy is to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary Of 2019-2020 Operational Plan Achievement - The Ministry achieved 82.7% in terms of the implementation of the 2019-2020 Operational Plan initially set out in the beginning of the financial year. The highest achievement was from the Corporate Services, IT, Finance & Planning Division at 92.0% followed by Training & Education and Timber Utilisation Divisions at 87.0% each, Silviculture Research Division at 84.0%, Forest Resource Assessment & Conservation Division at 81.0%, Executive Management at 79.0% and the Monitoring, Control, Surveillance & Extension Division at 69.0%. <p>Strategic Priority 1: Cohesive legislation, regulation, policy, guidelines and compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finalisation of Forest Bill and relevant regulations - the Ministry continued to internally review the Forest Act 1992. Once the amendment to the Act is endorsed, relevant regulations already drafted and reviewed will also be finalised. These regulations include the Sawmill Regulation, the Preservative Timber Treatment Regulation, and the Forest harvesting regulation.• Sandalwood Strategy & Regulation - Ministry worked on developing drafts in collaboration with stakeholders.• Planted Forest Policy - Ministry developed the Planted Forests Policy, with assistance from the Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in 2016. It has undergone some internal reviews and amendments, however not much progress has been made this financial year.• Rural Forest Fire Strategy - draft strategy was developed with the assistance of the Pacific Community (SPC) and relevant stakeholders such as the Ministry of Agriculture. The draft information paper to Cabinet was compiled, however the team was advised to conduct more
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	<p>increase forest areas under managed plantations to reduce pressures on Fiji's natural forests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rural Forest Fire Strategy - A draft strategy was developed with the assistance of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the relevant stakeholders such as the Ministry of Agriculture.• National Plywood Standard - Due to current gaps in the local plywood industry, the development of a national plywood standard was recommended. The responsibility in developing standards lies with the Commerce department of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport (MCTTT). With budget allocation of \$20,000.00, a consultant was engaged during the year to undertake a feasibility study to determine the need to either develop a totally new standard or adopt the Australian Standard currently used as a guideline for processing local plywood. The main reason is to address the increase in the importation of substandard material by enforcing the standard as a requirement for all importation of plywood into the country. A feasibility study report was developed and submitted to the Ministry by the consultant.• Strategic Development Plan - Ministry's SDP, which was developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, was finalised and published this financial year.• Mangrove Management Guideline - draft guideline was developed on the work and lessons learnt from the six communities/project sites of the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) project. This Guideline was developed in collaboration with the Pacific Community (SPC). <p>Strategic Priority 2: Enhance sustainable forest management (SFM) frameworks and implementation of SFM practices</p>	<p>community awareness. Unfortunately the project was funded by SPC and the funding program had lapsed, therefore SPC and MOF are seeking extra funds to conduct wider community consultations before Cabinet is informed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mangrove Management Guideline - draft guideline was developed on the work and lessons learnt from the 6 communities/project sites of the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) project. This guideline was developed in collaboration with the Pacific Community (SPC). The guideline is yet to be endorsed for publication. <p>Strategic Priority 2: Enhance sustainable forest management (SFM)</p> <p>Frameworks and implementation of SFM practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forest change analysis was carried out from January till March of 2020 for 12 islands based on the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) method.• Drones – 3 officers were selected for a week long training in New South Wales, Australia to be licensed by Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) for sub 25kg multi rotor and sub 7kg VTOL drones, which also included assessment for an Aeronautical Radio Operators Certificate. A drone (DJI Mavic 2 Pro with Smart Controller and Pelican Case) was purchased from Drone Services Fiji and registered with the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji for use in monitoring, reporting and verification exercises by the Divisions. The Ministry purchased 2 additional sub 2kg drones and trained more of its staff as drone pilots. The drones were used for the following activities: Post-disaster reconnaissance, Assessment of forest reserve encroachment noticed in the Colo i Suva forest reserve,
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forest Change Analysis - 4 officers travelled to CSIRO's Data61 Facility in Perth, Australia, where they were trained in forest change analysis. The training was conducted by a World Bank Consultant and a CSIRO Officer. Officers were introduced to manual cloud masking and classification of forests using training vectors. The software used in this training were ERMapper, RStudio and Python Scripts in Command Prompt. The officers successfully classified and cloud masked Viti Levu images from 2005 to 2017 during this exercise.• Harvest Area Reports (HARs) - HARs submitted by all Divisions; North, West and Central/Eastern.• Harvest Plan Maps - 5 plan maps were produced with a total revenue of \$1,098.90. Mataqali Nabaulevu received the most areas, as the applicant requested 3 coupes. 3 Harvested Maps to be produced, with different areas. Mataqali Narakura (Gracesealand) has 2 coupes maps, while the rest received one coupe map each.• Mapping Requests - 21 mapping requests were attended to and successfully completed. This included both internal and external requests.• Volume Estimates - 44 volume estimate applications were received and attended to.• Permanent Sample Plots (PSP) - PSP team undertook the fourth round of measurement of the PSP plots in the two major islands and Taveuni. 28 plots were measured, of which 16 were in Vanualevu and 12 were in Vitilevu.• Inventory - Pine inventories were conducted for Kadavu and Lakeba to determine the standing volume of forest areas. 118 plots were measured in Lakeba and 11 pine schemes in Kadavu. Two other inventories were conducted for Mataqali Vatuvula and Savura Dam.	<p>Promotion of the Colo i Suva forest park using aerial images and videos to be used for the Ministry's website, Forest reserve planning for better management, Monitoring of planted areas, including mangroves, in the 30MT15Y initiative to assess survival rates and improve planting practices, Planning of forest inventories and monitoring, reporting, and verification of harvesting sites and Field verification of forest change detection from satellites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GIS & Mapping - the Ministry adopted ESRI ArcGIS Products for GIS data storage, manipulation and visualization. In doing so, all the data was consolidated to a standard platform which makes it easier for collaboration using data with other agencies such as the Ministry of Lands and iTaukei Lands Trust Board (TLTB). Using ArcGIS online, the Ministry successfully developed and now maintains 2 dimensional and a 3-dimensional dynamic web maps which can be accessed using any web browser anywhere in the world.• Planted Area Dashboard - In the Ministry's aim to plant 30 million trees in 15 years, data collection and visualization duties were also conducted by FRAC Division.• Harvested Area Report (HAR) - Submission of harvested area reports from the operations divisions is critical as this is used for forest reference level reporting. The table on page 19 of the annual report shows the full details.• Inventory & Verification - 2 forest inventories were carried out this year, one for mataqali Solia and the other was for African Tulip. For verification, the survey team together with the REDD+ Project undertook verification at Nalotawa Catchment. This was to verify Forest Type area, Degraded & Reforestation Forest, and Mangrove areas.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest parks and reserves - Upgrade of Colo-i-Suva Forest Park - major renovations were conducted this financial year and includes the following: Upgrading of park entrance and construction of security booth, renovation of “Bures”, construction of toilets, bathrooms and changing rooms, picnic area with tables and benches, track repairs, construction of steel railings and installation of rubbish bins. • Duke of Sussex unveils Queen’s Commonwealth Canopy (QCC) Award - The nation was honoured to host the Duke and Duchess of Sussex on the occasion of their 16-day royal visit to Fiji. The Ministry of Forestry was also honoured to host Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex, who made a special visit to the Colo-i-Suva Park, where he unveiled the plaque to commemorate the Queen’s Commonwealth Canopy Award, received by the Park in the previous financial year. With His Royal Highness planting a dakua seedling at the Park. • Colo-i-Suva Visitor Numbers and Revenue Generated - A total of 40,291 visitors visited the Colo-i-Suva Park by end of July 2019, generating a total revenue of \$101,741.00. • Maintenance, Management of Forest Parks and Reserves - Boundary maintenance was carried out in 5 forest reserves. Boundary maintenance is a core output for the Division in ensuring clear demarcation of reserve boundaries under its lease conditions. It also includes marking of all forest and nature reserves boundaries. • Harvesting Operations - 142 harvesting licenses (right licenses) were issued: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 45 licenses for Northern Division, b. 63 licenses for Central Eastern Division, c. 34 licenses for Western Division. <p>Total log volume produced in 2018-2019 financial year amounted to 439,780.0 m3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent Sample Plots (PSP) - A total of 9 plots were measured by the team, 6 plots in Vanua Levu and 2 plots in Viti Levu. • Forest Parks and Reserves - The nature and forest reserves boundary maintenance is one of two major outputs for the Parks and Reserves unit in ensuring clear demarcation of reserve boundaries where there are lease arrangements with government. It includes the marking of all forest and nature reserves boundary that falls within the listed categories. • Colo I Suva Forest Park - The bird life in the park is of international importance. Of all the 57 land birds in Fiji there are about 30 bird species found in the Colo-i-Suva Forest Park. Out of the 57 land birds 26 are found to be endemic and in the Colo-I Suva Forest Park there are 17 endemic bird species. <p>Upgrading of CIS forest park - The project focuses on the upgrading of existing structures, with the intention to draw in more visitors to the Colo-i-Suva Forest Park. This project directly addresses the sites at the Upper pool, Lower Pool and Waisila track.</p> <p>The Revenue Collected from Park Visitors in 2019– 2020 was \$85,090.00.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law Enforcement – Licensing, Monitoring & Compliance • Right licenses issued - A total of 195 Right License (RL) was issued during this financial year. • Harvesting Operations - A total log volume of 451,264.37m3 was produced this financial year. • Sawmill Operations - A total of 42 licensed sawmills were operating during the year, comprising of 24 static and 18 portable saw mills. The Central division was issued with 15 licenses followed by the Western and Northern
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sawmilling Operations - 47 sawmill licenses were issued (19 static, 28 portable). • Sawmill Return by Division - total of 156,849.24m3 of Log input, with 66,173.33m3 output, the average recovery rate stood at 42%. • Treatment Plant Operations - Out of the 27 treatment plants in Fiji, 19 were licensed for operation this financial year. • 1,267 timber samples were analysed by the Ministry which generated a total revenue of \$23,312.80. • Treated Timber Samples and Hazard Classes – the number of samples (1267) that have passed (1223) and failed (44) the copper loading requirements, according to the specific preservative hazard treatment level. Few treated samples failed H4 and H5 treatment level. • Reforestation and afforestation - Mass Tree Planting Initiative - With a target of 800 hectares for the Reforestation of Degraded Forests (RDF) Project, a total of 684,417 seedlings (1,632.31ha) were planted by the end of July 2019. This financial year, The 4 Million Trees in 4 Years (4MT4Y) initiative was launched in January 2019 by the President, His Excellency, Jioji Konrote. • Agroforestry - 4 agroforestry plots were established in the following locations: Vuma Village, Levuka, Dawasamu Secondary School, Vunivaivai, Nakelo, and Yale Kadavu collaboration with USP. <p>Research and development - silviculture research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed Collection, Processing and Sowing for Seedling Production - total of 1,414.6kg of seeds were collected and processed by the silviculture research division. Out of these processed seeds, 97,200 seeds were sowed for seedling production. 	<p>divisions with 14 and 13 licenses respectively. These sawmills processed a total log volume of 149,970.390m3, producing 71,322.670m3 of sawn timber, meaning an average sawn timber recovery of 48%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veneer mill production by manufacturer - A total log volume of 35,315.890m3 was processed, producing a total veneer volume of 24,721.123m3, and achieving an average recovery of 70%. There are only 3 manufacturers namely; Valebasoga Tropikboards, Long Investment and Houyilin, who are all based in Vanua Levu. The top 5 species processed into veneer were; pine (<i>Pinus caribaea</i>), dakua makadre (<i>Agathis macrophylla</i>), kaudamu (<i>Myristica castaneifolia</i>), vusavusa and waciwaci with a collective volume of 31,756.738m3, which comprised 90% of the total volume that was processed. Mahogany (<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>) and pine (<i>Pinus caribaea</i>), the two major plantation species collectively contributed a volume of 17,342.194m3, which comprised 49% of the total volume that was processed. • Post & Pole Production - A total pine (<i>Pinus caribaea</i>) volume of 2,192.043m3 was processed into post and pole producing a total volume of 1,969.742m3 with an average recovery of 90%. Tropik Wood Industries produced the highest volume which comprised 35% of the total volume produced, followed by Waiqele and Jaydil at 26% and 21% respectively. • Treatment Plant Operations - A total of 23 timber treatment plants out of the 28 that exists in Fiji were licensed during the year and treated a total sawn timber volume of 40,734.220m3. A total of 40,734.220m3 were treated, comprising of pine (988.630m3), mahogany (1,789.750m3) and kauvula (154.210m3). Tanalith Oxide
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forest Health - Biological Rapid Assessments (BIORAPS) were undertaken to report on the baseline assessment and current state of the Biological Diversity within the areas of natural forest reserves designated for the purpose of protection for biodiversity conservation, as consented to by the landowning communities. This year BIORAPS were conducted by the forest health team in the following areas:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Nadarivatu - This assessment was done in collaboration with USP-IAS. The result indicates insect diversity in the different trapping methods used. It was noted that the insect order Coleoptera was mostly collected from leaf litter, rather than from the normal method of collection such as light trap.b. Upper Tuva Catchment - BIORAPS results from the upper Tuva catchment area shows the types and abundance of insects present that are known to be good forest health indicators.• Tree Improvement – Assessment of Trial Plots - Assessments were conducted for the following trial plots and reports were compiled accordingly:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Yavuna Nausori Highlands – Sandalwood and mixed speciesb. Drasa Alternative Species Trial – Eucalyptus, Pine and Acaciac. Vaqia, Ba – Mixed species• A new Agarwood research trial plot was established with the Fiji Women’s Growers Association at Toga, Rewa, in November 2018. A total of 54 Agarwood seedlings were planted in rows of two. Treatments of NPK, Aglime or Organic manure were applied to each two-row planting.• Natural Forest Management – Nakavu Operation - This is the third year of operation at the Nakavu Pilot Project, based on the volume and species recovery after 22 years of logging.	<p>was used to treat 38,944.470m³ with the balance (1,789.750m³) treated with Tanalith NCA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality Control - Quality control was carried out through the analysis of charge sheets and timber samples collected from all the treatment plants on a monthly basis. Charge sheets were validated and the results recorded. Timber samples were analysed at the laboratory in Nasinu on a “user-pay” basis and reports sent to plant operators confirming the results of the tests.• Monitoring of forest harvesting operations (MCS Project) - With an annual budget of \$100,000, the main objective of the MCS project is to ensure that all commercial forest harvesting operations are in compliance with Fiji’s Forest Harvesting Code of Practice (FFHCOP) which enables the sustainable utilisation and management of Fiji’s forests. Evaluation are conducted for field operations and also on the condition and standards of harvesting machines. Two operators were issued with ‘prohibition notices’ due to the severity of defects observed on their machines and considered to be unsafe for use hence urgent repairs were warranted. The average national monitoring result for this financial year stands at 89.05%.• Sawmill Monitoring - The monitoring of sawmills were conducted on a quarterly basis with the main objective of ensuring that best practices were applied and that licensing conditions were met in line with the Sawmill Policy and Forest (sawmill) regulations of 1968.• Reforestation and Afforestation - 30MT15Y Initiative - This financial year saw the transition of the 4MT4Y Initiative (initially launched in Jan 2019) to the 30MT15Y Initiative which was declared by the Prime Minister for
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	<p>The different logging intensities were still maintained, but the new diameter limit table to be adopted will be based on the log volume derived from the first logging rotation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Consultancy and Seed Bank - 2 consultants were engaged by the Ministry to conduct a review of the work of the Silviculture Research Division and the need to develop a seed bank or tree seed centre. The review was completed this financial year and the findings and report were presented to management. • Sandalwood Project -With a \$100,000 budget allocation, the following activities were conducted by the Sandalwood Project team: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sandalwood market survey and consultation; 2. Sandalwood inventory programme and registration of farmers; 3. Sandalwood planting, and 4. Monitoring of project sites. <p>Research and development – timber utilisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on Lesser Known Species - Applied research, studying the properties and potential uses of lesser known species (LKS) continued during the financial year with a total of 31 species identified in Nakavu. With a total budget of \$150,000.00, a total of 8 species were extracted out of the 31 species identified. • A total of 160 stakes were installed (20 stakes per specie). The newly installed species are: Sole, Vutukana, Kaunigai, Dalovoci, Bulu M, Maqo ni Veikau, Bausa and Damabi. • Wood Pellet Production and Research on Calorific Content of Pellets - One Mini pellet machine was procured this year. Pellets were tested for their calorific contents at the USP. In addition to the calorific value analysis, the students also 	<p>Fiji, Hon Bainimarama in New York on 26 September 2019. The Ministry reviewed its annual target accordingly from 1 million trees to 2 million trees till 2030. A total of 1,503,935 seedlings (2,570.1 hectares) were planted by the end of July 2020.</p> <p>Research and Development - Silviculture Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed Collection - A total of 1,243.1kg of seeds were collected and 229.9 processed by the silviculture research division. Out of these processed seeds, 97,200 seeds were sowed for seedling production. Seed collection targets were not fully achieved during the year due to the unavailability of seeds in the field, the uncertainty in fruiting and maturity and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting normal work schedules. • Forest Health - is concerned with insects that affect the forest and forest products and its scope of research is to survey, collect and rear timber infesting insects, to liaise with timber inspectors and quarantine officers for imports of timber products and periodical trapping at ports of entry, plantations and nursery. • Tree Improvement - Assessment of trial plots, the objective of tree improvement is to identify, thin and develop superior stands for the purpose of supplying quality seeds for reforestation. Assessments were conducted for the following trial plots and reports were compiled accordingly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yavuna Nausori Highlands – Sandalwood & mixed species • Drasa Alternative Species Trial – Eucalyptus, Pine & Acacia • Vaqia, Ba – mixed species
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	<p>conducted research on the firewood properties of Kuvula. The firewood research is still in progress as the research team in Nasinu is currently drying Kuvula to the required moisture content levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of Metal Tape Embosser Machine - The machine was procured from Australia in November 2018. The machine enables tagging to be done on metal strips and these strips are attached to timber samples which are placed in trial sites for testing and assessment. A total of 160 stakes were tagged using this new machine. • Upgrade of Research Exhibition Room - the exhibition room in Nasinu was renovated and improved, as it is a popular field visit site for many educational and vocational institutions, as the displays portray the various timber processes, from harvesting, sawmilling, treatment, to construction and various timber products. <p>Strategic Priority 3: Capacity Building (Ministry and Stakeholders)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation of Forestry Training School - The Forestry Training Centre in Colo-i-Suva received its accreditation certificate on 07 December, 2018 from the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC). • Technical Forestry Training - the Ministry conducted 39 short term technical trainings. • Advanced Certificate in Applied Woodcraft Technology - The Advanced Certificate in Applied Woodcraft Technology programme was introduced, with 12 trainees graduated from the programme. • Industrial Attachment for Students - 32 students from various academic institutions were engaged as part of their industrial attachment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed Stand Establishment - The research team conducted seed stand selection for mahogany in Vanua Levu from 22 July to 2 August, 2019. Assessments were conducted on the Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), the Tree Height, the Stem Form, Tapper of the tree which gives the relationships between the diameter and heights, the Branching within stems, and the Forest Health component that assesses pests and diseases. Only trees with heights of more than 10m high are considered. • Establishment of Santulum Yasi Gene Conservation Area (GCA) - The team established a GCA plot at Tutu, Taveuni in October 2019 which accommodated a total of 113 S.yasi seedlings from all over Fiji that were collected from marked trees. A total of 32 seedlings were planted in Plot A and the remaining 81 seedlings were planted in Plot B with a 5x5 meter spacing. Seedlings were measured after planting and both plots will be monitored and measured on an annual basis. • Natural Forest Management – Nakavu Operation, this is the third year of operation at the Nakavu Pilot project based on the volume and species recovery after 22 years of logging. Different logging intensities are still maintained but the new diameter limit table being adopted is based on log volume derived from first logging rotation. • Sandalwood Project - With a \$100,000 budget allocation, the following activities were conducted by the Sandalwood Project team: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sandalwood inventory programme & registration of farmers 2. Sandalwood Heartwood Study and Oil Extraction Process
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	<p>Strategic Priority 4: Stewardship Sustainable trade environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Facilitation - The following trade licenses/permits were issued by the Ministry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 196 export licenses were issued, with a total value of FJ\$65.8 million. Pine chips were the biggest contributor, with a value of \$47.6 million. b. 176 import permits were issued, with a total value of FJ\$7.8 million. • Seed Capital Revolving Fund (SCARF) Programme - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 applications were received by the Ministry for vetting. • 12 applications were submitted to the Fiji Development Bank for further vetting and final decision. • Climate change adaptation and mitigation - Emission Reduction Programme (ERP) Document and the Readiness Package were submitted and endorsed, without conditions, by the FCPF Carbon Fund of the World Bank in July 2019. • Livelihood assistance - Housing Rehabilitation - Due to the devastating impacts of a series of tropical cyclones experienced by Fiji, the Ministry worked with affected communities to utilise their forest resources to rebuild and repair their homes. The following results were achieved in this financial year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kadavu – 86 housing structures produced. • Gau – 17 houses (9 complete houses and 8 extensions) • Six other islands/villages were also assisted, including Koro Island, Lomaiviti, Onoi-Lau, Lau, Tubeinasolo, Ba, Navutulevu, Serua, Dogotuki, Macuata Namalata, Kadavu. <p>Strategic Priority 5: Forest Financing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Sandalwood Tree Assessment, Pests & Diseases Survey 4. Sandalwood Market Study & Management Plan 5. Sandalwood Community Awareness Activity 6. Sandalwood Community Nursery Assistance & Plot Establishment 7. Sandalwood Seedling Production <p>Research and Development – Timber Utilisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on lesser known species - A project funding of \$150,000 was provided for applied research studies on the properties and potential uses of lesser known species (LKS). During the financial year, work was completed on 13 out of the 31 species identified in Nakavu. • Establishment & Assessment of Graveyard Service Trials - The purpose of graveyard and service trials is to test the durability of tree species in ground contact, as well as its service life in weather contact. Samples were measured and cut into stakes of 37cm (width) x 37cm (width) x 50cm (length) and inserted into the ground. These stakes are currently assessed every 3 months to determine its durability whilst in ground contact hence the name graveyard trial. To test the durability while exposing to the weather, species were profiled into weatherboards and installed at the graveyard trial sites. • Nasinu Graveyard Service Trial - A total of 11 species were installed as stakes and 5 species as weatherboard in Nasinu. • Assessment of Graveyard Service Trials - The graveyard stakes and weatherboard profiles were assessed every 3 months from the date they were installed. The last assessment that was carried out noted that Dalovoci (<i>Hernandia olivacea</i>) stakes recorded a 95% failure in ground contact followed by Damabi (<i>Endiandra gillespiei</i>)
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	<p>There was no initiative/activity planned for this strategic priority for the financial year under review.</p> <p>Strategic Priority 6: Organisation Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• HR management - The Ministry had a staffing strength of 242 (85.8%) out of the 282 approved posts.• Ministerial Tours - A total of 111 villages/stakeholders were visited by the Hon. Minister for Forestry and the supporting Forestry team this financial year, to champion the national tree planting initiative and to also create awareness about the work of the Ministry.	<p>and Vutukana (<i>Barringtonia edulis</i>) with 45% and 35% respectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Korotari Graveyard Service Trials - A new trial site was established at Korotari, Labasa during the last quarter of the financial year. The establishment works included the cleaning of the site, fencing and installation of LKS graveyard stakes and weatherboards. The Korotari trial contains 9 species (bausa, bulu M, damabi, maqo ni veikau, sole, tomanu, vutukana, kuluva, kaunigai) as graveyard stakes and 4 species (kuluva, kaunigai, bausa, damabi) as weatherboards.• Upgrade of Research Exhibition Room- the upgrades included the construction of linings from our local and exotic timber species like coconut, mahogany, kaudamu, kauvula, vutukana, kaunigai, bausa and damabi. <p>Strategic Priority 3: Capacity Building (Ministry & Stakeholders)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accreditation of training facilities and programmes<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The FTC Facility has been accredited but not the programmes2. Accreditation of Training Programmes to Fiji Higher Education Commission is still under dialogue.3. Submission of the programmes has been done to the Higher Education Commission and the outcome is yet to be received.4. Marketing and advertising strategies for training have begun with the national universities through MOUs with FNUm& USP.5. The training programmes for FTC & TITC have been adopted locally but partnerships are required to support themadoption of these training programmes at a regional level with neighbouring Pacific islands.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical Training - The FTC facility was used as a COVID-19 Community isolation facility from April 2020 which affected the delivery of most of the Ministry's scheduled technical training. The most common training carried out this financial year was the Harvest Trees Manually Basic (HTMB) Training.• Corporate Trainings - A total of 150 staff were trained locally while 21 staff attended training abroad. The total number of staff trained stood at 171 which is an increase of 29.5% when compared to the previous year. Of the 171 staff trained this financial year, 117 are males and 54 are females. <p>Strategic Priority 4: Stewardship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exports - A total of 314 export licenses were issued, with a total value of FJ\$50.0 million. Pine chips were the biggest contributor, with a value of \$36.3 million (72.6%).• Import - A total of 239 import permits were issued, with a total value of FJ\$11.8 million. Major imported products include plywood, plyboard, sawn timber and hard board.• Forestry Business/ Investment Guide - The 2019-2020 Forestry business and investment guide was published and disseminated to all Divisional offices, stakeholders and the general public who visit the forestry offices, trade show booths and other interagency shows/ consultations. A copy was also updated onto the Ministry's website for public informations. <p>Climate change adaptation & mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emission Reduction Programme (ERP) - Following the acceptance of Fiji's Emission Reduction Programme Document (ERPD) in July 2019, the document was presented in 9 forums from November 2019 to February 2020.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Forest Management System - Work on the integration of the National Forest Management System (NFMS) with the Timber Revenue System (TRS) began this financial year and will be completed in the next reporting period though the development of a software programme. Officers of the Ministry are being trained on the use of tablets and the ODK application for the collection of field data.• Study of Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation - Work on the Study of Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation remains incomplete due to lack and insufficient data, particularly for the infrastructure, agriculture and mining sectors. This work is expected to be completed in the next reporting period.• Livelihood Assistance, Community development and Inter-agency collaboration - Housing rehabilitation - The Ministry continued its assistance to communities who needed their homes rebuilt and repaired after the impacts of natural disasters. Portable sawmills were also delivered to affected communities and pine schemes to assist in the harvesting and processing of timber for housing structures. More than 600 houses were identified to be repaired. By the end of the financial year, the Ministry was able to assist communities with the production of 181 housing structures.• DISMAC Operations - This year the impacts of a number of tropical cyclones saw the Ministry step up to support leading government agencies in the clearing of trees and debris, conducting damage assessments and distributing food and other relief rations to affected communities.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Response Support - The Ministry adhered to the call of the government of the day and supported the Ministry of Health & Medical Services in trying to control the outbreak of the pandemic. Support was provided in terms of seconding staff to MHMS to contribute in various fields, provision of vehicles and the use of the Forestry Training Center since April 2020 as a community isolation facility. More than 50% of the Ministry staff and over 50% of Ministry vehicles were engaged for COVID-19 operations. <p>Strategic Priority 5: Forest Financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable financing for terrestrial protected areas - One of the long term outputs under this strategic priority is to establish Forest Trust Funds. With the objective of developing forest financing mechanisms, the Ministry commenced work this financial year on reviewing and assessing cost models of existing terrestrial protected areas such as the Sovi basin, Tomaniivi, Delaikoro and Taveuni protected areas. <p>Strategic Priority 6: Organisation Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Management - The Ministry had a staffing strength of 239 (87.2%) out of the 274 approved posts. • Ministerial Tours – A total of 154 villages/stakeholders were visited by the Hon. Minister for Forestry and the supporting Forestry team this financial year to champion the national tree planting initiative and to also create awareness on the work of the Ministry.
Financial Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry received a total budget of \$17.07 million, which is an increase of \$1.0 million (6.5%) when compared to the 2017-2018 financial year. The Ministry utilised \$14.87 million (87.1%) for the implementation of the Ministry's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry received a total budget of \$14.8 million which was a decline of \$2.3 million (15.5%) compared to the 2018-2019 financial year. The Ministry utilised \$13.3 million (89.9%) for the implementation of the Ministry's



	programmes and projects. The details of the budget is on the page 14 of the annual report.		programmes and projects and achieved 82.7% of its deliverables in the Annual Operational Plan.
Financial Position		2018-19 (\$)	2020 (\$)
	Total Revenue	553,774	341,114
	Total Expenditure	14,873,741	13,269,542
	Cost of Goods Manufactured transferred to Trading Account	208,159	61,171
	Gross Profit/(Loss) transferred to Profit and Loss statement	(39,536)	19,409
	Total Income	39,536	19,409
	Total Expenditure	285,071	200,874
	Net Loss	(324,607)	(181,465)
	Total Assets	1,532,481	1,339,072
	Total Liabilities	2,195,360	2,183,417
	Total Equity	(662,879)	(844,345)
Auditor's Opinion	Opinion Auditor has audited the financial statements of the Ministry of Forestry (Ministry) which comprises the Statement of Receipts and Expenditure, Appropriation Statement, Statement of Losses, TMA Manufacturing Account, TMA Trading Account, TMA Profit and Loss Statement and TMA Balance Sheet for the financial year ended 31 July 2019, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. In auditors opinion, except for the effects of the matters discussed in the Basis for Qualified Opinion paragraphs, the accompanying financial statements of the Ministry are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Financial Management Act and Finance Instructions 2010. Basis for Qualified Opinion Operating Fund Account		Opinion Auditor has audited the financial statements of the Ministry of Forestry ('the Ministry') which comprises the Statement of Receipts and Expenditure, Appropriation Statement, Statement of Losses, TMA Manufacturing Account, TMA Trading Account, TMA Profit and Loss Statement and TMA Balance Sheet for the financial year ended 31 July 2020, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. In auditor's opinion, the accompanying financial statements of the Ministry are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Financial Management Act 2004 and Finance Instructions 2010 and Finance (Amendment) Instructions 2016.



1. Expenditures totaling \$302,301 were not recorded in the Statement of Receipts and Expenditure for the year ended 31 July 2019. This amount relate to unrecorded expenditures for accountable advance but were not cleared from the Revolving Fund Account as at 31 July 2019. Consequently, total expenditure of \$14,873,741 for the year ended 31 July 2019 is understated by \$302,301.
2. There is an unreconciled variance of \$1,025,547 between the FMIS general ledger and the Ministry's payroll report for both Established Staff and Government Wage Earners. Consequently, I was unable to establish the accuracy of the Established Staff Government and Wage Earners balances recorded in the Statement of Receipts and Expenditure for the year ended 31 July 2019.
3. There is an unreconciled variance of \$167,998 between the FMIS general ledger for revenue received from Native Timber Measurement and the report extracted from the Timber Revenue System. Consequently, I was unable to establish the accuracy of the revenue recorded under Native Timber Measurement of \$318,442 in the Statement of Receipts and Expenditure for the year ended 31 July 2019.
4. Included in the FMIS general ledger are accounts receivable of \$677,339, accrued expenses and deferred income of \$1,739 and accounts payable of \$5,767, which had been carried forward from previous years. The Ministry was unable to provide appropriate documentations to support these balances. As a result, I was unable to verify the completeness and accuracy of the balances and also unable to determine whether any adjustments might have been necessary and any corresponding adjustments to the elements making up the statement of income and expenditure.

Trading and Manufacturing Account



5. There is an unreconciled variance of \$112,699 between the TMA bank re-conciliation and the general ledger balance for Cash at Bank. Consequently, I am not able to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the Cash at Bank balance of \$1,338,610 recorded in the TMA Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2019.

6. The Ministry, with the approval of the Ministry of Economy, transferred a sum of \$2,000,000 in 2016 to the Trading and Manufacturing Activity (TMA) account from its operating budget for the purpose of salvaging logs after Tropical Cyclone Winston. Although funds amounting to \$228,886 was utilised in 2019, deferred income was not adjusted and the balance of \$2, 198,548 remained the same since 2017. The cash at bank balance of \$1,338,610 recorded in the TMA Balance Sheet was not sufficient to support the remaining deferred income balance of \$2, 198, 548.

7. The Ministry recorded maintenance and operation expenses of \$285,071 in the TMA Profit and Loss Account, which included the cost of a logging truck of \$218,349. As a result, the maintenance and operations expenses recorded in the TMA Profit and Loss Account is overstated by \$218,349 for the year ended 31 July 2019.

8. The Ministry recorded Accounts Receivable of \$73,857 in the TMA Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2019. The Ministry was unable to provide appropriate documentations such as debtors' aging listing, subsidiary debtor's ledgers and account reconciliation statements to support the accounts receivable balance. As a result, I was unable to verify the completeness and accuracy of the balance and unable to determine whether any adjustments might have been necessary to the elements making up the TMA Profit and Loss Account and TMA Balance Sheet.

Emphasis of Matter
I draw attention to the following:



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trading and Manufacturing account continues to operate at loss since 2010 which has resulted in excess of liabilities over assets of \$662,879 in the TMA Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2019.• Note 5 to the financial statements states that TMA sales of \$144,086 included a reimbursement of TMA wages of \$55, 718. My opinion is not modified in respect of these matters.	
Gender Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ministry conducted the Technical Forestry Training were gender information was provided on the participates.• The Advanced Certificate in Applied Woodcraft Technology programme was introduced, with 12 trainees (3 females and 9 males) graduating from the programme this financial year. Both on page 31 of the annual report	

08 April 2024

Disclaimer

This Annual Report Summary was prepared to assist the Standing Committee on Natural Resources in its review of the Ministry of Forestry 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 Annual Report. This summary should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. Other sources and information should be consulted. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate, the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji will not accept any liability for any loss or damage which may be incurred by any person acting in reliance upon the information. The Parliament of the Republic of Fiji accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. For further information please email: Shrutkeertee Devi on email Shrutkeertee.devi@legislature.gov.fj



Annual Report Summary – Ministry of Forestry 2020/2021 – 2021/2022

Standing Committee on Natural Resources

	2020-2021	2021-2022
Vision	Sustainable Forests, Our Future	
Mission	To be a Leader in Sustainable Forestry	
Background	<p>The Ministry is a regulatory and service organisation responsible for the national forestry sector through the following functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate and implement forest strategies and policies; • Provide and administer the regulatory function under the Ministry's respective legislation and regulations; • Monitor and evaluate current strategies, policies and deliverables; • Develop and promote effective training, communication and awareness and extension advisory services; • Strengthen community and industry networks and support frameworks; • Maintain international bilateral and multilateral commitments; and • Undertake applied research for sustainable forest resource management practices and product development. 	
Acts in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Act 1992 • National Research Bill • Environment Management Act (EMA) 2005 • Biosecurity Act 2008 • Native Land Trust Act 2012 (amended) • Endangered and Protected Species (Amendment) Act 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Act 1992 • National Research Bill • Environment Management Act (EMA) 2005 • Biosecurity Act 2008 • Native Land Trust Act 2012 (amended) • Endangered and Protected Species (Amendment) Act 2021 • Climate Change Act 2021
Organization Structure	On page 15 of the annual report.	On page 9 of the annual report.
Key Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Allocation - \$15.7 million; Utilised - \$13.9 million (88.5%) • Development of a 3-year Economic Recovery Plan for Forestry with a total revenue target of \$418.7 million • 30MT15Y Initiative: 5.4 million trees and mangroves planted in the 2020-2021FY • Log production: 760,817.0m³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Allocation - \$13.8 million; Utilised - \$12.5 million (90.6%) • 30MT15Y Initiative : 5.5 million trees planted in 2021-2022FY • National Forest Inventory 2021/2022 • National Log production: 545,208m³ • Timber/wood product Export: \$97.3 million



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Export and Import Online Licensing System - Timber/Wood product Export: \$97.3 million • Community Development/Livelihood Assistance -Over 300 house structures produced from matured forest resources. • Partnership with FAO, USFS, FRCS, FBOS and Fiji Police Force • Signing of the ERPA with World Bank's FCPF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timber/wood product Import: \$12.0 million • 201 timber housing frames produced • Partnership with USFS, FAO, CI, SPC, ACIAR • Pledge “Say No to Illegal Logging” • 2020-2021 AOP Implementation 78.8%
Major Highlights/Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020, Fiji’s GDP stood at \$8,856.9 million. The forestry and logging industry contributed \$26.6 million (0.3%) to Fiji’s real GDP in 2020, which is 7.7% increase when compared to 2019. The forestry and logging industry was one of only three industries that made positive growth in a challenging year when the COVID-19 pandemic affected the nation. The combined forest-related activities within the forestry sector contributed \$153.0 million (1.7%) to the national GDP by the end of 2020. The significant contribution of \$60.0 million was from the sawmilling and planning of wood activity, followed by the forestry and logging industry, which contributed \$26.6 million. • Employment in the Forestry Sector – the Annual Employment Survey stood at 918 in 2020. It's an increase of 6 per cent compared to the 2019 employment number of 865. • Exports - wood and wood products - contributed \$76.6 million in export revenue. The major export commodity was woodchips which generated \$55.4 million. Domestic exports of wood products accounted for 6.7% of total domestic exports. • Imports - wood and wood products contributed \$18.9 million to the import bill. • Import substitution products - Fiji has been importing commodities such as plywood and ply boards due to its high demand in the construction industry in Fiji. Opportunities lie in setting up facilities locally to manufacture these products for local and overseas markets. It will also contribute to local employment opportunities and socio-economic growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2021, Fiji’s GDP stood at \$8,404.2 million. The forestry and logging industry contributed \$34.1million (0.4%) to Fiji’s real GDP in 2021, a 28.2% increase compared to the \$26.6million (0.3%) contribution in 2020. The combined forest-related activities within the forestry sector contributed \$162.5 million (1.9%) to the National GDP by the end of 2021. The Significant contribution of \$55.3 million was from the sawmilling and planting of wood activity, followed by forestry and logging industry, which contributed \$34.1 million. • Employment in the Forestry Sector- the Annual Employment Survey stood at 918 in 2020. It’s an increase of 6% compared to the 2019 employment number of 865. • Exports – wood and wood products contributed \$118.5 million to export revenue for 2021. The major export commodity was woodchips which generated \$74.8 million. Domestic exports of wood products accounted for 9.5% total domestic exports. • Imports – wood and wood products contributed \$17.8 million to the import bill. • Summary of 2021-2022 operational plan achievement- the ministry achieved 78.8% in terms of the implementation of the 2021-2022 operational plan that was set for the year. Details on page 21 of the report.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-timber forest products - Investment in non-timber or non-wood forest products also has excellent potential in Fiji. With pressure growing on our natural forests, investing in short-rotation tree crops is a better option as there are greater returns on investment for these forest products.• Summary of 2020-2021 Operational Plan Achievement - The Ministry achieved 83.0% in implementing the 2020-2021 Operational Plan set out at the beginning of the financial year. <p>Strategic Priority 1: Cohesive legislation, regulation, policy, guidelines and compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development & review of legislation, regulations, policies & plans - Finalisation of Forest Bill and relevant regulations, Sandalwood Strategy & Regulation, Planted Forest Policy, Rural Forest Fire Strategy, National Plywood Standard, National Afforestation & Reforestation Guideline, Endangered and Protected Species (Amendment of Schedules) Regulations 2021 and Climate Change Bill.	<p>Strategic Priority 1: Cohesive legislation, regulation, policy, guidelines and compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development & review of legislations, regulations, policies & plans<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Finalization of Forest Bill and relevant regulations – the ministry continued to review the Forest Act 1992 and submitted a draft to the SG’s office this year. Once the amendment to the Act is endorsed, relevant regulations already drafted and reviewed will also be finalized. These regulations include the Sawmill Regulations and the Preservative Timber Treatment Regulation. A new Forest Harvesting regulation will be developed as well.2. 2011 REDD+ Policy – the review of the 2011 REDD+ Policy was carried out through the conduct of stakeholder consultations and the engagement of a consultant to complete the reviewed Policy. The final draft was submitted to management for endorsement before submitting it to Cabinet Office.3. Climate Change Act – the ministry was part of the consultant on the draft Climate Change Act and provided its contribution as this Act is relevant to the work of the Ministry. The Climate Change Act No. 43 of 2021 was endorsed but has not come into force yet.
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**Strategic Priority 2: Enhance sustainable forest management (SFM) frameworks and implementation of SFM practices**

- **Forest Cover and Forest Change Analysis** - Forest change detection for 2020 was carried out using the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) methodology of semi-automatic classification. The team downloaded, pre-processed, classified, mosaiced and post-processed Landsat 8 imagery of three islands (Viti Levu, Vanua Levu and Taveuni). Results were made available later in the year, refined and made ready for accuracy assessment. This work was done in collaboration with United States Forest Service (USFS) Climate Fellow Dr. Randy Hamilton.
- **Drones** - The Ministry used drones for measuring, monitoring, reporting, verification, and decision-making throughout the year. Notable work done using drones includes monitoring, reporting and verifying the Taveuni Forest Reserve, particularly its boundary. Drones were also used for post-disaster support and damage assessment after Cyclone Yasa hit Vanua Levu in late 2020. This financial year, the Ministry took possession of the most robust drone purchased by the Ministry, the DJI Matrice 300. The drone was tested for flights, and the officers of the Ministry were taught its operations.
- **GIS & Mapping** - Using ArcGIS, the Ministry continued updating information as and when received from various sources to project visuals and web maps in 2D and 3D. The senior management team's web maps facilitate informed decision-making and are updated with actual time frequency. The planted area dashboard was updated as soon as the information was received and verified from the RDF unit.
- **Harvested Area Report (HAR)** - A total of 1,241.75 hectares was reported as harvested for forest produce. Submission of harvested

Strategic Priority 2: Enhance sustainable forest management (SFM) frameworks and implementation of SFM practices

- **Forest Cover and Forest Change Analysis** - The change analysis is done by leveraging artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms on Landsat Satellite Imagery. The forest statistics figures are for lowland rainforest, upland rainforest, and cloud forests. The islands of Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, and Taveuni altogether cover more than 92% of Fiji's total land area. The total forest area for 2020 in Fiji is approximately 1.1 million hectares. This figure includes mangroves, plantation forests, and native forests.
- **Drones** - The Ministry has 4 drones to assist in its operations. Due to COVID-19, the use of drones for operations was halted in 2021. However, some drone imageries were acquired throughout the year to assist in planning. Drones proved to be very useful in covering large areas for assessment and monitoring, capturing detailed information for planning and decision-making.
- **Harvested Area Report (HAR)** - A total of 1,410.58 hectares was reported as harvested for forest produce.
- **National Forest Inventory** - The Ministry is mandated to carry out the National Forest Inventory (NFI) in Fiji every decade. The design and methodology for the NFI 2021/2022 were also developed and officially launched on 27 January 2021 by the Permanent Secretary for Forestry. Training for the NFI field assessment team was conducted in February 2021 before the actual field work began. In June 2021, with the increasing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent national lockdown, the field work was halted, and the teams were redeployed to assist in the national COVID-19 safety and community assistance operations. The field work



	<p>area reports from the operations divisions is critical as this is used for forest reference level reporting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory - The national Climate Change Bill recognises and emphasises the need to ensure Measuring, Reporting and Verifying GHG emissions of all IPCC3 sectors are conducted to meet Fiji's reporting obligations under UNFCCC. To undertake this work, the Ministry of Forestry seconded a Forestry Officer (GIS) to the Ministry of Economy for 3 months, from 05th October 2020 to 04th January 2021.• Forest Reserves and Nature Reserves - The nature and forest reserves boundary maintenance is one of two significant outputs for the Parks and Reserves unit in ensuring clear demarcation of reserve boundaries where there are lease arrangements with the Government. It includes marking all forest and nature reserve boundaries within the listed categories. This year, three reserves, namely Ravilevu, Taveuni and Colo-i- were attended to due to encroachment complaints. Drones were also used to assess these reserves and ascertain the extent of encroachment. A series of consultations and awareness was carried out for Land Owning Units that were practising unsustainable farming practices and encroaching into reserve areas.• Colo-i-Suva Forest Park - Home to 30 bird species, of which 17 are endemic, the Colo-i-Suva forest park is located within the Colo-i-Suva forest reserve owned by three mataqali lands of Kalabu village. This financial year, a total of 24,807 visitors visited the Park, of which 24,789 were locals, and 18 were from overseas, generating a total income of \$22,264.50. The number of visitors declined by 30% compared to the previous financial year due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.• Upgrading of CIS forest park - The following activities were carried out under the upgrading Project:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Rock lining for the second upper pool;	<p>recommenced in February 2022. In March 2022, Unique Forests (Germany), a consultancy company was commissioned to design and execute the NFI. They were in the country for 2-weeks in June and conducted a quality assessment and refresher training for the NFI team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results of Field Assessment - The NFI design (sampling distribution) and methodology have set the total number of distributed plots at 1,133. Each plot consists of 5 subplots in one sampling unit. Only plots that fall within "closed" forests will be assessed, and from which field samples are collected. The distribution of the assessable plots are tabulated below. As of 31 July, the total plots assessed is 530 or 53% completion.• Environment Management - For this financial year, a total of 2 EIAs and nine EMPs were vetted and submitted to DOE. The Unit also developed SOPs and information booklets relating to EIA processes, reviewed CITES scheduled species, environmental laws, and regulations relevant to the forestry sector to be used as references for Ministry staff.• Forest Governance Development - Forest governance is a newly established function in the FRAC division that provides support for the development of proposals, policies, strategies and governance on permanent forest estates, sustainable forest management, high conservation value forests, forest certification and sustainable forest financing to ensure the sustainable management of forests in Fiji.• Forest Certification - A forest certification workshop was conducted in which a Forest Management and Certification Steering Committee was established. However, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has yet to endorse this. The Ministry worked on assisting the Fiji Hardwood Corporation Limited (FHCL) with its certification, which included meetings,
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Installation of drop-down blinds at the Kubuloa Bure (upper pool car park bure); ▪ Installation of solar-powered security light at the upper pool car park; ▪ Installation of solar lighting and inverter system at the Kubuloa Bure and Ablution Block; ▪ Planting of vetiver grass for stabilisation of slope; and Construction of boardwalk. • Law Enforcement – Licensing, Monitoring & Compliance - Right licenses issued - 74 Right Licenses (RL) were issued during this financial year. • Harvesting Operations - A total log volume of 760,817.0m³ was produced this financial year, an increase of 309,553m³ (68.6%) compared to the previous financial year. • Sawmill Operations - A total of 42 licensed sawmills were operating, comprising 21 static and 21 portable sawmills. The Northern Division was issued with 15 licenses, Central Division with 12 licenses and Western Division with 14 licenses. These sawmills processed total log volume of 148,866.85m³, producing 72,722.09m³ of sawn timber, meaning an average sawn timber recovery of 49%. Pine was the most utilised species, which comprised 75% of the total log input, followed by mahogany and raintree, comprising 14% and 7%, respectively. • Veneer mill Production - A total of 13,717.225m³ of logs were processed, producing a total veneer volume of 7,653.647m³ and achieving an average recovery of 56%. There are only two manufacturers, Valebasoga Tropikboards and Long Investment, based in Vanua Levu. The top five species processed into veneer were; kaudamu (<i>Myristica</i> spp.), pine (<i>Pinus caribaea</i>), vusavusa (<i>Gonystylus punctatus</i>), mahogany (<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>) and kauvula (<i>Endospermum macrophyllum</i>) with a collective volume of 9,125.263 m³, which comprised 66% of the total volume that 	<p>a documentation review and a one-week workshop. A FHCL Forest Certification Gap Analysis and Roadmap Report was developed and published as an outcome of this work which was also supported by WWF and USP. The report and roadmap serve as a guide towards FHCL's attaining certification status by 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Reserves and Nature Reserves - The maintenance of nature and forest reserves boundaries is one of two significant outputs for the Parks and Reserves unit in ensuring clear demarcation of reserve boundaries where there are lease arrangements with the government. It includes the marking of all forest and nature reserves boundaries that fall within the listed categories. For this financial year, the following activities were undertaken where reserves were concerned: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marking and Maintenance of Colo-i-Suva (CIS) Forest Reserve. 2. Reconnaissance exercise was carried out for the Tomaniivi Nature Reserve and Wabu Forest Reserve. • Colo-i-Suva Forest Park - Home to 30 bird species, of which 17 are endemic, the Colo-i-Suva Forest Park is located within the Colo-i-Suva forest reserve owned by three mataqali (Tuirara, Matanikorovatu, Naulukarowa) lands of Kalabu village. This financial year, the park was reopened in October 2021 after being closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 31,269 visitors visited the Park, of which 1,769 were international tourists and 29,500 were local. The total number of visitors showed an increase of 7,496 (31.5%) when compared to the previous financial year. A total revenue of \$35,406.50 was generated from the collection of park fees. • Upgrading of Colo-i-Suva Forest Park project - The following activities were carried out under the upgrading project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintenance of the swimming pool,
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	<p>was processed. Mahogany (<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>) and pine (<i>Pinus caribaea</i>), the two major plantation species, collectively contributed a volume of 3,957.876m³, comprising 29% of the total volume processed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post & Pole Production - A total of 3,934.920m³ of pine (<i>Pinus caribaea</i>) Roundwood were processed, producing a total volume of 3,085.330m³ of posts and poles with an average recovery of 78% (Table 20). Long investment produced 34% of the total volume produced, followed by Valebasoga and Tropik Woods at 26% and 17%, respectively.• Treatment Plant Operations - A total of 17 timber treatment plants out of the 28 that exist in Fiji were licensed. The total treated volume was 39,968.254m³ of which 25,944.531m³ (65%) were treated in the Western Division mainly due to the demand for pine in the domestic markets as well as the opening up of new exporting destinations within the Pacific region; 10,135.166m³(24%) were treated in the Northern Division and the Central Division recording the least volume at 3,888.557m³(11%) due to difficulties faced by companies with Native License.• Quality Control - Quality control was carried out through the analyses of charge sheets and timber samples collected from all the treatment plants every month. Charge sheets were validated, and the results were recorded. Timber samples were analysed at the laboratory in Nasinu on a “user-pay” basis, and reports were sent to plant operators confirming the results of the analyses. The total number of treated timber samples analysed during the year was 1,586, with 1,497 samples passing the analysis and penetration tests, an overall pass rate of 94%. Almost 70% of the samples analysed were H3 treated, indicating that most treatment plants treated timber for hazard level 3 applications.• Monitoring of forest harvesting operations (MCS Project) - With an annual budget of \$80,000, the main objective of the MCS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Maintenance of tracks from the upper pool to the lower pool,▪ Construction of boardwalk,▪ Replacement of hand railings,▪ Upgrade of bure, changing room and benches at the lower pool, and▪ Construction of a water catchment facility near the washrooms at the park. <p>Law Enforcement – Licensing, Monitoring & Compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Right licenses issued - A total of 109 Right Licenses (RL) were issued.• Harvesting Operations - A total log volume of 545,208m³ was produced this financial year, which is a decline of 215,609m³ (28.3%) when compared to the previous financial year. Of this total volume of 545,208 cubic meters, Pine constitutes 85.4%, Mahogany 8.3% and indigenous species 6.3%.• Say No to Illegal Logging Pledge - The Northern Division started the above initiative which was launched by the Permanent Secretary of Forestry on 11 February 2022 with the objective of curbing illegal logging through community and public awareness in collaboration with the Fiji Police Force and forest owning communities. By the end of the financial year, 324 pledges were received and recorded, including farmers, private organisations, government officials, logging companies and land-owning units.• Sawmill Operations - A total of 43 licensed sawmills were operating, comprising of 23 static and 20 portable sawmills. The Northern division was issued with 17 sawmill licenses, the Central division with 15 and the Western division with 11. These sawmills processed a total log volume of
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	<p>project is to ensure that all commercial forest harvesting operations are in compliance with Fiji's Forest Harvesting Code of Practice (FFHCOP) which enables the sustainable utilisation and management of Fiji's forests. Evaluations are conducted for field operations and on harvesting machines' conditions and standards. A few trainings were also conducted for field officers. The overall compliance rate for this financial year stood at 86.2%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sawmill Monitoring - The purpose of the monitoring was to ensure best practice and compliance with the conditions of a sawmill license and the Forest (sawmill) Regulations 1968. An inspection checklist was designed to monitor the sawmill performances to achieve efficiency and effectiveness of sawmill operations and better utilisation of resources. The monitoring results of the monitoring log yard, housekeeping, machine standard and conditions, health and safety of workers (PPE), and validation of log input and sawn output data were recorded in the monitoring forms. The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the monitoring work as travel restrictions were imposed.• Reforestation and Afforestation - 30MT15Y Initiative - a total of 5,473,383 seedlings were planted.• Research and Development - Silviculture Research - Seed Collection, Processing & Sowing for Seedling Production - The targeted seed production volume was not achieved as most tree seed stands were destroyed during TC Yasa and TC Ana. In addition, movement restrictions were in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which hindered the seed collection programme, and the majority of the research staff had been involved in the COVID-19 operation with the Ministry of Health.• Allometric Model and Biomass calculation - A crucial step in climate change mitigation is quantifying the forest's aboveground biomass and carbon storage by applying Allometric equations. The primary activities for this financial year are to engage a consultant,	<p>138,488.67m³, producing 65,628.910m³ of sawn timber, meaning an average sawn timber recovery of 47%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Veneer mill Production - A total of 8,904.04m³ of logs were processed, producing a total veneer volume of 4,459.18m³ and achieving an average recovery of 50%. This veneer production was captured from Valebasoga Tropik Board in Labasa and Long Investment in Savusavu. The Ply mills were not in full operation due to lack of resources and EIA issues from the Department of Environment which ceased most of the logging operations.• Treatment Plant Operations - A total of 19 timber treatment plants out of the 28 that exist in Fiji were licensed.• Quality Control - Quality control was carried out through the monthly analysis of charge sheets and timber samples collected from all the treatment plants. Charge sheets were validated, and the results were recorded. Timber samples were analysed at the laboratory in Nasinu on a "user-pay" basis, and reports were sent to plant operators confirming the results of the analysis. The total number of treated timber samples analysed during the year was 2,511, with 1,357 samples passing the analysis and penetration tests, an overall pass rate of 54%. <p>Monitoring, Compliance, Surveillance (MCS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring of forest harvesting operations (MCS Project) - With an annual budget of \$80,000, the main objective of the MCS project is to ensure that all commercial forest harvesting operations comply with the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice (FFHCOP), which enables the sustainable utilisation and management of Fiji's forests. Monitoring and evaluations are conducted for field operations and on the condition and standards of harvesting machines. Training
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	<p>procure specialised equipment and proceed with data collection and analysis of selected tree species in the different geographical conditions. Furthermore, the COVID-19 restrictions caused a delay in all planned activities, from training to the execution of the fieldwork scheduled for implementation within 3 months. With support from the REDD+ unit, a consultant was engaged to provide technical advice for the team and a Field Guide on the “Allometric Biomass Equation of Terrestrial Forest of Fiji”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diameter Limit Table (DLT) Guideline - A draft copy of the DLT implementation guideline has been drafted. The DLT implementation guideline aims to provide direction to the Ministry of Forestry staff and other relevant stakeholders, i.e. logging contractors and land owners, on the standard logging practice in accordance with the Ministry of Forestry’s Harvesting Code for native tree species and its corresponding Diameter Limit.• Forest Health - Forest Health is concerned with insects that affect the forest and forest products, and its scope of research is to survey, collect and rear timber-infesting insects, to liaise with timber inspectors and quarantine officers to import timber products and periodical trapping at ports of entry, plantations and nursery. A draft copy of the Incursion and Response Plan on Forest Pests and Diseases was drafted and submitted to the relevant organisations for their feedback before submission to the management for review and endorsement.• Tree Improvement - The objective is to identify, thin and develop superior stands to supply quality seeds for reforestation. Assessments were conducted for the following trial plots, and reports were compiled accordingly:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Yavuna Nausori Highlands – Sandalwood & mixed species▪ Drasa Alternative Species Trial – Eucalyptus, Pine & Acacia▪ Vaqia, Ba – mixed species	<p>sessions were also conducted for field officers. The overall compliance rate for this financial year stood at 71.0%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improvement Notices and Corrective Measures – the measures were imposed in accordance with the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code and Forest Act 1992 to avoid further breach of the license conditions and to act as a deterrent to the logging contractors. A total of 23 fines were imposed on the offenders from the 3 divisions during the monitoring operation.• Sawmill Monitoring - The monitoring of sawmills was conducted on a quarterly basis, and its main purpose was to ensure that best practices were applied and that licensing conditions were met in line with the Sawmill Policy and Forest (Sawmills) Regulations 1968. An inspection checklist was designed to monitor the sawmill performances with the aim of achieving efficiency and effectiveness of sawmill operations and better utilisation of resources.• 30MT15Y Initiative -, a total of 5,488,756 seedlings were planted within a total area of 5,300ha. <p>Research and Development - Silviculture Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seed Technology - A total of 16 mother trees were identified as seed sources after assessing the tree form, canopy cover and health status. The research team continued to collect seeds for their research purposes and assisted Divisions when required. 80kg of mahogany (<i>swietenia macrophylla</i>) seeds were sold at \$8,000 to Totoka Islands, a private company aiming to develop integrated agro-forestry operations in remote areas. Another 40 kg of mahogany seeds were distributed to the 3 operation Divisions to assist in the reforestation programme.• Allometric Model and Biomass calculation - The Allometric model and Biomass calculation is a joint collaboration
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) Guideline - An MRV Guideline was developed to assist the Reforestation of Degraded Forest project and the 30 million tree in 15 years initiative to capture the quality of work delivered by the Ministry. The draft MRV Guideline was submitted to the management team for review and endorsement and will be trialled out in the 2021-2022 fiscal years. The MRV Guideline for traceability starts from the seed collection – field planting survival or mortality rate.• Collaboration with Partners - Through the Silviculture research divisions, the Ministry collaborated with the following organisations to carry out certain activities.<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Seed Technology with SPC, FAO and Mamanuca Environment Society<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Seed Germination Training – 8/8/20 -12/8/20b. Seed Phenology, Tree Selection and Seed Stand Establishment Training – 12/10/20 -16/10/20c. Basic Tree Climbing Training – 9/11/20 – 13/11/20d. DLT and Seed Collection Training -23/11 – 27/11/20e. Joint seed collection activity with FAO & MES in the Mamanuca and Hands-on training on Seed germination – 24/02/21 -26/02/212. Natural Forest team with USP on the Eradication of Invasive Species (African Tulip) from Waindina Catchment at Naitasiri.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. The coring and drilling method was adopted as it is the most sustainable and efficient technique to implement to eradicate larger African Tulip trees. The application of this method showed the best results of interest in a short time frame. Contrastingly, herbicide on the stump; bark removal; and hack and squirt work best at killing younger trees.• National Tree Seed Center - With a budget allocation of \$50,000, specialised equipment was procured for developing a tree seed	<p>between the Research Division and the REDD+ Unit. The essential primary activities planned for this financial year were to engage a consultant, procure specialised equipment and proceed with data collection and analysis of selected tree species in the different geographical conditions. However, the COVID-19 restrictions caused a delay in all planned activities, from training to the execution of the fieldwork, planned for 3 months. The team was able to re-strategise upon the lifting of restrictions whereby the field work and sample analysis are currently ongoing and will be completed in the next financial year with the ultimate aim to cover all aspects of the SOP and Terrestrial Field Guide before the end of the World Bank Grant in November 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diameter Limit Table (DLT) Guideline - The DLT implementation guideline aims to provide direction to the Ministry of Forestry staff and other, relevant stakeholders, i.e., logging contractors and landowners, on the standard logging practice as per the Ministry of Forestry's Harvesting Code for native tree species and its corresponding Diameter Limit. A copy of the DLT implementation guideline was developed and reviewed with the Senior Executive team. The team is currently drafting the cabinet paper for the endorsement of the guideline by Cabinet members.• Bamboo Research & Development - To develop and enhance the bamboo industry in Fiji, the research team conducted applied research on this species with assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture. The team collected samples from the growing bamboo clumps at the Ministry of Agriculture research station in Naduruloulou and transported the clumps to the forest research station for propagation and growth studies. The team was able to propagate 16 bamboo vegetatively using the following four treatments;
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	<p>centre in Colo-i-Suva. For example, Walk-in cool room, display cooler, Deep Freezer, storage container and Shelves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sandalwood Project - With a budget allocation of \$80,000, the team conducted the following activities: Sandalwood Inventory Data Analysis & Registration of New Farmers, Sandalwood Market Study – Consultation for Sandalwood Plant Distillery Establishment Locally (Initiation Phase), Sandalwood Tree Assessment, Pests & Diseases Survey and Project Monitoring. <p>Research and Development – Timber Utilisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research on lesser-known species - A project funding of \$150,000 was provided for applied research studies on the properties, and potential uses of lesser-known species (LKS) continued during the financial year with work completed on 26 out of the 31 species initially identified in Nakavu. These species were assessed for their natural durability using stakes exposed in graveyards at Nasinu (11 species), Korotari (9 species) and in Drasa (6 species).• Site selection for LKS extraction<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site 1: Nabukelevu, Serua - The research process for the LKS project consists of tree identification, verification and marking of the selected trees for log and density discs' extraction. Because of the damage to the access bridge at Nakavu, our research team travelled to Nabukelevu during the first Quarter. To identify and mark the LKS to be studied. The team was made up of the research team at TUD, a tree spotter from FRAC and a Navua Extension Officer who participated in the identification of trees via phenological characteristics. A total of 27 individual trees, comprising eight species, were identified and marked during the 3 days the team spent in Nabukelevu. The eight species selected included bau, bulu, dalovoci, damabi, kaunigai, kuluva, maqo ni veikau and tomanu, most of which were located within logging coupe for the current logging contractors at Nabukelevu.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tree Improvement - Assessments were conducted for the following trial plots, and reports were compiled accordingly:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Yavuna Nausori Highlands – Sandalwood & mixed species,▪ Drasa Alternative Species Trial – Eucalyptus, Pine & Acacia,▪ Vaqia, Ba – mixed species.• Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) Guideline - An MRV Guideline was developed in 2020-2021FY to capture the quality of work delivered by the Ministry in the implementation of the Reforestation of Degraded Forest project and the 30 million trees in 15 years initiative to capture the quality of work delivered by the Ministry. The MRV Guideline for traceability starts from the seed collection to field planting survival or mortality rate. This year, the guideline was successfully trialled out in the daily operations of the Divisions, and this will ensure that proper records are maintained from seed collection, mapping of seed stands or mother trees and collection of seed survey data for traceability purposes.• Establishment of Gene Conservation Areas & Clonal Seed Orchard - To establish a gene conservation area and clonal seed orchard, the research and the forest resource assessment team collaborated in identifying a site and conducting a joint inspection. Draunibota and Labiko Nature Reserves were identified as the most suitable site for setting up the seed orchard, because they are nature reserves isolated from the mainland and easily monitored. For this financial year the team was able to conduct a vulnerability assessment at Draunibota. <p>Forest Health Surveillance & Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forest Health - the forest health team focussed on re-establishing the sentinel plants at the Suva Kings wharf to detect pests and diseases that come through ships and
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site 2: Nakavu, Namosi - Due to the inability to extract logs from Nabukelevu, the research team had to pursue other options and, together with staff from the Navua Extension Office, was able to identify and mark 3 LKS, namely dalovoci, kaunigai and vutukana (with at least 5 trees per species; $\geq 35\text{cm}$ DBH) from the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Research Plot in Nakavu. Unfortunately, these trees were not felled due to the project fund spending restrictions • Natural Durability Research Trials - the Drasa service trial was established with graveyard stakes and weatherboard installed. The purpose of the graveyard trials is to assess the natural durability class of each of the species studied. For the weatherboards, the objective is to evaluate the species' performance under final and undercoat painting conditions and compare untreated boards with those treated at H3 hazard level. Korotari graveyard trial site and the Division's nursery were also fenced during the quarterly assessments of the trial sites. • Drasa Graveyard Trial (Lautoka) - The Drasa graveyard trial site is located in Lautoka, on land given by the Fiji Pine Group of Companies. The trial site was established in the 2nd Quarter, where 120 stakes (6 species) and 3 weatherboards were installed. The six species for the natural durability stakes are bausa, kaunigai, kuluva, sole, maqo ni veikau, and marasa. For the weatherboards, the three species tested included dalovoci, kaunigai and bausa. • Korotari Graveyard Service Trial - The trial site was established during the last fiscal year (2019-2020). Fencing, trial assessments and maintenance continued into the current fiscal year (2020-2021). From the previous evaluation undertaken during the 3rd Quarter (2020 – 2021), results indicated that all bausa, tomanu, kaunigai, kuluva and bulu graveyard stakes were still sound. In comparison, 70%, 60% and 50%, respectively, for damabi, maqo, 	<p>shipments through our major Ports of Entry. They need to be intercepted at Ports and stopped from spreading to our forests. The four main species of interest setup at the wharf as sentinel plants were mahogany (<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>), teak (<i>Tectonia grandis</i>), dakua (<i>Agathis vitiensis</i>) and <i>Flindersia</i> (<i>Flindersia australis</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest health assessment was also conducted at the Uluibeka trial plot using the timber bait collection. The primary purpose of this is to study the existence of <i>Aquillaria</i> species (agarwood) in the trial plot and to understand the species' common pests if there are any. • Collaboration with Partners - Through its research divisions, the Ministry collaborated with the following organisations to carry out certain activities. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nature Fiji Mareqeti Viti (NFMV) – collaborated on restoring two endemic species, i.e. Yanita/Ma and Sago Palm. 2. Fiji Pine Limited (FPL) – collaboration on seed technology and nursery management. FPL also accommodated 2 research officers who took part in study tours and worked with them to develop an SOP for pine seed processing. 3. The seed technology team of the Ministry assisted Fiji Hardwood Corporation Limited (FHCL) in terms of providing technical support and assistance in areas of mahogany seed processing, quality control test and working in collaboration with the Pacific Community (SPC) on its storage. • Sandalwood Project - With a budget allocation of \$40,000, a reduction of 50% when compared to the previous year, the project team managed to conduct the following activities. <p>Research and Development – Timber & Non-Timber Utilisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on lesser-known species -The Research on Wood and Non-wood Project received a budget allocation of
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	<p>sole and vutukana graveyard stakes had failed in ground contact. Assessment of weatherboards showed that with the exception of bausa, stains were detected on the untreated control sections for kaunigai, kuluva and damabi. There was also some light mould growth on the treated sides of kaunigai, kuluva and damabi weatherboards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasinu Graveyard Trial - The Nasinu trials were established in 2019 and now consist of 11 species (including bausa, baumika, bulu, damabi, dalovoci, dulewa, kaunigai, kuluva, maqo ni veikau, tomanu, sole and vutukana) as graveyard stakes for natural durability assessments and five species for weatherboards (baumika, dulewa, kaunigai, kuluva and vutukana) comparing performances by species, painting and treatment. Dalovoci and sole are two species that have already failed in ground contact (<25% of the stakes remaining). The maintenance and quarterly assessments of the Nasinu trial site are ongoing activities at Timber Utilisation Division that will continue into the 2021 – 2022 fiscal year. <p>Strategic Priority 3: Capacity Building (Ministry & Stakeholders)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry Technical Training - The impact of Tropical Cyclone Yasa late in 2020 hampered FTC's achievement of its training targets set for 2020 – 2021 as staff were engaged in DISMAC Operations, clearing main access roads, farm roads and villages in the Central and Northern Divisions of the country from the debris that was left behind after the onslaught of the Tropical Cyclone. In addition, the Forestry Training Centre was also used as a COVID-19 Community Isolation Facility from April 2020 until now. Staff were working from home, and some were engaged in COVID-19 operations near their homes and villages. • Corporate Training - A total of 113 staff were trained, all conducted locally due to international travel restrictions. Of the 	<p>\$75,000 to continue applied research studies on the properties and potential uses of 31 lesser-known species (LKS) identified from Nakavu. These species were assessed on a quarterly basis for their natural durability using stakes exposed in graveyards at Nasinu (11 species), Korotari (9 species) and in Drasa (6 species). Other activities undertaken this financial year under this Project include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compilation of R&D 10 Years report, 2. Maintenance and assessments of the three service trial sites in Drasa, Korotari & Nasinu, 3. Density analyses of Kaunigai, Vutukana, Dalovoci and Canarium sp., 4. Continuous calorific analyses in collaboration with Agriculture Research –Koronivia, and 5. Product Development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coconut and other non-traditional forest resources for the manufacture of Engineered Wood Products (ACIAR) - Reviewing the "Research & Development (R&D) Capacity" of the Ministry was necessary to strengthen collaboration with established networks and identify opportunities to collaborate with new members not previously engaged during the project commencement. <p>Strategic Priority 3: Capacity Building (Ministry & Stakeholders)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Skills Training - Technical skills training conducted, Of the 667 trained, 656 (98.4%) were males, and 11 (1.6%) were females. About 35 participants out of the 667 trained were able to secure work in New Zealand. • Forest Harvesting Training -The Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice requires that all supervisors, chainsaw and machinery operators working in forestry operations to be trained and certified in the principles of the code as part of their licensing process. A total of 3 training activities were completed which
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	<p>113 staff trained, 43 (38.1%) were females, and 70 (61.9%) were males.</p> <p>Strategic Priority 4: Stewardship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Facilitation - The Ministry launched its Export and Import Online licensing system. It was a timely achievement during a challenging period, allowing traders to access the online systems from their homes without visiting the forestry office. This financial year export revenue reached a total amount of \$97.3 million, which is an increase of \$47.3 million (94.6%). • Exports - From the \$97.3 million export revenue, pine chips contributed the most with a total value of \$65.3 million (67%), followed by sawn timber at \$20.7 million (21%), Slabs at \$6.1 million (6%), Decking at \$2.99 million (3%) and Plywood at \$1.0 million (1%). The major export destinations for 2020-2021FY are China at \$44.6 million, Japan at \$23.2 million, Hong Kong at \$10.9 million, United States of America at \$8.1 million, Dominican Republic at \$2.4 million and Others totalling to \$8.1 million. • Import - A total of 178 import permits were issued, with a total value of FJ\$17.9 million. Major imported products include Plywood, plyboard, sawn timber and hardboard. The major import destinations for 2020-2021FY are China at 58%, Australia 14%, Bahrain 12%, Thailand 7%, New Zealand 4% and others 5%. • Product Development - 4 products were developed from the use of lesser-known species. These products include office furniture, foldable benches, ironing shelves/chair, and desks. <p>Climate change adaptation & mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emission Reduction Programme (ERP) - Following the acceptance of Fiji's Emission Reduction Programme Document (ERPD) in July 2019, the key activities were undertaken by the REDD+ team of the Ministry are on page 49 of the annual report. 	<p>included skills tests, I.D. card processing and harvesting supervision. Harvesting Supervision Training Module 1 was conducted in Lautoka for 27 participants from various harvesting contractor companies in the west. A total of 211 operators were assessed and deemed competent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Silviculture Training -The first Basic Silviculture training was conducted in Nabukadra, Nakorotubu, and Ra for 39 course participants from the villages of the district of Kavula and a few villages from the Nakorotubu district. • Forest Warden Training - One of the key implementing priorities in the National Forest Policy is the need to "Build capacity and to support forest owners in sustainably managing their forests" through the appointment of 'forest wardens to assist in the policing of forest laws.' The forest policy also mandated the ministry to train resource owners on the environmental requirements stipulated in the management and harvesting licenses and, where possible, engage these trained resource owners in monitoring environmental standards. With this Policy as a guide, the ministry, through the Forestry Training Centre, had trained Forest Wardens and continued to facilitate refresher training in the three divisions in this financial year. • Nursery Establishment & Management Training - A total of 3 nursery establishment and management trainings were conducted this year with a total of 102 participates. • Timber Industry Training - The Timber Industry Training Centre provides training for timber processing facilities and resource owners. A total of 8 training was provided with 178 participates. • Corporate Training - 143 staff participated in regional training in 2021-2022. The number of staff trained during the financial year 2021-2022 increased as a result of uplifting the COVID-19
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- **US Forest Service Climate Fellow Support to Ministry of Forestry**

- Climate Fellows is a U.S. Government technical cooperation program that promotes sustainable land use through targeted technical assistance to selected country partners. The program places technical experts in host country government ministries to address priority technical needs related to national greenhouse gas inventories, forest management, and/or forest monitoring. These experts work directly with host country counterparts to provide customized, long-term technical assistance to strengthen national capacities with respect to forest inventory; Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV); and other systems for tracking and reporting changes in forest, agricultural, and other lands. In April 2021, the US Forest Service placed a Climate Fellow, Dr. Randy Hamilton, within the Ministry of Forestry to provide technical assistance to the Ministry for at least 2 years. Dr. Hamilton has expertise in remote sensing and forest monitoring. Following discussions with Ministry leadership prior to and after his arrival, two key priority areas were identified for Dr. Hamilton's assistance:

- Support the REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) program with the monitoring aspects of the Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) process
- Support the development of a national, multi-purpose forest and land monitoring system that will satisfy REDD+ and greenhouse gas reporting, as well as other information needs

Global, Regional & National Partnership

- **International Climate Initiative (IKI) partnership between FAO and the Ministry** - The Project Document for the International Climate Initiative on Forest Landscape Restoration in the Yasawa and Mamanuca islands was approved. This Initiative resulted from the Paris Agreement, an international treaty on climate change adopted in 2015, and covers climate change mitigation,

restrictions. Nine staff attended overseas training after the COVID-19 travel restrictions were uplifted in May 2022.

Strategic Priority 4: Stewardship

- **Trade Facilitation** - The launch of the Export and Import Online licensing system last financial year made trading much more efficient and effective for our stakeholders, who can apply for a permit from any location without having to visit the office, especially when the second COVID-19 wave impacted the nation. This financial year, the export revenue reached a total of \$101.2 million, an increase of \$3.9 million (4.0%) from last financial year.
- **Exports** - From the \$101.2 million export revenue, pine chips contributed the most with a total value of \$50.1 million (50%), followed by sawn timber at \$36.2 million (36%), Slabs at \$8.9 million (9%) and Decking at \$3.5 million (3%). The major export destinations for 2021-2022FY are China at \$43.2 million, Japan at \$24.9 million, the USA at \$16.0 million, the Dominican Republic at \$4.8 million, Australia at \$3.5 million and Others totalling \$8.7 million.
- **Import** - the total import value was FJ\$12.0 million, a decline of \$5.9 million (33.0%) when compared to the previous period. Major imported products include plywood, particle board, hard board, laminated board and sawn timber.
- **Wood Utilisation Project** - The following activities were undertaken under the Wood Utilisation project. Activities under this project were: Consultation with GM FHCL and field visit, Supply of mahogany logs, Manufacture of 22 double bunks, Utilisation of recovered timber for show room double wall, Manufacture of showroom items, International Day of Forest, Open Week Show and Engagement and training of the Vugalei cottage industry.



	<p>adaptation and finance. The Project targets to restore dry forests in the Mamanuca and Yasawa group of islands and also assist communities with alternative livelihood sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MOU with Fiji Police Force - The Ministry signed an MOU with the Fiji Police Force to establish a foundation for systematically sharing information between the two organisations. It will also develop synergies to improve Fiji's overall management of our forests, including reducing illegal operations.• MOU with Fiji Revenue and Custom Services - The Ministry signed an MOU with the Fiji Revenue and Customs Services to strengthen partnerships and information sharing for efficient administration of Government's revenue policies to support economic growth and improve tax compliance in the forestry sector.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MOU with Fiji Bureau of Statistics - The Ministry signed an MOU with the Fiji Bureau of Statistics to help capture accurate information relating to Fiji's forestry sector in a more systematic and structure approach. <p>Livelihood Assistance, Community development and Inter-agency collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing rehabilitation - The Ministry continued assisting communities who needed their homes rebuilt and repaired after the impacts of natural disasters. Portable sawmills were also delivered to affected communities and pine schemes to assist in the harvesting and processing timber for housing structures. In the Northern Division, the Bua province was the most affected during TC Yasa and TC Ana, especially for the Lekutu and Wainunu districts. A total of 169 houses were reported to be either completely or partially damaged in the North. By the end of the financial year, the Ministry produced 311 housing structures to assist affected communities in the Eastern and Northern Divisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forest Emissions Reduction Programme (ERP) - the following key activities were undertaken and achieved by the REDD+ team of the Ministry.<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The completion of the review of the 2011 REDD+ Policy;2. The development of the methodology for detecting forest degradation through remote-sensing and geographical information system (GIS) approaches;3. The compilation of the 2005/2006 national forest inventory report;4. The completion of the integration enhancement capabilities of the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS);5. The launching of the Emission Reduction Program (ER-Program) Awareness Campaign Outreach Tool Kit;6. The operationalizing of the Feedback, Grievance Redress Mechanism.7. A Safeguard Officer was identified from within the Ministry to be responsible for assessing the national level of compliance to the UNFCCC safeguards and compiling the national report (Annex 1-3 of the ER-Report for the 1st Monitoring Period).8. The development of district-level land use maps for the 20 identified ER-Program districts, which will be completed by December. To-date, 10 out of the 20 maps have been developed and endorsed for adoption by the Town and Country Planning.9. Development of the national forest inventory methodology and conduction of field assessment and collection of field samples for forest carbon calculations.• US Forest Service Climate Fellow Support to Ministry of Forestry - For this financial year, Dr Randy Hamilton (who joined the Ministry in April 2021 and has expertise in remote sensing and forest monitoring) continued to provide
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DISMAC Operations- This year, the impacts of a number of tropical cyclones saw the Ministry step up to support leading government agencies in clearing trees and debris, conducting damage assessments and distributing food and other relief rations to affected communities. • COVID-19 Response Support - The Ministry continued to support the Ministry of Health & Medical Services in terms of seconding staff to MHMS to contribute in various fields, providing vehicles and using the Forestry Training Center since April 2020 as a community isolation facility. About 60% of Ministry personnel and 60% of Ministry vehicles were deployed to provide these support services. <p>Strategic Priority 5: Forest Financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable financing for terrestrial protected areas - One of the long-term outputs under this strategic priority is establishing Forest Trust Funds. Intending to develop forest financing mechanisms, the Ministry commenced work this financial year on reviewing and assessing cost models of existing terrestrial protected areas such as the Sovi basin, Tomaniivi, Delaikoro, and Taveuni protected areas. <p>Strategic Priority 6: Organisation Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) - The Ministry has progressed well with implementing the Human Resource Information System (HRMIS) with a target of uploading all employee contracts and leave information by December 2020. Due to COVID-19 work disruptions, this was not achieved within the timeline. A total of 249 contracts were uploaded, and the leave status for all employees was updated in the system. The Employee Leave Portal, which allows for online leave application and approval, was operational this financial year for Ministry staff to utilise. Training will be carried out before the roll out to all divisions. In 2022, it is envisaged that the performance 	<p>technical assistance to the Ministry to support the REDD+ work and also support the development of a national, multi-purpose forest and land monitoring system that will satisfy REDD+ and greenhouse gas reporting, as well as other information needs.</p> <p>Global, Regional & National Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Climate Initiative (IKI) partnership between FAO and the Ministry- Following the signing of the Project Document for the International Climate Initiative on Forest Landscape Restoration in the Yasawa and Mamanuca islands on 17 February 2021, the Project was officially launched for implementation in the islands in December 2021. The Project aims to restore dry forests in the Mamanuca and Yasawa group of islands and also assist communities with alternative livelihood sources. The Ministry created two project positions to be based in the Yasawas and Mananucas and work closely with the communities and the two NGOs, Mamanuca Environment Society and Vinaka Fiji Yasawa Trust Foundation, to achieve the targeted project outputs. • Action Against Desertification (AAD) - This year marked the conclusion of the AAD project in Fiji, which FAO and the Ministry spearheaded. The AAD Project is an initiative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), [now referred to as the "Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States" (OACPS)] with the objective to restore drylands and degraded lands in Africa the Caribbean and the Pacific and to tackle the detrimental social, economic and environmental impacts of land degradation and desertification. Fiji was fortunate to be the only Pacific Island Country to participate in the AAD project. With a budget of \$1.6million, the following outputs were achieved:
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	<p>assessment module will be implemented so that employee performance assessments can be done online rather than on paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• HR Management - The Ministry had a staffing strength of 247 (92.86%) out of the 266 approved posts.• A breakdown of staffing - strength by gender shows that 69% of employees are males and 31% are females, with males being particularly predominant in GWE and project roles.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reforestation of 1,133 hectares of land and which contributed to Fiji's 30 Million Trees in 15 Years (30MT15Y) initiative;2. assisted with the setup of backyard gardens in rural schools and communities with the provision of training, farming tools and seeds;3. provided beehives and relevant harvesting and value-adding equipment, which have contributed to sustainable livelihood and revenue generation for communities, including women and youths;4. established 35 project sites across Fiji which have directly benefited about 3,360 Fijians and indirectly benefited up to 2940 more Fijians in 29 neighbouring sites;5. supported the Ministry's natural disaster rehabilitation programme by providing planting materials and gardening tools. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) - The ITTO Project continued to provide alternative livelihood support to the 6 Project sites in setting up Income-generating projects, including a piggery farm for the community of Naivakacau in Buretu together with an apiculture farm for the community of Vutia in Rewa. The Project ended this year, and the Ministry acknowledges the tremendous contribution of ITTO in Japan and the 6 communities of the Rewa delta for their support in project implementation.• GEF 5 Ridge to Reef (R2R) Project - Fiji's GEF 5 R2R project focuses on testing and enhancing integrated management of a series of forested watersheds to protect land, water, forest, and biodiversity resources, maintain carbon stock, and protect coastal mangrove and coral reef marine protected areas (MPA). In the western division, the Ba River catchment and the Tuva River catchment areas were selected, and in
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		<p>Northern Division, Tunuloa and Labasa catchment areas were selected. The R2R project reforestation component was co-managed by the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Forestry. Two internationally recognized NGOs, Conservation International (CI) & SPC, were the implementing partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ba catchment - The team with SPC conducted planting at the Ba Upper Catchment Areas from 2021 to July 2022. The allocated area was 270 hectares, both in the Upper and lower Catchment, and the team managed to reforest 254 hectares, with the remaining 16 hectares to be completed by the Ministry before the project period ends.• Tuva Catchment - Conservation International (CI) worked with the Ministry in reforesting the Tuva Catchment. The allocated area targeted to be reforested is 300 hectares, and the team has managed to reforest 216 hectares, with the remaining hectares to be completed by the Ministry and relevant stakeholders before the project period ends.• Tunuloa & Labasa Catchment - 90 hectares were targeted for the Tunuloa catchment, and 270 hectares for the Labasa catchment area. The Ministry worked with SPC and members of LOUs in the planting and conducting of survival assessments for the two selected sites. <p>Livelihood Assistance, Community development and Inter-agency collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing rehabilitation - This year the assistance was mainly in the Lomaiviti, Kadavu and Lau province. A total of 201 house structures were completed by the end of the financial year.• COVID-19 Response Support - The Ministry continued to support the Ministry of Health in terms of seconding staff to MHMS to contribute in various response services, including the provision of vehicles and using the Forestry Training Center since April 2020 as a community isolation facility.
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		Strategic Priority 5: Forest Financing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable financing for terrestrial protected areas - One of the long-term outputs under this strategic priority is establishing Forest Trust Funds. Work continued on reviewing and assessing cost models of existing terrestrial protected areas such as the Sovi basin, Tomaniivi, Delaikoro and Taveuni protected areas. Strategic Priority 6: Organisation Effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Establishment - The Ministry had a staffing strength of 233 (89.3%) out of the 261 approved posts. 	
Financial Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry received a total budget of \$15.7 million which was an increase of \$0.9 million (6.3%) compared to the 2019-2020 revised budget of \$14.8 million. The Ministry utilised \$13.9 million (88.5%) for the implementation of the Ministry's programmes and projects and achieved 83.0% of its deliverables in the Annual Operational Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry received a total budget of \$13.8 million, a decline of \$1.9 million (12.1%) when compared to the 2020-2021 financial year. The Ministry was able to utilise \$12.5 million (90.6%) to implement its programmes and projects and achieved 78.8% of its deliverables in the Annual Operational Plan. 	
Financial Position		2020-2021 (\$)	2021-2022 (\$)
	Total Revenue	363,871	468,483
	Total Expenditure	13,886,409	12,519,016
	Cost of Goods Manufactured transferred to Trading Account	6,746	6,091
	Gross Profit/(Loss) transferred to Profit and Loss statement	172,825	39,779
	Total Income	172,825	39,779
	Total Expenditure	25,360	-
	Net Profit/Loss	147,465	39,779
	Total Assets	1,478,112	-
	Total Liabilities	2,174,992	-
	Total Equity	(696,880)	-
Auditor's Opinion	Opinion Auditor has audited the financial statements of the Ministry of Forestry ('the Ministry') which comprises the Statement of Receipts	Opinion Auditor has audited the financial statements of the Ministry of Forestry ('the Ministry') which comprises the Statement of	



	<p>and Expenditure, Appropriation Statement, Statement of Losses, TMA Manufacturing Account, TMA Trading Account, TMA Profit and Loss Statement and TMA Balance Sheet for the financial year ended 31 July 2021, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.</p> <p>In auditor's opinion, the accompanying financial statements of the Ministry are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Financial Management Act 2004 and Finance Instructions 2010 and Finance (Amendment) Instructions 2016.</p>	<p>Receipts and Expenditure, Appropriation Statement, Statement of Losses, TMA Manufacturing Account, TMA Trading Account, TMA Profit and Loss Statement and TMA Balance Sheet for the financial year ended 31 July 2022, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.</p> <p>In auditor's opinion, the accompanying financial statements of the Ministry are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Financial Management Act 2004 and Finance Instructions 2010 and Finance (Amendment) Instructions 2016.</p>
Gender Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A breakdown of staffing - strength by gender shows that 69% of employees are males and 31% are females, with males being particularly predominant in GWE and project roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A breakdown of staffing - strength by gender shows that 69% of employees are males and 31% are females, with males being particularly predominant in GWE and project roles.

09 April 2023



Disclaimer

This Annual Report Summary was prepared to assist the Standing Committee on Natural Resources in its review of the Ministry of Forestry 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 Annual Report. This summary should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. Other sources and information should be consulted. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate, the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji will not accept any liability for any loss or damage which may be incurred by any person acting in reliance upon the information. The Parliament of the Republic of Fiji accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. For further information please email: Shrutkeertee Devi on email Shrutkeertee.devi@legislature.gov.fj



Annual Report Summary – Standing Committee on Natural Resources

Ministry of Forestry 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022 Annual Report

1.0 Introduction

This brief is provided to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources (“SC-NR” or “Committee”) as requested through its secretariat. This comparative analysis is a summary of some of the key issues in the Ministry of Forestry Annual Reports (“AR”) for the financial years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022. The summary is designed to assist Honourable Members of the Committee undertake their comparative and related analysis of the tribunal’s performance as discussed in the three ARs.

2.0 Review of the Ministry of Forestry Annual Report

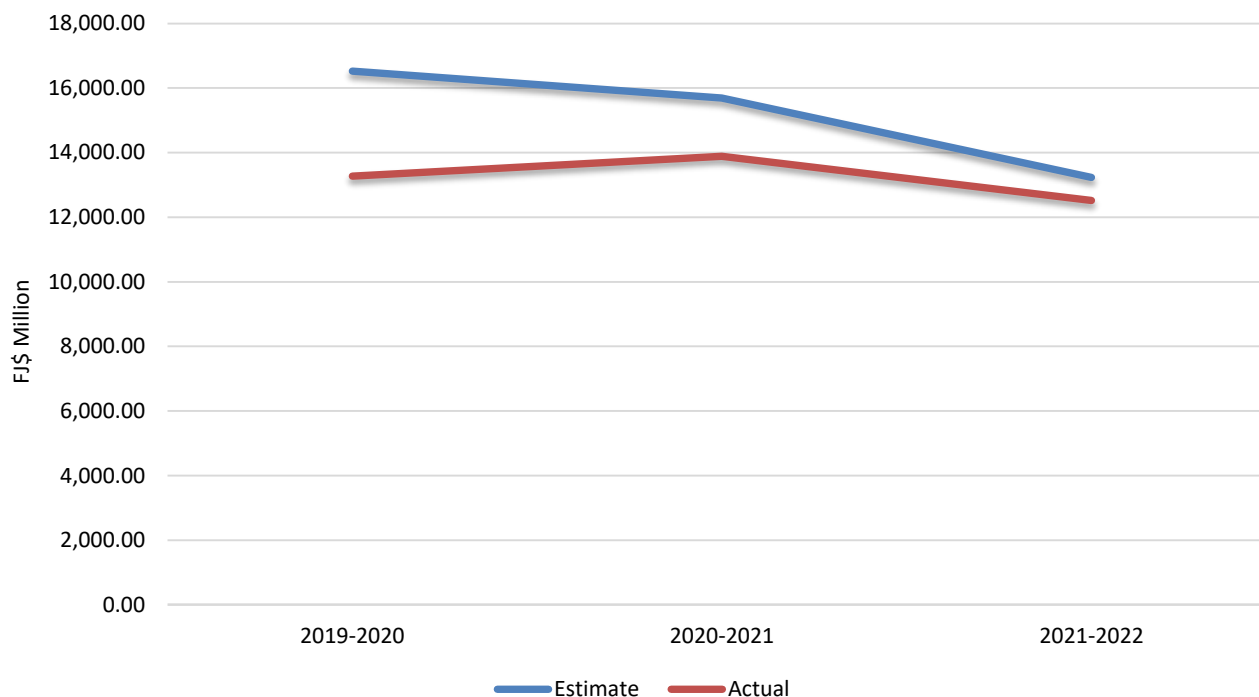
Activities	Ministry of Forestry 2019-2020 – 2021-2022 Annual Report Summary
Vision	Sustainable Forests, Our Future
Mission	To be a leader in sustainable forestry
Values	Responsible - We will discharge our duties with accountability. Resolute - We will discharge our duties with determination and be firm and fair in our decisions. Respectful - We will be sensitive to individual needs and the diversity of views. Resourceful - We will be practical, creative, effective, and efficient and maintain uncompromising integrity in our daily work. Reliable - We will do and deliver what we have committed and promised
Date Annual Report tabled in Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Ministry of Forestry 2019-2020 Annual report was tabled in Parliament on 1 September 2022• The Ministry of Forestry 2020-2021 Annual Report was tabled in Parliament on 17 February 2023• The Ministry of Forestry 2021-2022 Annual Report was tabled in Parliament on 15 September 2023
Acts/Legislation in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forest Decree 1992• Forest Fire Prevention Regulation• Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice 2013• Fees and Charges• Sawmill Regulation• Timber Preservative Regulation• Forest Guard Regulations• Climate Change Act 2021



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Endangered and Protected Species (Amendment) Act 2021• Native Land Trust Act 2012 (Amendment)• Biosecurity Act 2008• Environment Management Act (EMA) 2005• National Research Bill																		
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fiji Forests Policy 2007• Fiji REDD + Policy 2011• Forest Certification on Climate Change Policy 2012• Draft Energy Policy 2013• Fiji Rural & Land Use Policy 2005																		
Function	The Ministry of Forestry is responsible for the monitoring, surveillance, evaluation and control of all forest operations in compliance of the standard requirements of the Forest Decree 1992 and the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice (FFHCOP) 2013.																		
Analysis of the Ministry of Forestry 2019-2020 – 2021-2022 Annual Report																			
Budget Allocation	<p><u>Table 2.1: Ministry of Forestry Budget Allocation Data (Estimates vs Actuals) 2019-2020 – 2021-2022</u></p> <table><tr><th>FJ\$ Million</th><th>2019-2020</th><th>Revised 2019-2021</th><th>2020-2021</th><th>2021-2022</th><th>Revised 2021-2022</th></tr><tr><td>Estimate</td><td>16,522.70</td><td>14,802.00</td><td>15,694.20</td><td>13,230.40</td><td>13,825.80</td></tr><tr><td>Actual</td><td>13,269.50</td><td>n/a</td><td>13,886.40</td><td>12,519.00</td><td>n/a</td></tr></table> <p><u>Source:</u> Budget Estimates 2019-2020 – 2023-2024, Ministry of Finance; https://www.finance.gov.fj/budget-resources/</p> <p><u>Graph 2.1: Ministry of Forestry Budget Trend (Estimates vs Actuals) 2019-2020 – 2021-2022</u></p>	FJ\$ Million	2019-2020	Revised 2019-2021	2020-2021	2021-2022	Revised 2021-2022	Estimate	16,522.70	14,802.00	15,694.20	13,230.40	13,825.80	Actual	13,269.50	n/a	13,886.40	12,519.00	n/a
FJ\$ Million	2019-2020	Revised 2019-2021	2020-2021	2021-2022	Revised 2021-2022														
Estimate	16,522.70	14,802.00	15,694.20	13,230.40	13,825.80														
Actual	13,269.50	n/a	13,886.40	12,519.00	n/a														



Ministry of Forestry Budget Trend (Estimates vs Actuals) 2019-2020 – 2021-2022



- Note that the budgetary allocation for this Ministry fluctuates in the last three years 2019-2020 – 2021-2022. Financial year 2019-2020 recorded the highest budget allocation of \$16.5 million with \$13.3 million (actual) utilized and the least budget allocation recorded in financial year 2021-2022 at \$13.2 million with \$12.5 million (actual) utilized.

Key Highlights	Activities		2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
	30MT15Y Initiative	-	1.5 million Trees planted	-	5.4 million Trees and mangroves planted in the 2020-2021FY
		-	Launch of Ministry's revamped website and tree planting dashboard	-	5.5 million Trees planted in the 2021-2022FY
		Log Production	-	451,264.4m ³	-
-	Timber/Wood product Export: \$50.0 million		-	545,208m ³	
Forestry Sector Contribution to GDP	In 2021, Fiji's GDP stood at \$8,404.2 million. The forestry and logging industry contributed \$34.1 million (0.4%) to Fiji's real GDP in 2021, a 28.2% increase compared to the \$26.6 million (0.3%) contribution in 2020. The forestry sector, in totality, also contributes to the growth of				

	many other industries, such as the manufacturing industry. The combined forest-related activities within the forestry sector contributed \$162.5 million (1.9%) to the national GDP by the end of 2021. The significant contribution of \$55.3 million was from the sawmilling and planning of wood activity, followed by the forestry and logging industry, which contributed \$34.1 million.																																						
Employment in the Forestry Sector	<p>The formal employment number in forest-based operations recorded by FBOS through its Annual Employment Survey stood at 918 in 2020. It's an increase of 6 per cent when compared to the 2019 employment number of 865.</p> <p><u>Table 2.2: 2020 Formal Employment in Forestry</u></p> <table><tr><th rowspan="2">No.</th><th rowspan="2">Main Economic Activity</th><th colspan="3">Number of Employees</th></tr><tr><th>2018</th><th>2019</th><th>2020</th></tr><tr><td>1.</td><td>Nursery</td><td>14</td><td>25</td><td>44</td></tr><tr><td>2.</td><td>Tree cultivation & Conservation</td><td>444</td><td>397</td><td>414</td></tr><tr><td>3.</td><td>Logging</td><td>72</td><td>93</td><td>99</td></tr><tr><td>4.</td><td>Log processing & Sawmill</td><td>210</td><td>197</td><td>211</td></tr><tr><td>5.</td><td>Government¹</td><td>140</td><td>153</td><td>150</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Total</td><td>880</td><td>865</td><td>918</td></tr></table> <p><i>Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2022</i></p>	No.	Main Economic Activity	Number of Employees			2018	2019	2020	1.	Nursery	14	25	44	2.	Tree cultivation & Conservation	444	397	414	3.	Logging	72	93	99	4.	Log processing & Sawmill	210	197	211	5.	Government ¹	140	153	150		Total	880	865	918
No.	Main Economic Activity			Number of Employees																																			
		2018	2019	2020																																			
1.	Nursery	14	25	44																																			
2.	Tree cultivation & Conservation	444	397	414																																			
3.	Logging	72	93	99																																			
4.	Log processing & Sawmill	210	197	211																																			
5.	Government ¹	140	153	150																																			
	Total	880	865	918																																			
Exports	<p><u>Table 2.3: Exports of Wood Products 2019-2020</u></p> <table><tr><th colspan="4">Domestic Exports of Wood Products</th></tr><tr><th rowspan="2">Product</th><th>2019</th><th>2020p</th><th>2021p</th></tr><tr><th colspan="3">Value FJ\$ Million</th></tr><tr><td>Total Domestic Export</td><td>1,167.1</td><td>1,146.2</td><td>1,251.4</td></tr><tr><td>Wood and articles of wood</td><td>59.0</td><td>76.6</td><td>118.5</td></tr><tr><td>Of which</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>- Wood in chips or particles</td><td>37.6</td><td>55.4</td><td>74.8</td></tr><tr><td>- Mahogany</td><td>10.6</td><td>9.2</td><td>14.8</td></tr></table> <p><i>Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2023</i></p>	Domestic Exports of Wood Products				Product	2019	2020p	2021p	Value FJ\$ Million			Total Domestic Export	1,167.1	1,146.2	1,251.4	Wood and articles of wood	59.0	76.6	118.5	Of which				- Wood in chips or particles	37.6	55.4	74.8	- Mahogany	10.6	9.2	14.8							
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Imports	<p><u>Table 2.4: Imports of Wood Products (2019-2020)</u></p>																																						



Imports of Wood Products			
Product	2019	2020p	2021p
	Value FJ\$ Million		
Total Imports	6,008.5	3,754.3	4,484.9
Wood and articles of wood	23.5	18.9	17.8

Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2022

Table 2.5: Status of new and reviewed legislations, regulations, policies

	Output	Status of achievement
1.	Finalisation of Forest Bill and relevant regulations	The Ministry continued to review the Forest Act 1992 and submitted a draft to the SG's office within the Financial Year. Once the amendment to the Act is endorsed, relevant regulations already drafted and reviewed will also be finalised. These regulations include the Sawmill Regulation and, the Preservative Timber Treatment Regulation. A new Forest harvesting regulation will be developed as well.
2.	2011 REDD+ Policy	The review of the 2011 REDD+ Policy was carried out through the conduct of stakeholder consultations and the engagement of a consultant to complete the reviewed Policy. The final draft was submitted to management for endorsement before submitting it to Cabinet Office.
3.	Climate Change Act	The Ministry was part of the consultation on the draft Climate Change Act and provided its contribution as this Act is relevant to the work of the Ministry. The Climate Change Act No. 43 of 2021 was endorsed but has not come into force yet.

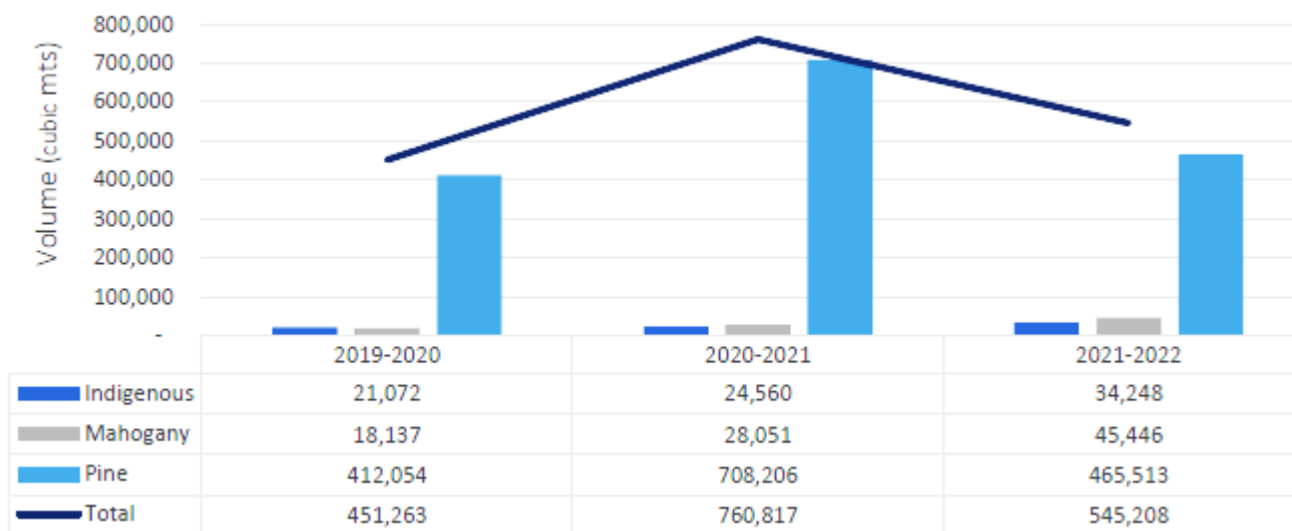
Forest Cover and Forest Change Analysis

Table 2.6: Fiji's Forest Cover by forest type

Forest Type	Total Area	Percent
Lowland Forest	998,065.01	89.64%
Upland Forest	74,040.51	6.65%
Cloud Forest	41,338.01	3.71%
Total	1,113,443.53	100.00%

Harvesting Operations

Graph 2.2: National Log Production Aug 2019-Jul2022



A total log volume of 545,208m³ was produced this financial year, which is a decline of 215,609m³ (28.3%) when compared to the previous financial year. Of this total volume of 545,208 cubic meters, Pine constitutes 85.4%, Mahogany 8.3% and indigenous species 6.3%



24 May 2024

DISCLAIMER

This Annual Report Summary was prepared to assist the Standing Committee on Natural Resources Affairs in its review of the. The Ministry of Forestry 2019-2020 – 2021-2022 Annual reports. This summary should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. Other sources and information should be consulted. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate, the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji will not accept any liability for any loss or damage which may be incurred by any person acting in reliance upon the information. The Parliament of the Republic of Fiji accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. For further information please email: Siteri Gaunalomani on email siteri.gaunalomani@parliament.gov.fj or siteri.gaunalomani@legislature.gov.fj