



Ministry of iTaukei Affairs Culture Heritage and Arts

WRITTEN RESPONSE TO ORAL QUESTION

Parliamentary Question No.: 141/2025

Asked by: Honourable Inosi Kuridrani

Directed to: Honourable Ifereimi Vasu, Minister for iTaukei Affairs

Sitting Date: Monday, 29 September 2025

Subject: Expected Beneficiaries of the iTaukei Resource Owners Support and Development Fund for the 2025–2026 Financial Year

Submitted by:

Hon. Ifereimi Vasu

Minister for iTaukei Affairs

Parliament of the Republic of Fiji

29 September 2025

Written Response

Honourable Speaker,

I refer to the Oral Question raised by Honourable Kuridrani on the expected beneficiaries of the iTaukei Resource Owners Support and Development Fund for the 2025–2026 financial year.

At the outset, I wish to clarify that the Honourable Member's question touches on **two separate but complementary facilities**:

1. The **iTaukei Resource Owners Support and Development Fund**, managed by the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs in partnership with Merchant Finance Limited (MFL) and the Fiji Development Bank (FDB); and
2. The **iTaukei Development Fund Facility**, administered by the iTaukei Land Trust Board (TLTB).

Both funds are designed to uplift our iTaukei landowning groups — the mataqali, yavusa, and their companies — though they operate under different criteria and mechanisms.

iTaukei Resource Owners Support and Development Fund

For the 2025–2026 financial year, Government has allocated **\$3 million** to this Fund. From this allocation, it is expected that **60 projects will be supported through MFL** (20 existing and 40 new) and **five projects through FDB**. Provinces already engaged include Tailevu, Macuata, Ba, and Nadi, with more expected as new applications are lodged.

The Fund's **eligibility and scoring system** is transparent and requires:

- Proper registration and legal recognition of the landowning group.
- A viable business plan with realistic cashflows.
- Demonstrated governance and broad landowner support; and
- Commitment to sustainable use of land and resources.

Milestones achieved in 2024–2025 include:

- **11 projects worth \$291,000 approved through MFL,**
- **8 projects worth \$331,000 submitted to the Ministry of Finance, and**
- **The Tailevu Provincial Company securing a \$3 million facility through FDB,** with subsidised interest.

Subdivision projects in Nadi and Lautoka were also successfully supported.

The shift from a **grant-based scheme to an interest-subsidy model** has been the key reform, promoting accountability while easing borrowing costs. To address challenges in technical capacity, a **Project Management Unit** is being established to provide oversight, training, and monitoring.

iTaukei Development Fund (TLTB)

The TLTB administers a separate but complementary initiative, the **iTaukei Development Fund Facility**. This facility has **directly supported 23 landowning units across nine provinces**, distributed as follows:

- Ba – 7 units
- Naitasiri – 4 units
- Nadroga/Navosa – 3 units
- Macuata – 2 units
- Ra – 2 units
- Tailevu – 2 units
- Cakaudrove – 1 unit
- Kadavu – 1 unit
- Rewa – 1 unit

In addition, **seven co-operatives** have benefitted, made up largely of mataqali and yavusa members. These include examples such as the **Dreketi Mahogany Landowners Cooperative in Macuata**. With both landowning units and co-operatives considered, the total number of groups supported stands at **30**.

The **eligibility and selection process** under TLTB is comprehensive and rigorous, ensuring only well-prepared and sustainable ventures are supported. Applicants are required to provide:

- **Legal standing:** Registered trust deeds, Joint Card/TIN, and VKB confirmation.
- **Business viability:** Detailed business plans, projected cashflows, supplier quotations, and, where relevant, farm reports from the Ministry of Agriculture.
- **Financial health:** Six months of bank statements, existing loan statements, and, for operating businesses, three years of financial statements.
- **Security:** A valuation report of the property or lease to be mortgaged, consent from 51% of LOU members for assignment of lease monies, and in some cases security over machinery, vehicles, or even ship mortgages for maritime ventures.

This approach balances opportunity with responsibility, safeguarding funds while enabling landowning units to unlock the value of their land and resources.

While a numerical “scoring system” is not used, these criteria collectively form a **merit-based framework**. Applications are prioritised based on the strength of the business plan, financial health, quality of security offered, and broad community support. This ensures that only projects with strong potential for long-term sustainability are financed.

Conclusion

Honourable Speaker, Sir, while the Ministry's Fund and the TLTB's Fund are separate, they are **mutually reinforcing**. Together, they provide complementary avenues for landowning groups to access finance, build enterprises, and grow wealth.

Both initiatives strengthen iTaukei entrepreneurship, promote accountability, and most importantly, contribute to the **economic wellbeing of iTaukei communities and the alleviation of poverty**.

Respectfully submitted,



Hon. Ifereimi Vasu
Minister for iTaukei Affairs
29 September 2025