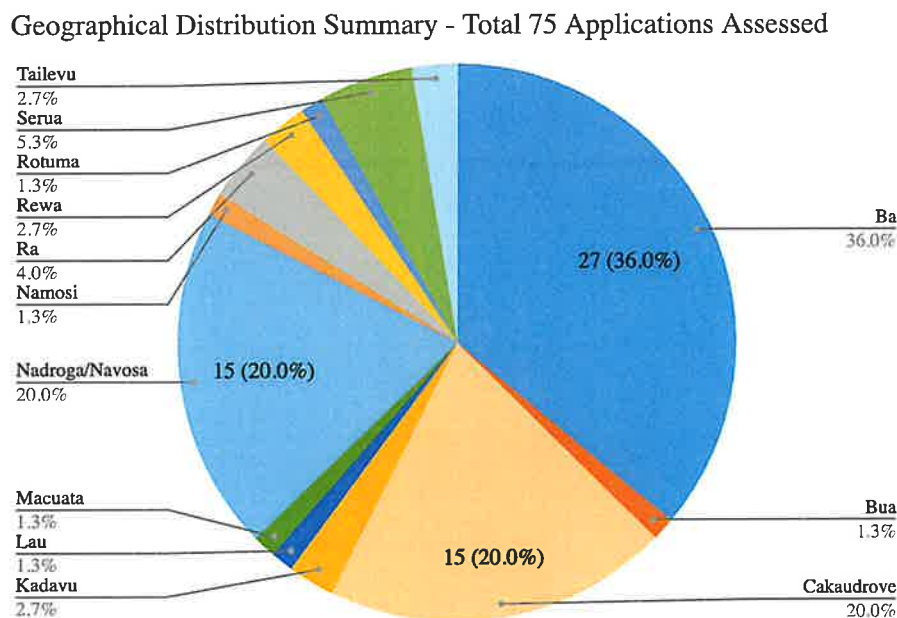


2.0 KEY APPLICATION HIGHLIGHTS

- 2.1 The Pilot was launched on 4 December 2024 through Expression of Interests and closed on 28 March 2025.
- 2.2 A total of 75 applications were received. The geographical and demographic distribution of applicants are outlined in the charts below.

Chart 1: Geographical Distribution Summary



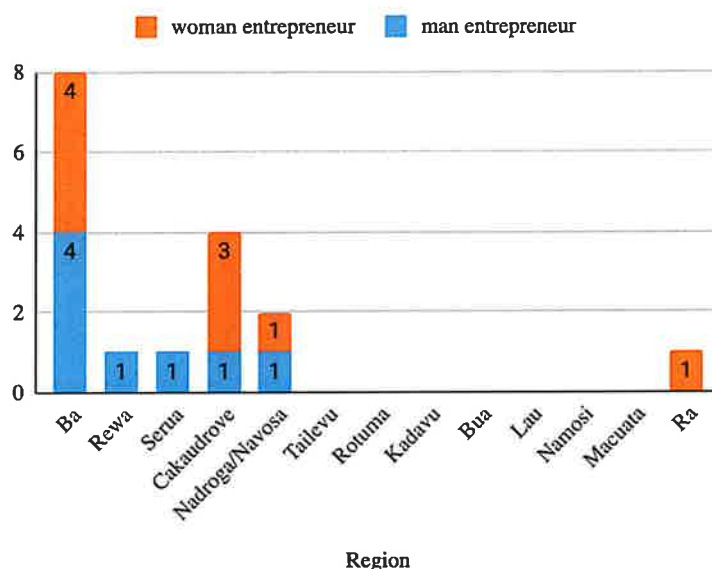
- 2.3 The majority of applicants came from the Ba Province, which is expected given its role as a tourism hub, accounting for 36% of total submissions. This was followed by Cakaudrove (21%) and Nadroga/Navosa (19%), the tourism interests are concentrated in more developed or tourism-active provinces. It potentially reflects the need for targeted outreach and support to encourage participation from underrepresented regions in future funding rounds.
- 2.4 Applications reflected a strong mix of tourism-related sectors, with the highest interest in tour operations and homestay accommodations. Other key sectors included marine transport, culture and heritage, and adventure tourism, alongside niche sub-sectors such as agritourism, and the creative arts.
- 2.5 The majority of applicants (65%) are classified as micro businesses, while 32% fall under the small business category. Medium-sized businesses are not eligible for the Pilot MSE Fund.
- 2.6 Out of the 75 applications received, 38.67% were submitted by women entrepreneurs.

3.0 2024-2025 BENEFITTED APPLICANTS

- 3.1 In the first batch of assessments, 24 applicants were shortlisted applications, of which **19 projects were approved for funding by the Selection Panel¹, with a total Pilot contribution of \$293,686.**
- 3.2 The geographical and demographic distribution of fund recipients is illustrated in the chart below. Of the 17 businesses that have received disbursements to date, 47% are led by women entrepreneurs. Two (2) businesses requested an extension to their one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) contribution due to time constraints and changes in supplier availability or internal fund allocations. These two applicants are expected to receive disbursement in the next financial year.

Chart 2: Demographic & Geographic Distribution Summary

Demographic - Total 17 Disbursed Fund

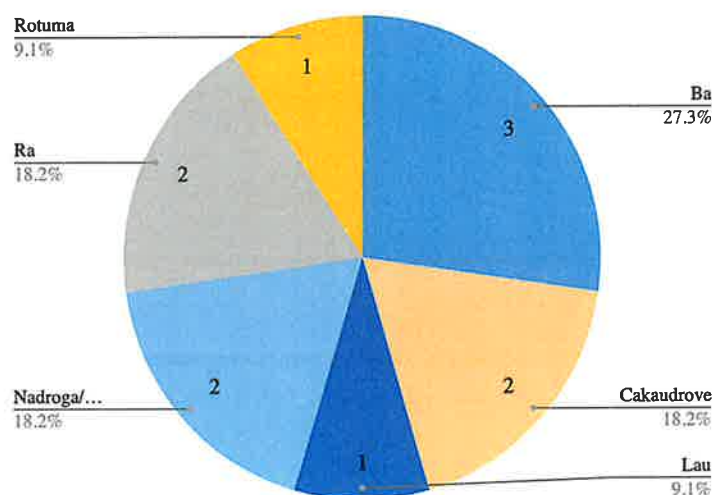


- 3.3 The Second Selection Panel meeting assessed 16 shortlisted applications under Batch 2. From this group, 9 projects were approved, 6 applications were placed on hold pending further information, and 1 application was not supported.
- 3.4 Thus, a total of 11 approved projects are scheduled for disbursement in the next financial year. The geographical distribution of fund recipients is illustrated in the chart below.

¹ Selection Panel consists of Public and Private sector representatives guided by a Terms of Reference

Chart 3: Approved Geographic Distribution Summary for Next Financial Year

Geographical Distribution - Batch 2: 11 Approved & To Be Disbursed In Next Financial Year



4.0 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

4.1 To be eligible, MSEs must be:

- Fijian citizens of 18 years of age and above;
- An existing registered enterprise in operation for two years;
- Registered entity must be majority Fijian owned (at least 51%);
- Engaged in tourism and where a majority share of revenue comes from the tourism sector including tour operators, activity providers, ground operators, hospitality, food and beverage, and transportation; and
- Ability to meet the one-third cash funding project cost with support documents satisfactory to the Ministry.

4.2 The Pilot provided grant funding for the purchase and construction of capital projects as well as operational items. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Improvement of products and experiences (including virtual, land and marine experiences);
- Visibility and awareness such as website upgrade;
- Adoption of technology to enhance visitor experiences;
- Amenities enhancements such as visitor areas or signage;
- Small-scale infrastructure such as trails, signage; and
- Equity funding with financial institutions for capital expenditure and diversification purposes. Relevant FIs compliance and requirements will apply.

4.3 In its Pilot phase, the following tourism activities and experiences were encouraged:

- Activities that promote culture and heritage
- Environmentally sustainable activities such as bird watching and trekking
- Accessibility such as trails and signage
- Upgrade and rejuvenation of heritage sites
- Niche markets such as Agri-tourism and Wellness
- Natural parks such as forests and reef

4.4 A Policy that highlights the criteria, exclusions, application process, grievances mechanisms, assessment criteria and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms was developed and widely published to ensure transparency.

5.0 **CONCLUSION**

5.1 Although the utilization of funds did not reach 100 percent in its inaugural year, the program has demonstrated efficacy. Recipients in the 2024-2025 financial year included enterprises such as village tours, homestays, agri-tourism products, creative arts, and marine tours.

5.2 For the 2025-2026 financial year, the Ministry initiated the second year of the pilot program with an allocation of \$400,000. Applications became open as of 4 August 2025.