STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Consolidated Review Report of the Investment Fiji Annual Reports 2022-2023 and 2023-2024

Appendices

ANNEX 1

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Investment Fiji

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Presented by **Kamal Chetty**
Chief Executive Officer

INVESTMENT FIJI ACT 2022
(ACT NO. 25 OF 2022)

5. The mandate of Investment Fiji is—

a. **Investment promotion:** to increase the contribution made by investors to Fiji's economy by promoting Fiji's competitive and comparative advantages;

b. **Investment facilitation:** to facilitate all necessary information and services to assist prospective and existing investors to meet their specific investment project needs;

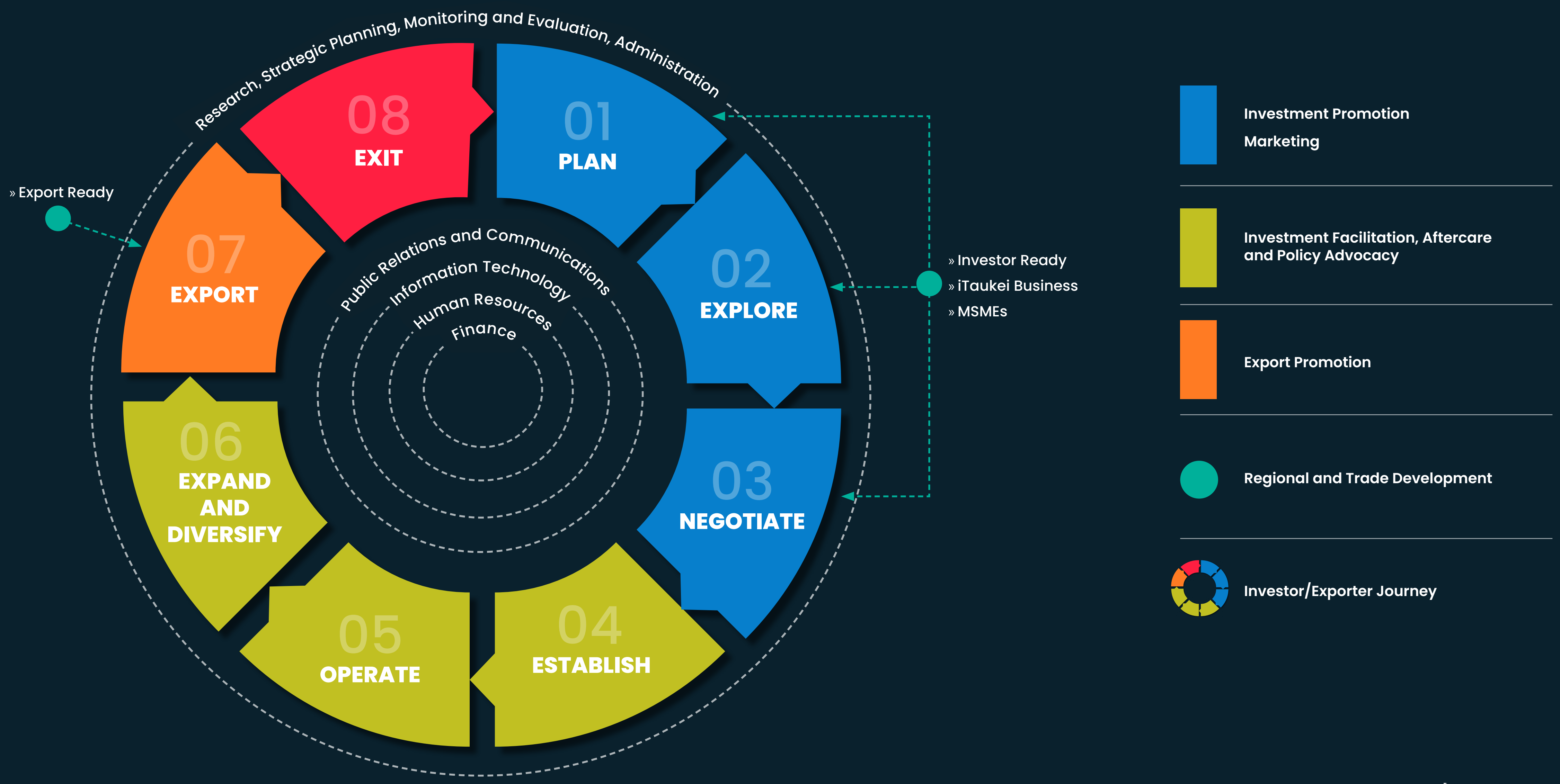
c. **Export promotion:** to facilitate and promote the development and expansion of export;

d. **After-care:** to provide investors with assistance to overcome any challenges to the growth and expansion of their activities and support investors with their expansion and diversification objectives;

e. **Policy advocacy:** to collect information and raise awareness on the challenges faced by investors and recommend reform measures to improve Fiji's investment and business-enabling environment; and

f. **Image building:** to promote Fiji as a desirable investment destination.

INVESTMENT FIJI MODEL



Investment Fiji

TARGETS (NEXT 3-5 YEARS)

25%+
≈$3b
Investment to GDP
Baseline for Investment to GDP 14%

$500m+
FDI
Baseline for FDI 3%

10%+
Annual increase in Domestic Exports
Baseline for Annual Increase 1.7%

TO BE ONE THE BEST INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY IN THE REGION

SELF SUFFICIENCY

INCREASE REGIONAL INVESTMENT

5% GDP Growth

» Technology Transfer
» Economic Diversification
» Import Substitution
» Increased Regional Investments
» Local Linkages
» Sustainability

DOWNSIDE RISK TO THE INVESTMENT

InvestmentFiji

Global Economic Uncertainty

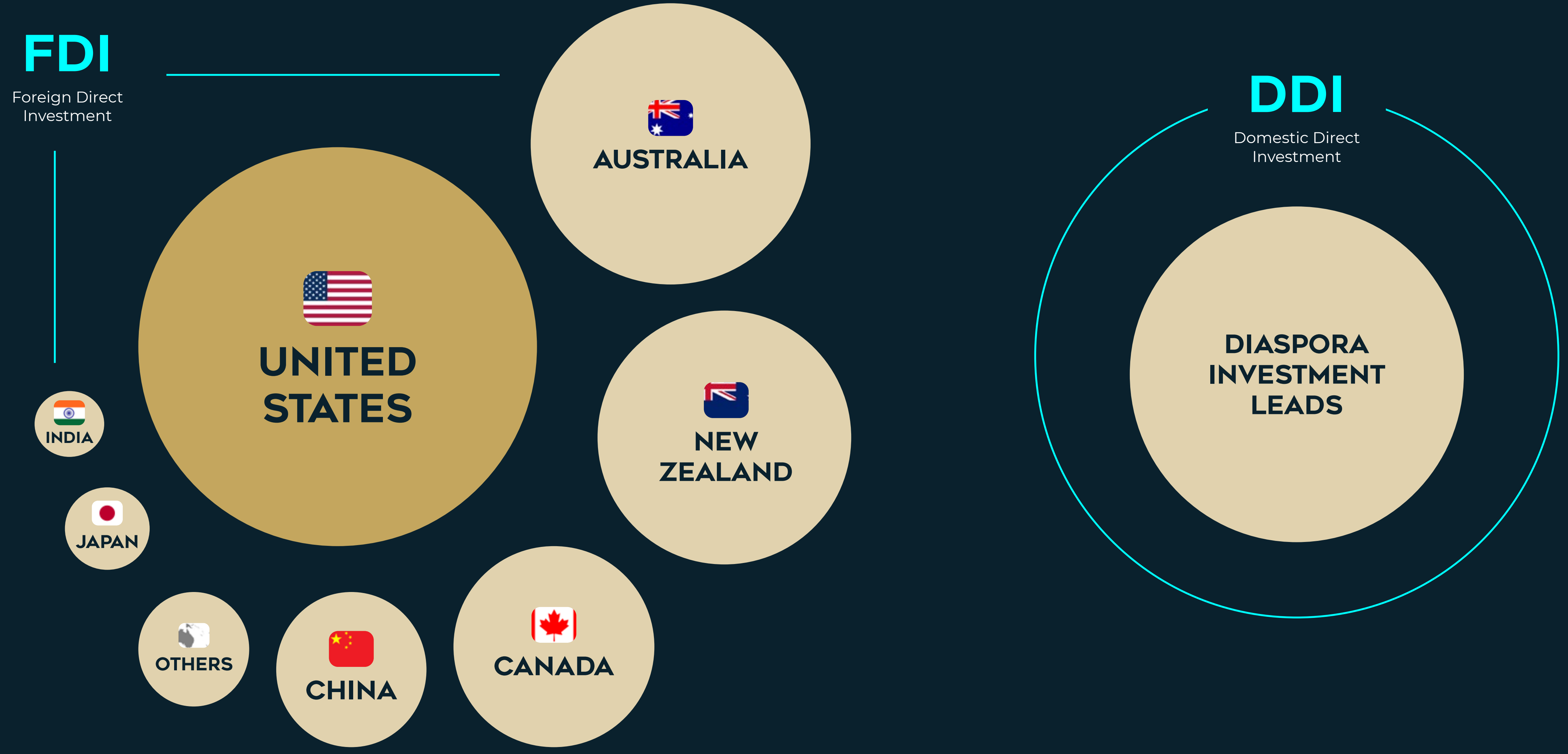
Labour and Skills Availability

Infrastructure Readiness

Regulatory and Approval Timeframes

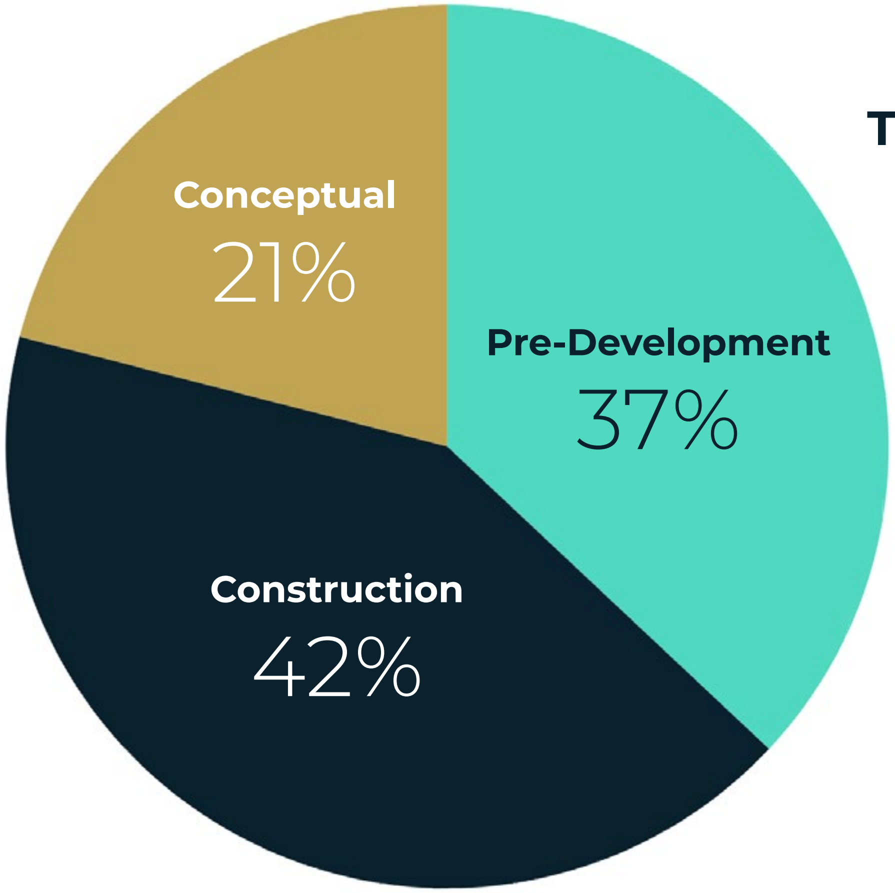
Fuel Crisis

INVESTMENT LEADS

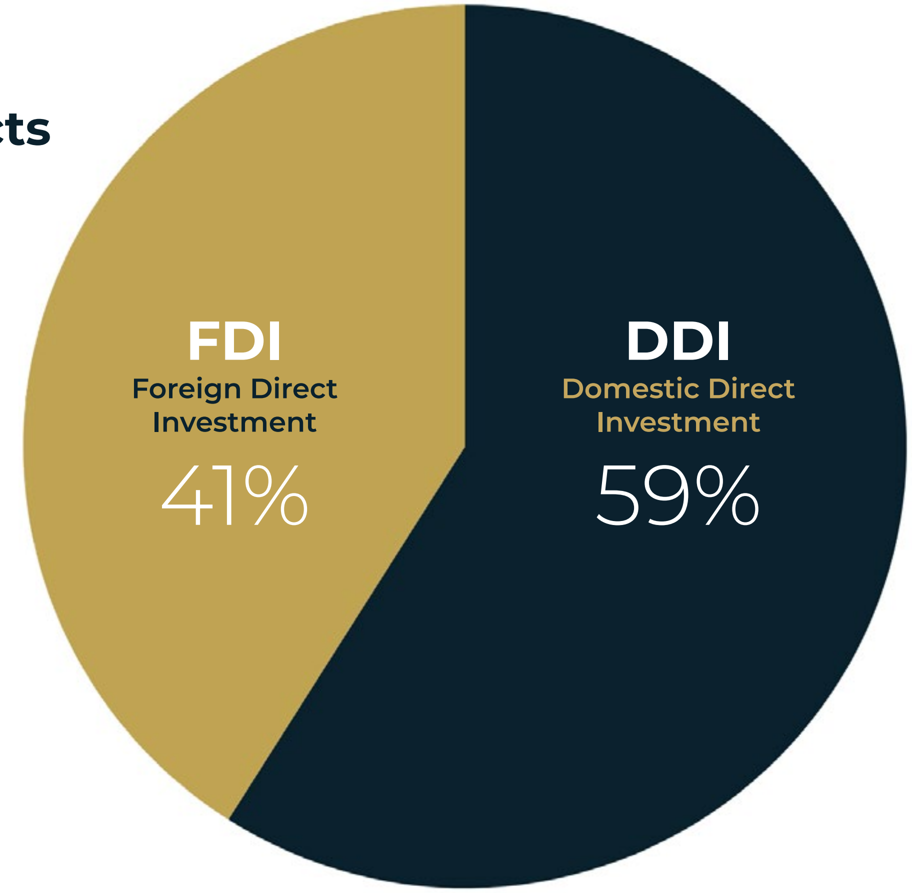


INVESTMENT PROJECT MANAGEMENT

254
Total Projects



PROJECT STAGES



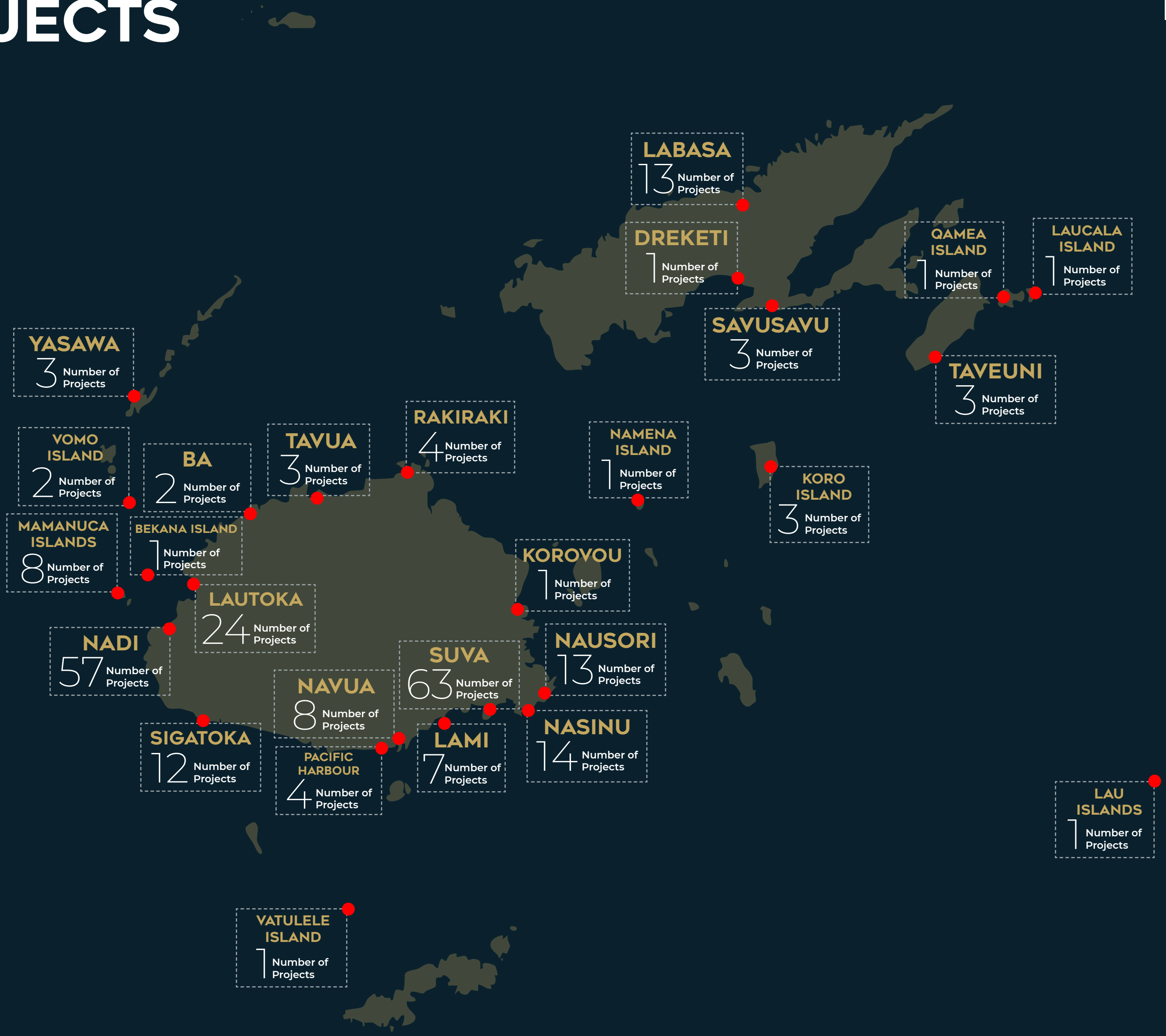
INVESTMENT TYPE

INVESTMENT PROJECTS BY SECTOR

- REAL ESTATE
- TOURISM
- TRANSPORT, STORAGE & COMMUNICATION
- SERVICES
- WHOLESALE/RETAIL
- MANUFACTURING
- AGRICULTURE
- ENERGY
- FINANCIAL INTERMEDIATION
- ICT/BPO
- CONSTRUCTION
- MINING
- EDUCATION

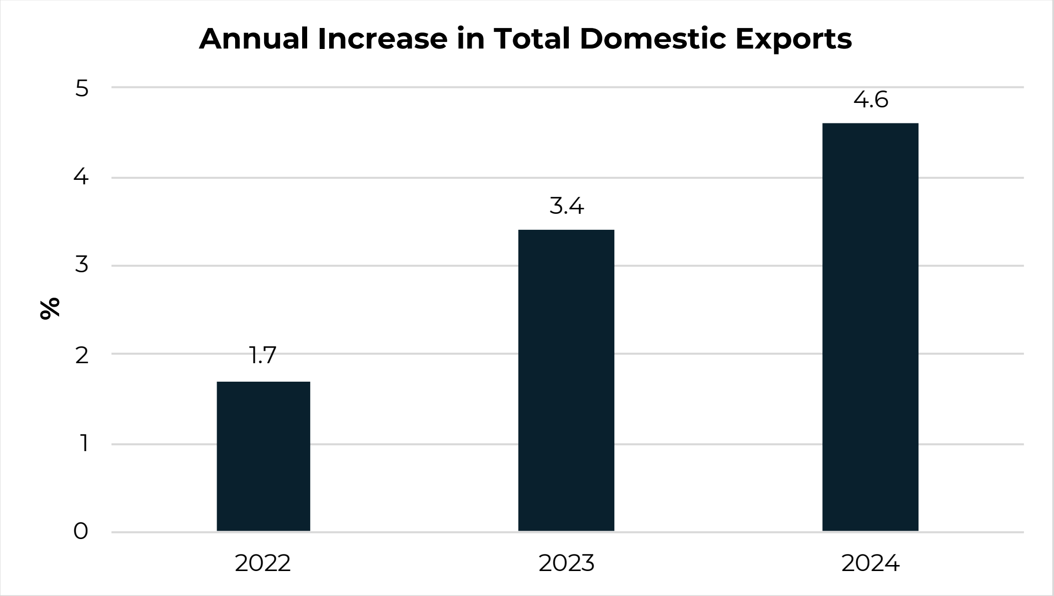
INVESTMENT PROJECTS BY REGION

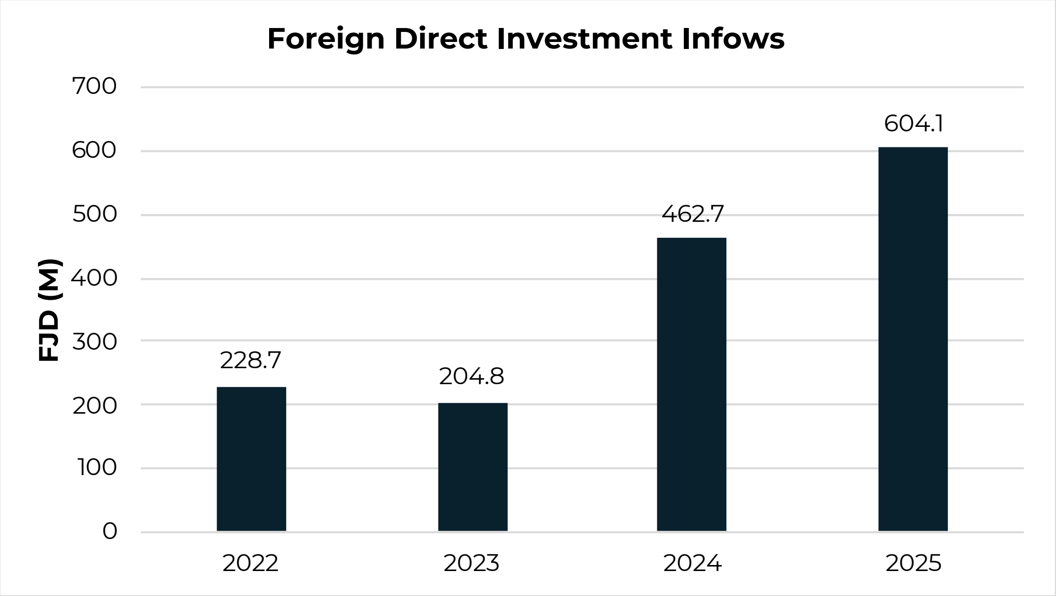
Investment Fiji



RECENT PERFORMANCE (2022 - 2024)

2022	2023	2024
21.8% Investment to GDP	19.8% Investment to GDP	20.9% Investment to GDP



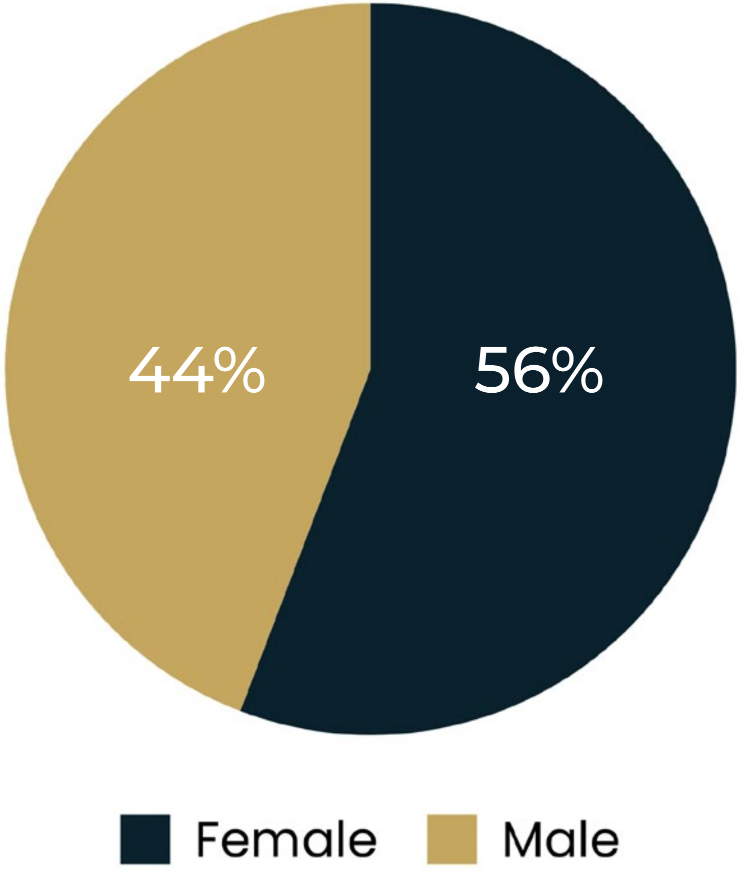


Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics

CURRENT STAFF

42 Total Staff

33 Average Staff Age



Investment Fiji

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2024

Total Grant Received

FY 2022-2023	FY 2023-2024
$2,700,000	**$2,780,000**
Marketing Budget **$320,000**	Marketing Budget **$250,000**

$1 Spent on investment promotion

	Project Registration	Project Implemented
2022	$370,625	$229,062
2023	$254,400	$485,600

MAJOR EVENTS

FIJI – NEW ZEALAND BUSINESS MISSION 2023

FIJI-NORTH AMERICA BUSINESS MISSION 2024

MAJOR EVENTS

FIJI TOURISM INVESTMENT SUMMIT 2023

AHICE FIJI INVESTMENT IN TOURISM SUMMIT 2024

INVESTMENT WINS FROM THE EVENTS

Consultancy firm opens Nadi office

Business, Local News, News | Published: June 20, 2026 | Last Updated: June 20, 2026 | By Elena Vucukula

Listen to this article:

MP Manoa Kamikamica (left) with Duco Consultancy CEO Chandan Ohri officiates at the inauguration of the Duco Consultancy's new office at Vuvale Plaza in Nadi on Wednesday early this week. Picture: REINAL CHAND

Fiji to host green awards

Local News, News | Published: April 28, 2026 | Last Updated: April 28, 2026 | By Elena Vucukula

Listen to this article:

Fiji will be hosting the 2027 Green World Awards. Picture: SUPPLIED

INVESTMENT WINS FROM THE EVENTS

Global Capsule Home

THUNDERSTRUCK RESOURCES

EMERALD ENERGY

Sekan Global LLC (Turmeric Farm)

Deep Singh Holdings Pte Limited (Daruka Farm)

TRADE WINS FROM THE EVENTS

Road King Farms

Juice Fiji

Food Processors (Fiji) Pte Limited

Paradise Lighting

Agricultural Marketing Authority

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project Stages	No. of Projects	Proposed Investment ($m)
Construction	84	1,521.61
Pre-development	58	1,854.00
Conceptual	53	2,141.00
Total	**195**	**5,516.61**

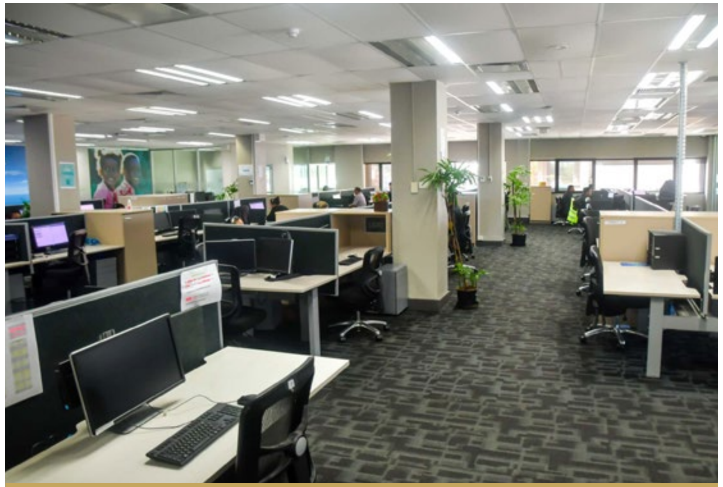
MAJOR PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BETWEEN FY22-24

NAWI ISLAND

Stage 1 development of a marina in Savusavu

PEPPER ADVANTAGE

Development of a call center in Suva



PACIFIC CENTRECOM FIJI LTD NADI

Development of a call center in Lautoka

MAJOR PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BETWEEN FY22-24

FIJI AIRWAYS

Expansion of the aviation training academy in Nadi

AQUAM INSULA

Manufacturing of sparkling water in Nadi

AIR LAUCALA HANGER

Development of aircraft hanger for Laucala Island Resort at Nadi Airport

MAJOR PROJECTS STARTED CONSTRUCTION BETWEEN FY22-24

STAGHORN PTE LTD

New Internet cable and associated facilities.

VATU TALEI - THE JEWEL

Development of 190 rooms hotel in Nadi.

CROWNE PLAZA FIJI NADI BAY RESORT & SPA

Development of hotel with 255 rooms in Wailoaloa, Nadi

MAJOR PROJECTS STARTED CONSTRUCTION BETWEEN FY22-24

CARPENTERS FIJI PTE LTD

Hilton Garden Inn - Resort development in Suva.

WANANAVU BEACH RESORT

Development of 100 room resort in Rakiraki.

FIJIAN HOLDINGS LIMITED

FHL Tower

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR INVESTORS

Investment Facilitation Committee (IFC)

Coordinates and streamlines investor approvals and resolves inter-agency bottlenecks for timely project implementation.

Commercial Agriculture Taskforce

Drives policy coordination and investment promotion to strengthen commercial agriculture value chains and production.

International Educational Tourism Taskforce

Promotes and facilitates investment in education-based tourism, including institutions, training, and student mobility services.

Immigration Taskforce Committee

Reviews and improves immigration policies and processes to support investment, labour mobility, and skilled migration needs.

BusinessNOW Portal

Provides a digital one-stop platform to simplify business registration, licensing, and regulatory approvals.

Policy Framework on Significant Investment Projects

Establishes guidelines for identifying, assessing, and fast-tracking large-scale strategic investment projects.

AGRICULTURE

COFFEE

Ona Coffee

Schibello Coffee

COCOA

Blue Phoenix

Aitken Spence

Nord Investment

COPRA

Punjas

FRESH PRODUCE

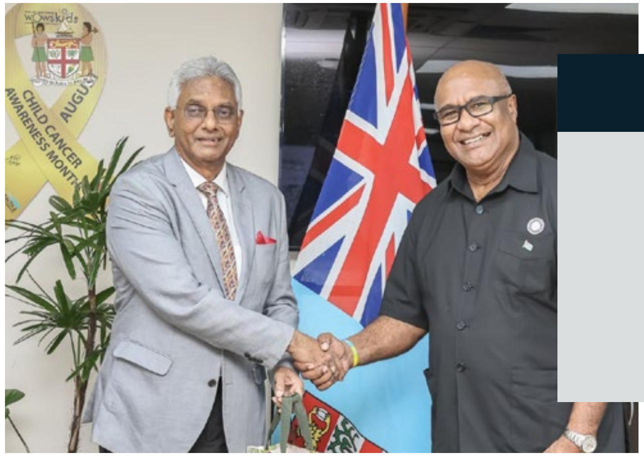
New Valley Processors

Fang Cong Farm

AGRICULTURE

CITRUS/LIME

The Wonderful Company



AITKEN SPENCE

Berries

Palm Oil

Cocoa

Tea Plantation

TROPICAL FRUITS

Pineapple

Mango

Watermelon

Pawpaw

Banana

DALO EXPORT FACILITY

Cibus Foods Limited
in partnership with Joes Farm

AQUACULTURE

EEL FARMING

Saith Bros Holding Co. Ltd

PRAWN FARMING

MANUFACTURING

NUTRACEUTICALS

Kava
Ginger
Noni
Tumeric
Moringa

CHEESE MANUFACTURING

FijiCheese Pte Ltd

NEAR SHORING

Byron Aviation

Daikin

PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING

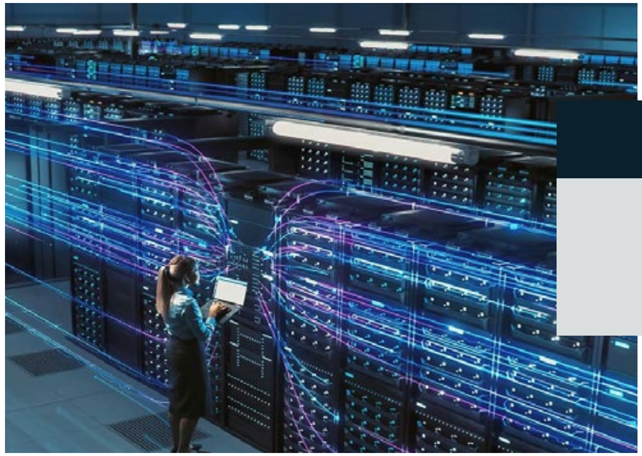
Douglas Pharmaceuticals

SWEET POTATO, UTO AND CASSAVA FLOUR

Natural Flours of Fiji

OUTSOURCING & ICT

BPO



AI CENTRES

Honeywell

KPMG

CYBERSECURITY CENTRES

Cyber CX

DATA CENTRE

GREEN ECONOMY

RECYCLING

Golden Manufacturers

CARBON TRADING

ENERGY TRANSITION

Energy Fiji Limited

NEW INDUSTRIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

DEEP SEAWATER INDUSTRY

Seawater Energy Plant Research Center (SEPRC)

SHIP BUILDING & REPAIRS

Topical Reef Shipyard

Norship

Austal

OLYMPIC 2032

WAY FORWARD

Improving Coordination between Ministries and Agencies

Ease of Doing Business

Digitalization of Processes

Infrastructure Readiness

Cost of Doing Business

Investment Fiji Budget

TARGETS (NEXT 3-5 YEARS)

25%+
≈$3b
Investment to GDP
Baseline for Investment to GDP 14%

$500m+
FDI
Baseline for FDI 3%

10%+
Annual increase in Domestic Exports
Baseline for Annual Increase 1.7%

TO BE ONE THE BEST INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY IN THE REGION

SELF SUFFICIENCY

INCREASE REGIONAL INVESTMENT

5% GDP Growth

- Technology Transfer
- Economic Diversification
- Import Substitution
- Increased Regional Investments
- Local Linkages
- Sustainability


Vinaka Vakalevu
Reliability | Responsiveness | Transparency | Accessibility | Communicative | Effectiveness

WRITTEN SUBMISSION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Submission on Investment Fiji Annual Reports 2022-2023 & 2023–2024

1.0 Introduction: Reserve Bank of Fiji Mandate

The Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF) welcomes the opportunity to provide observations on the Investment Fiji Annual Reports for FY2022–2023 and FY2023–2024.

The Bank's comments are provided from a macroeconomic, financial sector and balance of payments perspective. While Investment Fiji is mandated to promote, facilitate and support investment projects in Fiji, the RBF's role differs substantially. The Reserve Bank:

- Is responsible for regulating, licensing, and promoting the stability of the Fijian financial system;
- Monitors foreign exchange transactions associated with investments;
- Regulates cross-border financial flows, including equity investments, dividends, profit repatriation and offshore borrowing arrangements; and
- Assesses macroeconomic developments including the broader impact of investment activity on economic growth, employment, balance of payments, foreign reserves and financial stability.

More specifically in relation to Investment, from our understanding, the Investment Act 2021 provides the overarching legislative framework for investment in Fiji (domestic and foreign). Under the Act, a foreign investor intending to invest in Fiji must first register its business in accordance with the Companies Act 2015 before commencing operations. Thereafter, the investor is required to obtain the relevant licenses, permits and approvals from the respective regulatory authorities required for starting a business in Fiji.

The RBF does not approve investment projects; its role is primarily regulatory. The RBF administers the Exchange Control Act 1950 under powers delegated by the Minister for Finance pursuant to Section 48 of the Reserve Bank of Fiji Act. One of the functions administered under the Act is the approval of the issuance or transfer of shares involving non-resident shareholders in a locally incorporated company. This includes the issuance of shares in a newly incorporated company or additional shares in an existing company.

As a condition of the approval, the foreign investor is required to provide the RBF, bank confirmation evidencing the receipt of equity investment from offshore, within six months of the approval date.
From our records, the number of applications received and approved by the RBF:

Year	No. of Applications	Expected Level of Investment (based on the applications lodged)
2024	123	$290,866,229.72
2025	196	$471,150,204.10
2026	105	$121,597,799.00
Total	**424**	**$883,614,232.82**

In terms of controls, RBF approvals are automatically invalidated if the investor does not respond within six months. In addition, compliance with investment approvals, including the issuance of shares and confirmation of the investment, is also linked to the investors' future applications for offshore remittances. When an investor applies for Exchange Control approvals relating to profit repatriation, dividend payments, loan repayments, or other requests, the Unit first checks compliance with these requirements before processing their applications.

This is also a key safeguard against unscrupulous foreign investors, as funds cannot be remitted offshore through the banking system unless Exchange Control requirements have been met, including the submission of supporting documentation and tax clearance from FRCS.

RBF approval is also part of the documentation required by other agencies, such as Immigration Fiji, which helps ensure foreign investors are aware of and comply with Exchange Control requirements.

Given this background, the Bank's assessment focuses on linkages between developments reported by Investment Fiji and monitored macroeconomic indicators observed across the economy.

2.0 <u>Overview of Investment Fiji's Reported Performance</u>

The Reserve Bank acknowledges Investment Fiji's continued efforts to support the Government's economic development agenda through investment promotion, investment facilitation and export development initiatives.

The Annual Reports for FY2022–2023 and FY2023–2024 highlight a number of positive outcomes across investment promotion, investor engagement and export facilitation activities.

2.1 Investment Facilitation Outcomes:

- Increased investment facilitation (foreign & domestic) from $733.0 million in FY 2022–2023 to $1.12 billion FY 2023–2024, respectively;
- Employment generation increasing from 6,104 jobs to 7,398 jobs;
- More than 2,700 investment enquiries and leads through more than 50 investor engagements;
- Increased export facilitation outcomes; and
- Continued engagement with strategic investors across tourism, mining, ICT, business process outsourcing (BPO) and other priority sectors.

Key projects highlighted during the reporting period included:

- Lion One Tuvatu Gold Project;
- Nawi Island Marina Development;
- Sofitel Vatu Talei;
- Radisson Blu Mirage Resort; and
- Hilton Garden Inn.

2.2 ***Investment Interest and the Pipeline:*** The Bank notes that investor interest and project enquiries are useful leading indicators of future economic activity and provide insight into emerging investment trends and opportunities.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) interest strengthened over the review period, with enquiries increasing from 1,371 enquiries in FY 2022-2023 to 1,457 investment leads in FY 2023-2024. This growth reflected enhanced investor engagement and more targeted promotional efforts including investment missions to North America and New Zealand, as well as participation in tourism-focused summits.

Emerging interest in the BPO and ICT sectors further expanded Fiji's investment pipeline, supported by targeted engagement platforms such as EXO Fiji and outsourcing-focused investor interactions. These sectors offer important diversification opportunities beyond Fiji's traditional tourism and primary industry base.

2.3 ***Export Initiatives:*** The Bank recognises the important role of export development in supporting economic diversification, foreign exchange earnings and external sector resilience.

Investment Fiji reported export wins increasing from $55.8 million in FY2022-2023 to $85 million in FY2023-2024. The Bank acknowledges Investment Fiji's efforts to support Fijian businesses through market access initiatives and trade promotion activities.

While export growth moderated during FY2023–2024 following the exceptional post-pandemic rebound in the previous year, continued efforts to diversify export products and destination markets remain important for strengthening Fiji's external resilience and reducing dependence on a narrow range of export sectors.

3.0 Operating Context (Global and Domestic Environment)

In assessing Investment Fiji's reported performance, it is important to consider the broader economic environment within which businesses and investors were operating.

The FY2022-2023 and FY2023-2024 reporting period occurred against a challenging global and domestic economic backdrop. During 2022 and into 2023, global supply chain disruptions, elevated freight costs and inflationary pressures contributed to higher prices for construction materials, machinery and other capital goods, increasing the cost of investment projects and, in some cases, delayed implementation.

Domestically, Fiji benefited from a strong post-pandemic economic recovery, especially in tourism and construction, which supported investor confidence and investment demand. However, labour shortages became increasingly apparent during the review period, largely from the outward migration of skilled and semi-skilled workers.

Businesses through the biannual Business Expectations Survey conducted by the Reserve Bank reported difficulties in recruiting and retaining skilled workers, contributing to wage pressures and higher operating costs. In addition, other reported challenges faced by businesses were associated with high cost of doing business (regulatory approval processes), the economic environment and cost of inputs. While reforms have been ongoing across Government agencies to improve the ease of doing business, these factors remained important considerations affecting the pace of project implementation.

Against this backdrop, the increase in investment facilitation and export development initiatives reflects a notable level of economic resilience and continued investor confidence in Fiji's medium-term growth prospects.

4.0 RBF's Assessment of Investment Trends (2022-2024)

The Reserve Bank's assessment considers a range of macroeconomic indicators that typically respond to investment activity, including construction output, investment lending, imports of capital and construction materials, employment, and foreign exchange flows including FDI inflows.

4.1 ***Construction Activity:*** Construction activity is a key indicator of investment implementation, as it reflects the extent to which approved projects progress into the development phase and contribute to economic activity. Macroeconomic indicators suggest that investment-related construction activity remained robust during the review period. *Key highlights included:*

- The value of work put in place increased by 53.1 percent in 2022, 6.0 percent in 2023, and 4.8 percent in 2024, while the value of completion certificates issued also rose over the same period.
- However, higher construction activity was accompanied by higher building material costs, which increased project values.
- Construction-related imports grew significantly by 41.0 percent in FY2022-2023 before stabilising in FY2023-2024
- Domestic cement sales reflected strong demand despite temporary supply constraints caused by production disruptions.

Despite higher input costs and supply constraints, the sustained construction activity suggests that several approved investment projects progressed beyond the planning stage into implementation, supporting employment and broader economic activity.

4.2 ***Investment lending:*** Trends in investment lending provide an indication of private sector confidence and the willingness of businesses and households to undertake new investments and development projects.

Commercial bank lending for investment purposes continued to expand, increasing by 25.7 percent in FY2022-2023 and 18.3 percent in FY2023-2024, driven primarily by borrowing for real estate, building and construction, and residential development.

4.3 ***FDI Inflows**:* Foreign direct investment inflows provide an important measure of realised foreign investment activity and investor confidence in Fiji's economic outlook. FDI inflows,[1] as reported by the Fiji Bureau of Statistics, remained positive during the review period, increasing from approximately $181.1 million in FY2022-2023 to $329.7 million in FY2023-2024. This growth was largely driven by higher reinvested earnings, reflecting the willingness of existing foreign investors to retain and expand their investments in Fiji.

[1] FDI data, on a BOP basis are aggregated from the relevant calendar-year quarters (Q3, Q4, Q1 and Q2) sourced from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics. As monthly data are unavailable, the FY estimate covers July to June, rather than the August to July period reported in Investment Fiji's annual report.

The Bank notes that the reported facilitated investments mentioned earlier ($733m to $1.12b) comprise of both domestic and foreign investments and therefore should not be interpreted as equivalent to actual FDI inflows.

5.0 Contribution to the Fiji Economy

Investment activity plays an important role in supporting economic growth by creating employment opportunities, generating income, strengthening foreign exchange earnings and expanding productive capacity across the economy.

The Reserve Bank's assessment indicates that the positive investment outcomes reported by Investment Fiji during FY2022-2023 and FY2023-2024 are broadly supported by wider macroeconomic developments observed across the economy, including sustained construction activity, expanding investment lending, rising foreign direct investment inflows and continued foreign exchange activity, which supported overall economic growth.

- These investments would have supported employment, income generation, domestic demand and Government revenue, particularly through higher activity in related sectors like the construction, tourism, mining and related services.
- Facilitated investments have also expanded tourism capacity and generated foreign exchange earnings and overall economic growth.
- Despite challenges associated with labour shortages, outward migration, rising costs and regulatory processes that affected project timelines, investment activity remained resilient during the review period.
- Furthermore, growing investor interest in sectors such as BPO and ICT and other knowledge-based industries provided opportunities to diversify Fiji's economic base, create higher-value jobs and helped diversify the economy for longer term resilience.
- Export wins from facilitated ventures, particularly in tourism, gold mining and business process outsourcing, equity inflows and correspondent banking transactions, have also supported the country's reserve position.

6.0 <u>Conclusion</u>

The Reserve Bank appreciates the important role played by Investment Fiji in promoting Fiji as an attractive investment destination and supporting the Government's broader economic development objectives.

The Reserve Bank's assessment indicates that the positive investment outcomes reported by Investment Fiji during FY2022–2023 and FY2023–2024 are broadly reflected in macroeconomic indicators observed across the economy, including continued construction activity, strong growth in investment lending, higher foreign direct investment inflows and sustained foreign exchange activity.

The review period was characterised by significant global and domestic challenges, including supply chain disruptions, elevated construction costs, inflationary pressures and labour shortages arising from outward migration. Despite these constraints, investor interest remained strong, investment activity continued to expand, and several major projects progressed through various stages of implementation.

The Bank notes, however, that Investment Fiji's reported investment pipeline and facilitated project values provide an indication of investor interest and proposed investment activity, and these figures do not have a direct one-to-one relationship with the macroeconomic indicators monitored by the Reserve Bank. Investment Fiji data largely reflects projects at various stages of development, from conceptual, approval, and pre-development stages to projects under construction and completed, many of which may be implemented over several years or may not proceed to full execution.

Looking ahead, continued efforts to improve the business environment, strengthen workforce capabilities and support emerging sectors such as BPO, ICT and other knowledge-based industries will be important for sustaining investment growth, enhancing economic diversification and strengthening Fiji's long-term economic resilience.

Overall, Investment Fiji's activities in investment promotion, investor facilitation and export development have contributed positively to Fiji's investment climate, supported post-pandemic economic recovery and assisted efforts to broaden sources of growth, employment and foreign exchange earnings. This has helped reinforce investor confidence and support Fiji's broader economic development objectives.

End.

ANNEX 2

RESEARCH BRIEF

Information Brief for Standing Committee

Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

Comparative Analysis on Investment Fiji Annual Report 2022-2023 and 2024-2024.

1.0. Overview

This brief is provided to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs ("SC-EA" or "Committee") as requested through its secretariat. This comparative analysis is a summary of some of the key issues in the Investment Fiji Annual Report ("AR") for financial year 2022-2023[1] and 2023-2024[2]. The summary is designed to assist Honourable Members of Committee undertake their comparisons and related analysis of the organisation's performance as discussed in the ARs. The narrative provided here is only intended to assist the Committee with its appraisal of the reports and does not aim to provide in-depth oversight on the investment Fiji.

2.0. Introduction

Discussion Items	2022-2023	2023-2024
1.1. About	Investment Fiji is a Government . Investment Fiji was created in 1980 initially as the Economic Development Board under the *Economic Development Board Act* No.11 and in 1986 renamed as Fiji Trade and Investment Board. The institution continues in existence today as Investment Fiji in accordance with the *Investment Fiji Act 2022*. Investment Fiji primarily focuses on promoting and facilitating trade and investment, offering aftercare services, and advocating policies to improve Fiji's investment and business enabling environment.	
2.1. Vision	To be a leading economic development agency by ensuring increased sustainable levels of investment and exports.	
3.1. Mission	To create a positive economic impact in the lives of Fijians through premium investments, export, and employment opportunities, while diversifying the economy to make it more dynamic and less susceptible to global economic shocks.	
4.1. Values	• **Transparency:** Fostering trust and operating effortlessly for the customers to see and verify the performed actions. • **Reliability:** We believe in being trustworthy and performing consistently well in all the activities we undertake. • **Accessibility:** We strive to make information, activities, and/ or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many investors and exporters as possible.	

[1] Investment Fiji Annual Report 2022-2023. 44Investment-Fiji-Annual-Report-2022-2023-.pdf [Accessed on 25th June 2026]

[2] Investment Fiji Annual Report 2023-2024. 45Investment-Fiji-Annual-Report-2023-2024.pdf [Accessed on 25th June 2026]

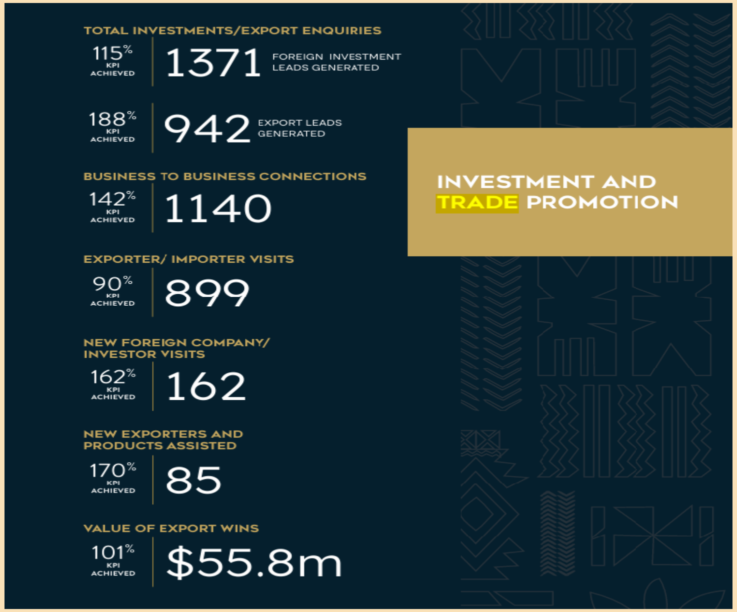
	• **Responsiveness:** We exchange information between private and public sector for increase in investment and export for Fiji. • **Communicative:** We create a culture of customer responsiveness by being able to respond to service enquiries and fulfil them in a timely manner. • **Effectiveness:** We deliver services to fulfil customer goals that helps them to have an easy and enjoyable experience or investor journey	
5.1. **Guiding Legislation**	**According to Section 5 of the Investment Fiji Act 2022[3], the mandate of Investment Fiji includes:** • **Investment Promotion:** Enhancing the contribution of investors to Fiji's economy by promoting the country's competitive and comparative advantages. • **Investment Facilitation:** Providing necessary information and services to assist prospective and existing investors in meeting their specific investment project needs. • **Export Promotion**: Facilitating and promoting the development and expansion of exports. • **Aftercare:** Assisting investors in overcoming challenges to the growth and expansion of their activities and supporting their expansion and diversification objectives. • **Policy Advocacy:** Collecting information and raising awareness on challenges faced by investors and recommending reform measures to improve Fiji's investment and business-enabling environment. • **Image Building:** Promoting Fiji as a desirable investment destination.	
6.1. Board and Executive Composition	Available on pages 11-13 of the AR	Available on pages 10-13 of the AR
7.1. Investment Promotions	• The Fiji Tourism Investment Summit 2023 • Fiji – New Zealand Business Mission on March 2023 • Fiji–Korea Business Forum 2022 • Fiji–New Zealand Business Council Forum • Fiji–Australia Business Council Joint Forum 2022 • Construction Industry Council Conference • Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association (HOTEC)	• The Asia-Pacific Hotel Industry Conference & Exhibition (AHICE) Fiji Investment in Tourism Summit 2024 • The Fiji-North America Business Mission, which was held from 4th – 14th May 2024 • PNG Investment Conference • First Nations Fiji Resource Foundation Symposium

[3] Fiji Government (2022) Investment Fiji Act 2022. Available at: https://www.laws.gov.fj/Acts/DisplayAct/3313 [Accessed: 25 June 2026].

	Conference 2022 • Top Executive (TOPEX) Conference 2022 • Asia Pacific IPAs FDI & Investment Conference (Thailand) • Asia Pacific Hotel Industry Conference & Exhibition (AHICE) • Fiji–European Union Trade & Investment Forum • Korea–Fiji Business Forum 2023	• 27th Australia Fiji Business Council Business Forum • New Zealand Fiji Business Council Joint Annual Conference 2023 • United Nations Asia-Pacific Innovation Forum • Pacific Infrastructure Conference 2023 • Pacific Fair 2023 • 8th World Investment Forum - UAE • Hotel Investment Conference Asia Pacific 2023 • Fiji Day Sydney Festival - Australia • NSW Business Council Fiji Day 2023 - Australia • Business Diplomacy Training for ACP Embassies in Brussels 2024 • International Scientific Conference in Russia • Guangdong Products Roadshow in Fiji 2023 • Asia-Pacific Hotel Industry Conference & Exhibition (AHICE) Launch 2023 • Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on CSW68 • Queensland Alumni Reception - Fiji • Customer Contact Week Australia and New Zealand • Super Sourcing Oceania 2024 - Fiji • PACER Plus Investment Promotion Toolkit Workshop • EXO Fiji 2024 • NZFBC and FNZBC Joint Annual Conference 2024 • New Zealand Business Mission to Fiji • Pacific Infrastructure Business Opportunities Seminar 2024 • Fiji-North America Mission 2024 • 10th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) • AHICE Fiji Investment in Tourism Summit 2024
Trade Promotions	• FOODEX Japan 2023	• Fiji–EU Kava Value Chain Workshop

	• ITC/UK Aid Inbound Delegation • Launch of the UK Trade Partnerships Programme • Naturally Good Trade Expo • Export Capability Programs • Export Supply Chain Program • Fiji Thrive Program • OACPS Business Days Forum	• Pacific Islands Entrepreneurship Expo • Pacific Regional Workshop on Trade in Services and Proposal Clinic • Fiji Day Sydney Event • Scoping Study on Developing the Kava-Based Pharmaceutical/Nutraceutical Industry in the Pacific • China International Import Expo (CIIE) 2023 • 2023 Guangdong Products Roadshow in Fiji • Understanding the US FDA Labelling and Regulatory Requirements • Fiji–German Business Roundtable Meeting • Farmers Forum by Fiji Crop & Livestock Council • Potential for Enhanced Fiji–Indonesia Economic Cooperation Talanoa Session • SIAL Shanghai Trade Fair • Coffee Forum • Naturally Good Expo 2024 • LR Group – Innovative Agro Industries (IAI) Visit • Indonesia Online Talanoa Session • Pacific Diplomatic Program • Cosmoprof Event, Las Vegas

Trade Promotion



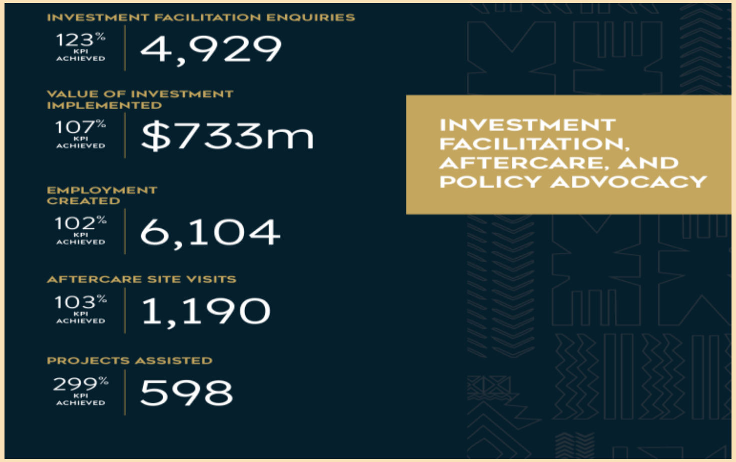
Source: Page 16

Trade

Trade Promotion	Target	Actuals	% Achieved
Number of Export Lead Generated (Enquiries)	600	1,027	171%
Value of Export Wins through Investment Fiji Intervention ($M)	61	85	139%
Number of Export Promotion Events (In-Bound / Out-Bound)	22	24	109%
Number of Export Capability Programs	11	14	127%
Number of Exporter/Importer Visits	1,100	1,265	115%
Number of New Exporters and Products Assisted	55	83	151%
Business to Business Connection	440	462	105%

Source: Page 29

Investment Facilitation, Aftercare, and Policy Advocacy

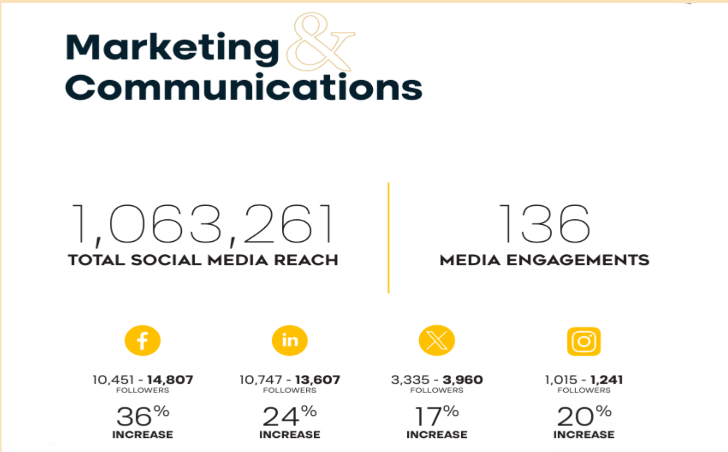


Source: Page 30

Investment Facilitation, Aftercare & Policy Advocacy

Investment Facilitation, Aftercare & Policy Advocacy	Target	Actuals	% Achieved
Number of Investment Facilitation Enquiries Handled	4,400	6,220	141%
Value of Investments Implemented ($M) (FDI & DDI)	753	1,214	161%
Employment Created	6,600	7,398	112%
Number of Facilitation & Aftercare Site Visits/ Meetings/Events	1,267	1,262	100%
Number of Investment Projects Assisted	220	657	299%
Number of re-investment project facilitation and assisted	220	277	126%
Facilitation Issues Solved	250	268	107%
Number of policy measures changed by government following Investment Fiji advocacy	6	6	100%

Source: Page 44

<table>
<tr>
<td>Image Building</td>
<td>


Source: Page 34
</td>
<td>


Source: Page 49
</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)</td>
<td>

SDG 5: Gender Equality – Investment Fiji intensified its efforts to achieve gender equality by collaborating with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). This partnership focused on mainstreaming gender equality into FDI attraction through three pillars: Policy and Governance, Innovative Financing, and Building ICT and Business Skills for Women entrepreneurs.
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth – The agency contributed to this goal by branding Fiji as an investment and trade hub to ensure job security and national economic growth. Efforts included building support and capability programs for MSMEs.
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure – Investment Fiji supported the development of resilient and sustainable infrastructure to advance

</td>
<td>

SDG 5: Gender Equality – The agency maintained a 50:50 gender balance in its permanent workforce (21 females and 21 males) as of July 31, 2024. It continues to promote inclusivity through its recruitment processes and participation in gender-focused investment forums.
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure – The IT department implemented smart technologies to optimize energy usage and reduce its carbon footprint. A major milestone was the migration of most application software to cloud technology, which significantly reduced reliance on on-premises servers and lowered electricity consumption.
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals – Investment Fiji revitalized and formed new strategic partnerships with multilateral agencies like the

</td>
</tr>
</table>

	the nation's progress.
	• **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals –** Strategic global partnerships were revitalized with organizations like UNESCAP and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to build value propositions for sustainable investment and implement sustainable development indicators.
	
	Assisting Businesses in Achieving SDGs
	Investment Fiji highlighted several private-sector projects for their contributions to specific sustainable goals:
	• **Lion One Metals (Tuvatu Alkaline Gold Project):**
	  ○ **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):** Created over 300 jobs.
	  ○ **SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production):** Focused on sustainable resource management and environmental stewardship.
	• **Totoka Islands Ltd (Aquam Insula Project):**
	  ○ **SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production):** Used eco-friendly glass bottles and upcycled materials.
	  ○ **SDG 13 (Climate Action):** Reforestation efforts removing 24,000 tons of CO2 annually and using solar-powered facilities.
	• **Solar Hub:**
	  ○ **SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy):** Provided clean energy to off-grid areas.
	  ○ **SDG 13 (Climate Action):** Reduced carbon emissions and supported climate resilience.
	• **Pacific Specialist Healthcare (PSH):**
	  ○ **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being):**
		World Bank, IFC, JETRO, ITC, the EU Delegation, and IOM to drive sustainable economic growth and facilitate diaspora investment.
		
		Assisting Businesses in Achieving SDGs
		
		Investment Fiji provided strategic guidance and aftercare support to several private-sector projects that contributed to diverse global goals:
		
		• **Hydrogen Power Fiji Pte Limited (Viti Levu Renewstable):**
		  ○ **SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) & SDG 13 (Climate Action):** Uses hydrogen fuel cells to provide 24/7 green electricity, aiming to reduce heavy fuel oil consumption on Viti Levu by 15%.
		• **The Fertile Factory & Co:**
		  ○ **SDG 13 (Climate Action):** Produces local non-synthetic fertilizer from green and animal waste that was previously destined for landfills, benefiting the "ridge to reef" ecosystem.
		• **Golden Manufacturers Pte Limited (Regen Recycling Project):**
		  ○ **SDG 14 (Life Below Water) & SDG 15 (Life on Land):** Focuses on recycling waste plastic and tires to safeguard marine resources and terrestrial ecosystems.
		• Pacific Specialist Healthcare (PSH):

	Improved local access to specialized medical care. ◦ **SDG 4 (Quality Education):** Promoted professional development and skills in the medical field. ◦ **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):** Provided employment for over 200 healthcare professionals. The detailed reporting for these goals can be found primarily on **pages 39, 40, and 41** of the 2022–2023 Annual Report	◦ **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being):** Provides advanced medical technology (e.g., Stone Laser and colposcopy microscope) to improve local treatment outcomes and minimize surgical risks. ◦ **SDG 4 (Quality Education):** Emphasizes professional development and local specialization in the medical field. • **Other Supported Entities:** ◦ **Island Solar (Fiji) Pte Ltd:** Delivering tailored solar and battery storage installations to businesses and communities. ◦ **Leeward Island Services:** Promoting clean energy through electricity generation and distribution on Malolo Island. ◦ **International School Suva:** Expanding educational infrastructure for Early Childhood Education. The detailed reporting for these goals can be found on pages **57, 58, 59,** and **60** of the 2023–2024 Annual Report.

Suggested Questions

- Under section 6(q)of the *Investment Fiji Act 2022*, under your functions ***"undertake or commission research, feasibility and project studies, sector analysis or any other analysis within the mandate of Investment Fiji related to the investment climate and opportunities in Fiji;"*** what are areas and research that Investment Fiji has undertaken?
- Without research how does Investment Fiji prioritise and focus its research issues?
- **Which sectors are prioritised for export growth and value addition?** Key sectors include Food & Agriculture (livestock, fisheries, kava, ginger), Mining

(copper, precious stones), Manufacturing, and Chemicals.

- What were the results of the inaugural Fiji–North America Business Mission in 2024? The mission generated 32 investment leads and led to over US$435 million in total investment commitments, including a major US$400 million waste-to-fuel project (Page 8 2023-2024 report)
- **What is the "Look Back Home" strategy?** It is a diaspora engagement strategy designed to leverage the skills, capital, and networks of the approximately 233,000+ Fijians residing abroad to boost trade and FDI (Page 8 and 54 AR 2023-2024)
- Under section 6(t)of the Investment Fiji Act 2022, under your function "***establish and maintain an investment portal with information on the regulatory and institutional framework for investment and detailed data on investment opportunities in Fiji;"*** has the organisation established such portal?
- Does Investment Fiji pitch to local/domestic investors to contribute towards development of Fiji? How?
- How does Investment Fiji resolve dispute that arises? Has there been any dispute? (Question according to section 6(e)of the *Investment Fiji Act 2022*, under your function ***"assist investors with resolving investment disputes in accordance with the Investment Act 2021;"***) (such as WG Friendship Plaza in Suva, standing 112 meters (367 feet) tall with 28 floors.)
- The 2023–2024 report notes that systemic challenges—such as delays in immigration, environmental impact assessments (EIA), land lease approvals, and utility connections—remain "common issues". While the agency influenced six policy changes, these major hurdles persist. What is the **accountable timeline** for the Investment Facilitation Committee (IFC) to resolve these inter-agency coordination gaps that continue to hinder investor confidence?

DISCLAIMER - This information is provided to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. All reasonable precautions have been taken to verify the information contained here. The Research and Library Services Unit shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice. The Research and Library Services Unit accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties.

ANNEX 3

VERBATIM REPORTS

[VERBATIM REPORT]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

ANNUAL REPORT

Investment Fiji 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 Annual Reports

SUBMITTEE: **Investment Fiji**

VENUE: **Big Committee Room, Parliament**

DATE: **Friday, 3rd July, 2026**

VERBATIM REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON FRIDAY 3RD JULY, 2026 AT 10.20 A.M.

Present:

(1)	Hon. S. Tubuna	Chairman
(2)	Hon. P.D. Kumar	Deputy Chairperson
(3)	Hon. S.T. Koroilavesau	Member
(4)	Hon. K.V. Ravu	Member

Interviewee/Submittee: Investment Fiji

In Attendance:

(1)	Mr. Filimoni Waqabaca	Chairman
(2)	Mr. Kamal Chetty	Chief Executive Officer
(3)	Ms. Elisha Mala	Head of Research and Strategic Planning
(4)	Mr. Lisala Dyer	Head of Regional and Trade Development
(5)	Mr. Sanjesh Narayan	Head of Investment Facilitation, After-care and Policy Advocacy
(6)	Ms. Esther Salem	Head of Investment and Trade
(7)	Mr. Ravinesh Prasad	Manager Finance

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, members of the media and the public, secretariat, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you all, and it is a pleasure to welcome everyone to this public hearing session.

At the outset, for information purposes, pursuant to Standing Order 111 of the Standing Orders of Parliament, all Committee meetings are to be open to the public. Therefore, this submission meeting is open to the public and the media, and will be aired live on Parliament's channel through the *Walesi* platform and live-streamed through the Parliament's *Facebook* page. For any sensitive information concerning the submission that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the Committee either in private or in writing.

Do note that this will only be allowed in are few specific circumstances which include:

(1) National security matters;
(2) Third-party confidential information;
(3) Personnel and human resource matters; 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 directed 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 all information gathered is covered for under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act and the Standing Orders of Parliament. Please note that the Committee does not condone libel or slander or any allegations against any individual that is no present her today to defend themselves.

In terms of other protocols, please be advised that whilst the meeting is in progress, movement within the meeting room will be restricted. There should be minimal use of mobile phones.

(*Introduction of Committee Members*)

With us this morning are the Chairperson and the representatives from Investment Fiji which the Committee has invited to provide a submission on the Annual Reports for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

The Committee has invited Investment Fiji to present their report as part of our oversight and scrutiny responsibilities. This engagement is important as it allows the Committee to assess Investment Fiji's performance, financial management and effectiveness in delivering its mandate of promoting investment and supporting Fiji's economic development. It also provides an opportunity to review key achievements, challenges, and future priorities while ensuring accountability, transparency, and efficient use of public resources. We thank Investment Fiji for appearing before us and we look forward to their presentation.

(*Introduction of officials from Investment Fiji*)

MR. K. CHETTY.- Mr. Chairman, we have shared a presentation, and it talks about the role of Investment Fiji, some current information, our performance from 2022 to 2024 and what we are working currently on at the moment.

On the first slide, we talk about the mandate of Investment Fiji which is mandated under the Investment Fiji Act. We are supposed to undertake a number of roles which include:

(a) Investment promotion;
(b) Investment facilitation;
(c) Export promotion;
(d) After-care (supporting investors, both local and foreign);
(e) Policy advocacy; and
(f) Overall building an image of Fiji as an investment and destination to buy products from.

In the next slide, I have highlighted the model we operate on, basically talking about slide three on the model Investment Fiji has. We follow the role of the investor, basically when they are planning to start a project in Fiji. We have a team that looks after them and gets them into Fiji. We help them explore about investing in Fiji, negotiate and get them started. The second stage starts when they establish, operate, expand and diversify. The second stage is, we have another team that looks after them establishing in Fiji, going through the challenges and a team that looks after them when they export. Basically, we cover the whole journey of an investor and exporter and see if we can assist them during that process.

Currently, our target as an investment promotion agency, we want investment to be 25- plus percentage of GDP. We aiming Foreign Domestic Investment (FDI) to be $500 million-plus of GDP, we want export to grow at 10 percent and also to be in top investment promotion agency in the region.

With the new board, we are also looking at how can we be more self-sufficient in terms of getting revenue for ourselves. At the same time, we are looking at bringing back some roles that Investment Fiji used to play previously in order for us to monitor and facilitate projects better. At the same time, we are also looking at increasing investment in the region. As part of that overall, if we achieve those targets, we are aiming towards growing the economy at 5 percent, obviously technology transfer, economic diversification, and other things that we do as an investment and trade promotion agency.

The challenges that lies ahead of us, Mr. Chairman, as an investment promotion agency in attracting investment, obviously investment globally is still being impacted with what is happening around the world; economic uncertainty, labour and skill availability, infrastructure readiness, regulatory and approval timeframes, and the new one is around fuel crisis and the impact that it is going to have on the economy.

I thought to also highlight where our investments are currently coming from. Most of our leads or people that we talk to are from Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Currently, we have in our database, people talking to us from 52 countries and in different forms. As part of our role, we also focus on diaspora investment, so we do a lot of work with diaspora investors. Part of our bigger portfolio is a lot of domestic investors. The domestic investors also play a very important role in the growth of the economy and the investment that we talk about.

We are currently managing 254 projects. These projects are not Expressions of Interest (EOI), that are real projects, that they have started work on. We do a lot with them to see if they can facilitate on time. We also study, "Journey of an investor". We look at how long it takes for an investor to start a project, and what are some of the challenges they face in their journey. Out of the 250 projects:

- 42 percent on construction stage;
- 37 percent on pre-development; and
- 21 percent on the conceptual stages.

Out of that, 59 percent are domestic investors; and 41 percent are foreign investors.

This continues to change as we engage with other investors. As I mentioned, these are serious people. These are not anyone trying to show us an expression of interest or has a dream to invest in Fiji.

We also see a bit more diversified portfolio now. As I know, there was concentration only on tourism before, but later on, I will talk about it in my presentation. We have projects in real estate services, agriculture, energy and Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO).

We have a number of other sectors that have come and are interested in investing. As part of our role, we are trying to see if we can diversify the economic base of the country.

I have also highlighted in the next slide, the projects are distributed across the country, it is not only on one area but obviously in Nadi in the western region and Suva has got a big chunk of it, but as our role, we want to diversify those investments across the country.

Most recent performance. These are the data from years 2022 to 2024:

- Investment to GDP-ratio was 21.8 percent; and
- Most recently is 20.9 percent.

As I mentioned, our target is to get it to 25 percent. Annual export increase, I have also highlighted and FDI inflows have slowly increased, but we want to increase further foreign investment into the country.

Currently, we have 42 staff, 33 is the average age:

- 56 percent female; and
- 44 percent male.

We have offices in Lautoka, Labasa and Suva is our headquarters.

I thought to just quickly talk about our performance for 2022 to 2024; those are some latest information.

We were allocated a budget of $2.7 million and $2.78 million in the two years. Our marketing budget was $320,000 and $250,000 that we worked on. This is the ROI that we thought to highlight. We spent $1, we generated $370,000 of project registration and $229,000 of project implemented during that year. For 2023, we have also highlighted what was our return, based on the marketing budget we got. About 90 percent of our expenditure is an operational expenditure that includes:

- Office;
- Staff; and
- Other expenses related to the operation of Investment Fiji.

We undertook four events, based on our budget, during both those years. We went to New Zealand for the first time, so we started the first mission there. Then we went to USA and also Canada. We also hosted the Tourism Summit. For the first time we brought the investors to Fiji. It was not an event outside, but we thought to bring the investors to Fiji to show them what the opportunities were in the tourism sector. We then started with other sectors later on. I have then highlighted some examples of wins out of those missions:

(a) Duco Consultancy recently started a new office in Nadi - they were part of the first mission from New Zealand.
(b) Gaia (Earth) is a project in Dreketi, Vanua Levu – that also was part of our mission when we went to New Zealand for the first time.
(c) Turmeric and Duruka farming in Sigatoka from a diaspora investor that came as part of our mission to US A.

As I mentioned, our focus when we go on promotional tours is not only on tourism. It is also on agriculture, ICT and other sectors. These were some of the trade deals that we got. There are many more, but , I have highlighted some of them:

(a) Road King from Taveuni;
(b) Juice Fiji;
(c) Food Processors Fiji (Pte) Limited
(d) Paradise Lighting; and
(e) Agro-marketing.

These were some of the deals that were made during that mission.

In terms of project management, we were managing 195 projects. Again, I want to emphasise, these are not dream projects. These are some real projects and these continues to change. We would be happy to share with the Committee the list of each of these projects, where they are, with pictures and what are they doing with each process. We have all the details on that. I thought to just give you some examples, these were some of the projects that got implemented during the two years.

- Nawi Marina;
- Pepper Advantage; and
- Pacific Centrecom Fiji Ltd Nadi.

Some of the bigger projects that started during that year:

- The Google project.
- Vatu Talei – started construction.
- Crowne Plaza.

We have highlighted some resorts but there were also some agriculture projects that started during that year. We also formed some subcommittees to assist investors.

As mentioned, we are facilitating investment. We have a team, we assign case offices for each project, and they work with each of these investors to see if they can facilitate those projects. We formed an Investment Facilitation Committee to facilitate those projects. We had also formed an Agriculture Task Force to see if agriculture projects get facilitated faster. I will talk about some of the examples.

We also looked at educational tourism, which we think is an opportunity. We had a number of issues where investors faced with their work permits, so we formed a committee to facilitate that and then we worked with the Ministry to see if the BusinessNOW platform can be fast-tracked, so everything can be digitalised. We also worked on a policy called Significant Investor Projects, facilitating investment of a certain level or fast-tracking that. These are some examples, in agriculture, these are projects, as I mentioned again, not dreams, but some real projects that are happening on the ground, either from feasibility to implementation:

- Coffee - there are two projects that we are currently working and this will develop the coffee industry in Fiji. .
- Cocoa – we are also doing a number of work around the cocoa industry;
- Copra – there is a market that we have got, and we are working with the Ministry of Agriculture;
- Fresh Produce - there are two new farms that started, if you go to Sabeto in Nadi, there are some big fresh produce farms that have recently started;
- Fiji Water Project – Wonderful Company Project, Citrus/Lime Project in Vanua Levu had started;
- Atken Spence - they are already here, they have made about 15 to 16 trips to Fiji finalising their deal, so they will be focussing on palm oil, cocoa, tea, tropical fruits and berries.

These are some of the projects that will help us diversify a bit more of the economic base. The model is not them planting it, but working with smallholder farmers to see if they can educate them and work with them, in order to facilitate those projects.

Aquaculture, we have also done a bit of work. Eel farming is one of them we are pursuing and we think we have a potential and the other one is around prawn farming.

In manufacturing, if you look at diversifying the economic base, we think there are some opportunities in manufacturing especially around nutraceutical. We have got about three companies we are working on to see if we can facilitate the nutraceutical industry here such as:

- Kava;
- Ginger;
- Noni;
- Turmeric; and
- Moringa.

We want to scale-up that has an impact on the economy.

The other one is, we have got a company that will start very soon, Cheese Manufacturing in Fiji and they are looking at the dairy industry and see how they can facilitate that. Near Shoring is another opportunity in manufacturing, we have Byron Aviation which manufactures small aircraft relevant parts. They have already started in Fiji and opened an office in Nadi. They moved their from Sydney to Fiji. We are also talking to companies like Daikin and others and then Pharmaceutical.

The last one in manufacturing is, we have got a company, already has a got a market and is based in Australia, currently looking at Fiji. They are about to start their project around processing of sweet potato flour, *uto* flour, cassava flour, et cetera. They are looking at setting up structure to export this.

The other one is around ICT and BPO. We have got a number of BPO leads we are working on. We are also working on AI centres. Two has already opened, there are more we are working on. The other one is around cyber security centres, with the Google's project coming in and then Data Centre.

Around the green economy, we think these are potential diversification that will help the country. Recycling economy, I am not sure if you aware of it. Golden Manufactures has already set up a recycling facility in Wainadoi and we have got a few others. Carbon trading we see as an opportunity, there is a lot work that needs to be done but we see that as an opportunity, and the Energy Transition will help the economy.

To finish off, these are some new industries that we are potentially exploring with the Board - Deep Seawater Industry. We think there is a potential in Fiji which has not been talked about. Itself, in Asia, it is a big industry and we have a lot of potential. Shipbuilding, we are talking to two of the companies from Australia that are looking at doing ship building and building a maritime facility here. A big opportunity for us is Olympics 2032. We are already talking and seeing if we organise ourselves, there are about \$500 million to \$600 million of business we can take out of Olympics 2032 because it is just happening at our doorstep.

Where we need support, Mr. Chairman, to this Committee is, improving co-ordination between ministries and agencies inorder to realise some of these projects, ease of doing business, digitalisation of some of the processes, infrastructure readiness which are challenges in some of the places; maintaining the cost of business, we always talk about, the last one is the right budget for Investment Fiji. If we get some of these things right, at the end of the day, we can achieve 25 percent target that we are targeting towards and also the \$500 million and other things that I have highlighted.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- *Vinaka vakalevu* CEO for that comprehensive presentation.

Just to start it off, you have mentioned about domestic direct investment; I think that is very important and also the improvement of coordination with other agencies. There were two couples who came in from Auckland, they wanted to establish a restaurant in Suva. One of the problems that they faced was, there was no one to cook the food because there was a lack of chef so they had to hire the chef from overseas. They had to get someone from overseas and the work permit, the time it takes. They were complaining and it came up to Office of the Prime Minister and I was looking around on how we could help. They came all the way from Auckland, and they were saying that they would return to Auckland because the visa was not approved or the time it took. After-care can have a helpline where people who are faced with difficulties can contact.

HON. K.V. RAVU.- Mr. Chairman under section 6(q) of Investment Fiji Act 2022, under your functions states and I quote:

> "Undertake or commission research, feasibility and project studies, sector analysis or any other analysis within the mandate of Investment Fiji related to the investment climate and opportunities in Fiji."

What are the areas and research that Investment Fiji has undertaken?

MR. K. CHETTY.- Mr. Chairman, through you, when we changed our role, one of the things we really wanted to build is our research capability. We now have a team that researches about respective sectors. What we do is in our research programme, we look at how can we find opportunities in new sectors and see how we can diversify the economy. For example, if you talk about tourism, a lot of them are focused on just accommodation. Within the tourism sector, how can we diversify new things and new opportunities. Our research team looks at what are those opportunities that are and does that opportunity make sense to an investor. We do a detailed analysis of what that opportunity looks like, and then we go and find out where can we find those investors on those opportunities and where will they come from.

For example, I will talk about retirement village. That is an opportunity we see in the tourism sector. Before we talk to an investor, there needs to be a lot of analysis done to make it happen. There are a lot of other things. We also look at, which other investors in Fiji can potentially be a joint venture with them. Once we develop a total analysis on that sector, then we take it to the market and talk to the investors. We also do analysis on trends happening globally. We look at what is happening in different sectors, for example, in agriculture, we look at things like, if we have Fijian products, where can we take those products; which market segments can we tap into; is it the the diaspora segment, who are those people in the diaspora segment that we can tap onto those markets? That is the kind of research we take.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Just a follow-up question. I think the honourable Member wanted to know exactly which researches you have done for that particular year. It is more from the performance assessment point of view.

MR. K. CHETTY.- Mr. Chairman, in fact, that year (2022), we did not have a research team. So now we have built a team of research of three people. Ms. Elisha Mala is the head of research, she came from the Ministry of Strategic Planning and Finance to work with us. In the subsequent annual reports, you will see all the research that we have done. We share some of them with the ministries also to find and synergise those opportunities.

HON.S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to ask the participation of landowners. As you know, the development and investment in Fiji basically hinges around, if you look at agriculture and Energy Fiji Limited (EFL), these are the two main issues that the Committee had discussed on development within Fiji. The landowners hold some land that are not productive in agriculture and basically, I had highlighted this in our previous meetings, the importance of EFL and connecting with landowners to have solar farms on this unproductive land. Perhaps, Investment Fiji could be used as a stage to actually attract investment in this area. As you know, EFL has always had a problem of saying that the infrastructure was expensive to be established and for them to lease out to any foreign investor , it is going to cost a lot of money. But we had indicated that if traditional landowners give up their unproductive land as solar farms and sell electricity to the main grid, I think it is a win-win situation for the landowners and EFL. The unproductive land can be utilised and EFL can produce more energy in that sector.

The other is agriculture. When we talk about agriculture, we then look at land and land is basically owned by traditional landowners, I think about 90 percent. Is it possible for Investment Fiji to be used as a staging tool to ask investors coming in on JV with landowners, because if you open that, I think the landowners will be much more proactive in creating that joint venture because they will basically benefit outright from the joint venture as a cash incentive for them to participate.

MR. K. CHETTY.- Mr. Chairman, through you, thank you honourable Member for that question. What we have done with Investment Fiji, we have set up a team which is head by Mr. Lisala Dyer to look at all those opportunities outside what we do because we realised, we can go out and get investors, but the impact on the economy might not necessarily be right across. For us to open the rural economy, the economy that is maybe not doing well that part of the country, we have to involve the resource owners in that conversation. What we have done is, obviously first getting that information ready with us. The second is, how do we connect to the project. So we are developing a model or have developed a model around it. What we do is, for example, there is a company XY that wants to export. We assist them finding a new market, but we also ask them what are the 10 products we are importing? One of them said, we are importing passionfruit puree from outside. What we do is, see if we can create a joint venture with the landowners to supply that. What we are doing is, we are bringing the *iTaukei* so they can educate the farmers. The second is, our Chairman who is from FDB, they can bringing the funding in that conversation. That is the kind of model we are looking at for Investment Fiji, to see if we can get the landowners involved and opening those land. So that is part of our strategy also.

MR. F. WAQABACA.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, thank you honourable Member for that question which is a valid one. You would have heard from our CEO that one of the objectives that we are working towards is to ensure that investment is spread right across the country and not concentrating in one particular sector, which is tourism. In that regard, we are studying the strength of each of the provinces or regions that we have and then using that to look for investors. And in our search for investors, we are bringing in various models. One, as sole investor or as partner with the resource owners or as partner with the private sector. We are encouraging PPP partnership agreement because we feel that some of the development challenges that we have can better be addressed through partnership, so we are partnering with private sector, we are partnering with development partners seeing what opportunities can be gathered from them and definitely the resource owners. We would like to see them benefit from some of these investments too. Within the Investment Fiji Board, we have representatives from the Reserve Bank of Fiji, Fiji National Provident Fund , iTaukei Land Trust Board and Fiji Development Bank. Sometimes we are competing who to get the investor when they express interest. We offer, the fact, that we could do joint ventures with investment, if it is to start off, at least generate some economic activities whether in agriculture or in solar farms and other areas in the country. Thank you for those comments which are valid and we will keep that in mind.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Though you Chair, the last slide that you had put up, where you are talking about some of the challenges. Right at the corner where you are talking about the budget for Investment Fiji. I will be very honest with you. If I have to give you money for your work, I will not give you. Why? Because of the way you have written your annual report. Your annual report is not justifying what you are actually doing on the ground. The performance that you mentioned here is not clearly specified as you did today with us, so there is a shortfall in your reporting structure.

So if I am the Minister of Finance and I want to know your performance, I will go through this and I will say, "it is more of a promotion kind of material, I cannot assess your performance." So how do I assess your performance? I will assess your performance by your PowerPoint presentation which you just did. I wish this information is included here. So it is a lesson learnt. Make sure that you include this information here because we want to really assess your performance – that is the work of the Committee. We are not able to assess that because the way the report is written.

Second point is, verification of the information. The Auditor-General only audits the finances: who audits your performance; why should we believe that that is your KPI and achievement; and how are you providing that information to the Committee so that we are convinced that it is your achievement?

Verification is equally important. When you are talking about the projects, how many projects were registered, how many are at the planning stages, how many are at the construction and how many are operational?

Similarly, you need to show that in your Annual Report if it is a non-construction type of activity - what are the stages, what is happening and very important that that information is given by sector, like real estate, construction, et cetera.

That is the kind of information we are looking at to properly assess Investment Fiji's performance and therefore the Committee can then make a recommendation that your budget needs to increase. Currently what we see, as you have said, 90 percent is going towards your operational, administration, et cetera. You have only 10 percent for this kind of work, which is very minute. If you are a promotion agency, your budget should be almost 70/30 or 60/40 kind of a mix. That mix we are not seeing at the moment. That is another area that you need to work and you can do it if you give us your correct assessment of the work that you have undertaken.

The other thing that I found the report lacked was board performance - extremely important. It does not mean that they are the board, therefore their performance should not be gauged. From the public accountability point of view, board performance is equally important. What did the board do during that year? If they met, what were the outcomes? How did the board drive the institution? That information needs to be included going forward.

However, I must commend Investment Fiji, at least some of the recommendations we made last time, you have taken that on board. That is good, that is the whole idea of this discussion is to how you can improve your reporting so that we all can believe in the work that you do and therefore we become your voice in asking for more funds for Investment Fiji because we will know that you are delivering. I was quite impressed with your PowerPoint presentation, particularly the table where you showed that investment is not only centred around Suva, Nadi and Lautoka, but it is going out into the rural areas, and it is really clearly shown. You do not have to put too many words because I can just see it and understand - that is how your reporting should be. I just thought that I must identify those areas and highlight it to you so that the next reporting, we should be able to see a lot more improvement.

MR. K. CHETTY.- Mr. Chairman, through you, thank you honourable Member for those suggestions. We have noted it very well. I think you made previous suggestions in our report which we have now included on the latest that has changed over the years. We have noted on the board's performance – that is something we will definitely see to be included in the report. Our only challenge is the projects continue to move in different stages. The one I presented is the latest one.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- You report according to the stages.

MR. K. CHETTY.- That is something we will include. On the monetary part, , I have noted that and we will definitely see to that in future reports that we have all those included with the year that is available.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I would also like to make this important suggestion for your annual reporting. For example, the projects that are in the construction phase is no longer confidential. You can say which projects are in the construction phase, projects that are completed, you name them. But I understand, projects that are registered, people do not want this this information to be out so soon, we understand that. We do not want that information. The only thing you can do is, those projects that are registered, you just give a breakdown of how in agriculture, how many fisheries or how many real estate, et cetera so that we will be able to gauge better the direction we are taking – are we too heavy on tourism and too light on something else? We have to make sure that it is balanced to some extent. We cannot put all our eggs in one basket – so we will be able to assess that.

If you are not going to report that way, then the Committee will have no option but to ask Auditor-General to do a performance audit of Investment Fiji. That is something that we can ask for. But having seen your PowerPoint presentation, I am very convinced that Investment Fiji is doing a great job. They need more funding, unfortunately, they are not reporting it in their annual reports.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- If there are no other questions, I would like to close this meeting. We would like to thank our colleagues from Investment Fiji and I re-emphasise the importance of agriculture, ensuring that agriculture is also being prioritised. The more we concentrate on tourism, the support provided by Government moves the resources away from those areas. Tax free provisions that was done 30 years ago, that has an impact on moving the land and training, et cetera, from agriculture. I wish to highlight again the need to re-strategise and include agriculture as a priority. Now with your new Chairman, you can work together in terms of financing and working on getting more investors in that field.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- One point that is still in my head and I want to get it out – the investment pipeline. We had a discussion earlier on. I think it is important that we specify, of all that $8 billion investment, what percentage of that is in the different stages so that it is more convincing, it is not like a pie in the sky. We want to be convinced that it is going to happen and is happening on the ground.

MR. F. WAQABACA.- Mr. Chairman, through you, thank you for that comment, honourable Kumar. I think we had shown a chart on the various stages of that $8.8 billion. We have more than $8.8 billion but we are not going to include them unless it is really concrete and there is substance in the investment that has been shown. We do not want to give false information in the market or heighten expectation. So therefore, we are very cautious in the figures that we announce in public. The point is taken , and that is why we express the information in that fashion to show that this is not just expression being given to us, but really, conceptual, on the ground, and those still being designed and awaiting approval. The approval ones, we hope that our inter-agencies that we are asking for will help us to unlock those investments.

If I can just give a figure, we have about $4.4 billion awaiting decision and we have been talking to our colleagues, the Ministry and the agencies, if they can help us fast-track these approvals, we will reach 5 percent growth very easily. To get 5 percent growth, you need about $1.8 billion of investment annually. We already have that in the pipeline and I think with the coordination of agencies, we will reach that.

Another point, honourable Kumar, on the board performance, we are fairly new and that is something that we have discussed. I am not always satisfied with the status quo. I want to leave a legacy, I am going to challenge the institution to a higher level of performance and we will decide on the KPIs which will then filter down to CEO and the others. Be rest assured, I have seen the KPIs that they have met, it is just that they did not include it in the report. I think maybe in the next report, we will include that, but you can start lobbying for a higher budget for us to your Members.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I will certainly do that but you need to improve on your annual reporting.

The other area of concern that we had discussed earlier on is how much of money is coming into the country, that needs to be reported in your annual report. How much of employment has been generated, verification is through FNPF. So that kind of data must be here, which is a lot more convincing.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I wish to sincerely thank all of you for availing yourselves for this submission meeting. To our colleagues from Investment Fiji , we thank you for your time and we hope that you will avail yourselves if the Committee has any further queries. Our meeting is now adjourned.

The Committee adjourned at 11.06 a.m.

[VERBATIM REPORT]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

ANNUAL REPORT

INVESTMENT FIJI
2022-2023 AND 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORTS

SUBMITTEE: **Reserve Bank of Fiji**

VENUE: **Big Committee Room, Parliament**

DATE: **Friday, 3rd July, 2026**

VERBATIM REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON FRIDAY 3RD JULY , 2026 AT 9.27 A.M.

Present:

(1)	Hon. S. Tubuna	Chairman
(2)	Hon. P.D. Kumar	Deputy Chairperson
(3)	Hon. S.T. Koroilavesau	Member
(4)	Hon. K.V. Ravu	Member

Interviewee/Submittee: **Reserve Bank of Fiji**

In Attendance:

(1)	Mr. Ariff Ali	Governor
(2)	Mr. Esala Masitabua	Deputy Governor
(3)	Ms. Jacinta Hesaie	Chief Manager Economics
(4)	Mr. Petaia Tuimanu	Chief Manager Financial Markets
(5)	Ms. Jacqueline Christopher	Manager Exchange Control

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Let us call the meeting to order. I would like to welcome our colleagues from the Reserve Bank of Fiji to this submission meeting.

Honourable Members, members of the media and the public, the secretariat, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you all, and it is a pleasure to welcome everyone to this public hearing session. At the outset, for information purposes pursuant to Standing Order 111 of the Standing Orders of Parliament, all Committee meetings are to be open to the public. Therefore, this submission meeting is open to the public and the media and will be aired live on Parliament's channel through the *Walesi* platform and livestreamed through the Parliament's *Facebook* page.

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 are few specific circumstances, which include:

(1) national security matters;
(2) third-party confidential information;
(3) personnel or human resource matters; 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 chairperson. 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 all information gathered is covered for under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act and the Standing Orders of Parliament. Please note that the Committee does not condone libel, slander or any allegations against any individual that is not present today to defend themselves. In terms of other protocols of this Committee, please be advised that whilst the meeting is in progress, movement within the meeting room will be restricted and there should be minimal usage of mobile phones.

(*Introduction of Committee Members*)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- With us this morning are the representatives from the Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF), which the Committee has invited to provide a submission on the Investment Fiji Annual Reports for the years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. We have invited RBF to give a presentation on Investment Fiji because it plays a critical role in promoting investment, supporting business growth, and contributing to Fiji's economic development.

Understanding Investment Fiji's functions, services and current priorities will help us better appreciate the investment landscape and the opportunities available to businesses and investors. Today's presentation will provide available insights into the support available for investments, facilitation, business establishment and economic expansion activities. It is also an opportunity for us to engage directly with RBF representatives, ask questions and strengthen our understanding of the investment environment in Fiji.

(*Introduction of officials from Reserve Bank of Fiji*)

MR. A. ALI.- Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting the Reserve Bank to contribute or make our submission to the Investment Fiji Annual Report. This is the first time we are fronting up the Committee on the Investment Fiji Annual Report, and we thank you for this invitation so that we can share our thoughts, particularly in the area of investment and how we fit in.

I must confess that when we were asked, the first thing I did was go back and look at Investment Fiji's Annual Reports. We have given you a written submission, what I will do this morning is highlight some key points from our submission as well as some additional points and maybe we can then open for questions and discussion.

Investment Fiji's key role is promotion, facilitation and stimulating investment and export to help the Fijian economy. It is important to note that their role is promotion and marketing. They are not responsible for each and every investment that happens. There are a number of agencies including the Reserve Bank that is responsible when someone wants to invest and these includes:

- Ministry of Town and Country Planning;
- Municipal Councils;
- Registrar for Companies;
- Water Authority of Fiji (WAF);
- iTaukei Land Trust Board (iTLTB);
- Department of Lands;
- Energy Fiji Limited (EFL);
- Ministry of Environment; and
- Ministry of Health, et cetera.

So, there are a number of agencies that are ultimately responsible for any investment to kick-off. When I look at the report, it comes from that perspective. I also looked at their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and I must confess that we assumed that those KPIs had been approved, vetted by the board, by management and by the auditors. I am not here to talk about whether those are right or wrong, I think they have a board who will do it. However, what I think is really important is for all of us to understand that investment is important for any country, whether it is domestic or local investment.

How does the Reserve Bank of Fiji fit in? Let me talk about that first. What is our role? Our role as a central bank is to make sure that we have conducive economic growth. When you have high growth rates, then everyone will want to invest because high growth rates translates to more income and profit. No one invests and then not going to make profit. Profit, in some people's eyes is taboo or bad. I feel that for the private sector, they will have to make a profit, otherwise they will not get a return on their capital, they will not borrow because ultimately, they have to pay. We can all debate about how much profit is good and how much profit is abnormal. That is a separate point, but they need to make profit.

Our job ultimately is to make sure that the economic environment, together with fiscal policy and others, to ensure that there is a conducive environment for the private sector to invest. So, what do we do in this regard? One of it is making sure that we our financial system is strong so that when individuals or businesses want to borrow, they are able to borrow what they want, provided they meet the requirements in terms of the credit rates, deposits, et cetera to fulfill the requirements because the funds that the bank lend out are not actually the banks, it is public's funds. So they are just an intermediary taking funds from the depositors and lending, making sure that we have enough strong prudential policies to protect the bank, but also for the bank's to ultimately lend out.

The other, of course, is making sure that the interest rate in the market is suitable for economic growth. This is something I had shared earlier with the Standing Committee, our interest rates right now are at historical low. This is something that we have had over the last three to four years, despite the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). I do not mean this in an arrogant manner but I think for us, this is our bread and butter. We know what it is good for and this is why we have consistently rejected the IMF's recommendations to increase interest rates. We feel that this is not a time to increase interest rates when the economy is fragile and has not grown above trend, which is about 3 percent or 4 percent in the recent past. We feel that the most appropriate monetary policy right now is to keep interest rates low. We know there are always risks of keeping interest rates low, but we feel that we have managed this well. So, keeping interest low so that people will be able to borrow and if interest rates are low, the chances of them borrowing is higher than when interest rates are high.

The other is also making sure that we have sufficient foreign reserves. When foreign investors invest in Fiji, one of the things they look at is will they be able to take out their profits, will they be able to take out their dividends, if they have to sell their investment, will they be able to withdraw their funds out of Fiji and they also look at whether we have exchange rate stability.

The last thing we want is investors putting in money here and when they have to take it out, the exchange rate is significantly devalued or depreciated so they take out much less than what they think. Of course, we have exchange control policies that states how much foreign investors can borrow from the local banks. We want them to bring in capital as well, we do not always allow them to borrow everything from Fiji. We have a debt-to-equity ratio for them.

The last thing is, we have an exchange control policy whereby any foreign investor that invests in Fiji must need to issue shares and we approve based on our Exchange Control Act in terms of the issue of shares. Let me now just briefly talk about some of the investment data that we have. Over the last 10 years, we have approved almost $5.5 billion worth of dividends, withdrawal of investments from Fiji. Dividends is somewhere around $3.6 billion, and the withdrawal of investments is about $1.6 billion. In my view, this translates that the economy has been growing well, and at most times, businesses have been taking out profits that they have declared, and at the same time, we had sufficient reserves to ensure that these dividends or withdrawal of investments can go out.

We have also seen is that prior to 2019, investment levels were picking up, foreign direct investment was picking up, but not to our liking. Each and every government has said that we need an investment, GDP ratio of 25 percent. We have not met that 25 percent in the recent past. When I am saying recent past, in almost 15 years or so, we have hardly met that ratio. This is one area that we all need to work on. We feel that from the Reserve Bank of Fiji's side, our low interest rates has seen a growth in private sector credit, which is helping but that is one part of it, it is not everything. What we have also seen that during COVID, most investments slowed down and that is understandable. You do not have to be an economist to understand that.

We then have seen that post-COVID, things have picked up. We have seen private sector credit picked up, we have seen a slight increase in foreign direct investment as well, and this is also supported by a number of other partial indicators we looked at. We looked at construction activities, import of investment goods and commercial bank lending for investment – this has gone up.

Has it gone up to the same level as pre-COVID? Somewhat, there is still room to improve, not to that level, and it is nowhere close to 25 percent. I am sure you all were part of the budget presentation last Friday, we see that at least from the Government side, there is a slight uptake in the Government's investment or CAPEX expenditure in this budget, and I hope that that will materialise because in the current financial year, the slight underspending is because of capital works.

Government agencies have a role to play in terms of their investment. I am now part of an Investment Task Force that has now been chaired by the Prime Minister's Office, Permanent Secretary for Strategic Planning and Permanent Secretary for the Prime Minister Office, and we had a meeting last week. That was attended by most of the CEOs of agencies that are responsible for investment. That includes Ministry for Environment, Fiji Roads Authority (FRA), Investment Fiji, Department for Town and Country Planning, Ministry for Local Government, Water Authority of Fiji, and Energy Fiji Limited to see where the bottlenecks for investments are. One of the things that I know is widely quoted by Investment Fiji is pipeline investment. Pipeline investment does not mean that all investments will take place. One of the other issues with pipeline investment is, we need to now narrow down and in one of the discussions we had was, what we need to know is what is the pipeline investment for the next three to five years; not beyond that. What is our capacity? Our capacity is to work on what will happen in the next two years to five years rather than down the line.

We also need to be mindful of investors that come in but are not *bonafide*. Almost every week, every month, whether it is through one of the ministries or through the private sector, we get people who will come and meet us and they say that they want to invest billions of dollars in Fiji. The first thing I ask them is, "show me your annual report, show me your board resolution, show me who are the members of your board et cetera because if you are going to invest large amounts of money and if it is a corporation, definitely there has to be a board resolution to say that you can invest in Fiji or there is something. We also must take note that there are a lot of people who fly by night.

I just want to end with one final point. There was a recent *Facebook* post about an investor that came to me and I declined his proposal. It is very easy for us in Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF) when we talk to investors to know how many of them are *bonafide* or not. One, we have the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) who does the background check. The second is, when these people come and start talking about billions of dollars, I know if investment are reputable or robust or not, first if they do not bring a good lawyer and a good accountant, if they do not ask me how can I take my money out, because if you are bringing millions of dollars, the first question they ask me and those who are reputable is, "Governor, please tell me, will I be able to take out my money if I need it."

If you do not ask me those questions right at the beginning, then the red flags start to go up. And then people will come and talk about things that legally is difficult. So if someone wants to come and say, "I want to set up a regional financial hub or financial centre" - we have exchange controls. Money cannot easily go out and come in. Most of the regions have exchange controls. You cannot invest in this type of area. These are some red flags when people come to us. That is something we need to be mindful of, I am sure you all had, there is so much on public forums about people coming and talking about investing billions and billions of dollars. I have had so much experience, the last one I would say is that, once a group of people came and they said that they will invest $3 billion . I asked them, "Where is the funds?" They said, "The funds are in Bougainville." They were accompanied by some government officials. So I told them, "Please go out." I then spoke to the government officials, and I said, "Please tell me where are they staying?" They said, "They are staying in Nadi Bay Motel." So I said, "If you had $3 billion, which hotel will you stay in." They replied, "InterContinental or Sheraton." That was my response. If they really had that much money, you know where they will stay. If they are staying in Nadi Bay Hotel, it is most likely they are not *bonafide*.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much, Mr. Ali. I will now give the time for any questions that you would like to ask Mr. Ali and the team on their presentation.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Firstly, I would like to commend RBF for keeping the interest rate very low and it has been like that from 2020 and having the guts to stand up against IMF and simply say, "let me manage my affairs the way it is suitable for Fiji." – that is really good. If the interest rate would have gone up, there would have been a lot more chaos in this country in terms of mortgagee sales, business collapsing and many impacts. So you were able to sustain that.

Now, your broader role is also to look at the economic growth and it is a very crucial component. We have seen with Investment Fiji, their focus is, of course, promotion. Their focus is, when they are out and about promoting Fiji, the bigger chunk is on tourism and we do not see a lot more happening in other sectors. Now, if you have to give one advice to Investment Fiji, and that can become our recommendation, what would that be in terms of diversifying in other areas rather than putting all eggs in one basket, which is just tourism? What could be other emerging sectors that, it is high time for Fiji to really capitalise on it?

MR. A. ALI.- Thank you, honourable Member, for that question. Let me respond in two parts. I think there seems to be a lot of coverage, particularly by the media as well, in terms of tourism and what Investment Fiji is doing in the area of tourism, because it is something people all know, the media is aware, and given some of the recent investments in the tourism sector. I have participated in some of these discussions and missions abroad, the Deputy Governor and the others have gone. There is coverage in other areas as well. Can we do more – definitely we can do more.

I do not think it has been highlighted enough, but there are two areas that I can tell you recently that has seen subtraction. One is agriculture, and the other is the BPO sector. What I feel that Investment Fiji may need to now think about is, how they can get maybe the Ministry of Lands, Ministry of Agriculture and Biosecurity of Fiji because they are all linked. For me, one area that has the biggest potential in Fiji is agriculture. We are closer to Australia and New Zealand. There are a lot of people who now want to go into food that is more natural, rather than using fertilisers, organic and the BPO sector. To me, these are the two key sectors that has great potential.

The other is an area that, I know that they are also working on, retirement homes. I think what we really need to do is be very clear on the tertiary hospital services. It is a question of the cart before the horse, so we cannot have the retirement home if we do not have good tertiary hospitals because retired people would need to have medical checks. I know we have got Aspen Medical, I know there are few other interests but this is the other area that we can look. Medical services is the other one. I always tell my board that we can do better, and I am sure Investment Fiji and the others can do better too. I also feel that a lot of times, because of the concentration in tourism (we tend to focus more on tourism or the media tends to highlight so much on tourism) but there is work done in other areas as well.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I just want to continue from there. I am sure you all have gone through the book. Unfortunately, Investment Fiji is more promoting just tourism structures in this booklet. You will see more hotels, this that that, and I think that is why that impression is there. Often the discussion is around that. But if anything, I see this Annual Report to be an accountability document. Like, if the Government has given you $2.8 million, what kind of returns have you given back to the Government. I did a thorough analysis, and what I found, almost three-quarter of the money is spent on administration and operational costs and other aspects, and they are left with barely $350,000 for promotional work. So there is a sort of mismatch from that perspective, and it is a bit of a concern. As a Committee, we need to seriously look at how, either they are given more money or they need to reduce their staff, et cetera, but more money needs to go in promotion work.

Another area of responsibility for Investment Fiji is aftercare and complaints resolution, because investors do face issues where they end up in disputes, whether they want to initially start a project or when they have actually started the project and they end up in dispute. There is nothing mentioned in the report. From your perspective, and since one of the members is from the board, what needs to be done so that the investors have more confidence to invest, all these things are all good but even if I end up in trouble, I do not have to spend millions of dollars in court case and then I spend too much time in court rather than focussing on my business. Can that be done so that we can improve that area?

MR. A. ALI.- Thank you for highlighting what is in the annual report in terms of the pictures. I go back to my earlier comment, I know recently they have done work with Atkins Spence in terms of agriculture, et cetera. Hopefully, the next annual report they will focus on other areas – the perception is not on that. Part of it is perception because that is how they presented it. Your comment in terms of aftercare is very important. The last thing we need is investors coming in and now with social media, you just write and say that this is not a good place to invest and the message goes to everyone in the world. It is important that they build capacity, they work with all the key stakeholders that are involved because a lot of times, the issue is not Investment Fiji, but it is one of the approving agencies. So it is making sure that they have the right people to talk to.

One of the reasons why we have one of our senior staff represent the board is, if there is ever an issue with exchange control or RBF, then they are there in the board to help. I feel that the board need to be represented by some of these key agencies so that they can quickly resolve the issues. If they are not part of the board, then they need to be part of some subcommittee or committee so that people can quickly pick up the phone, the CEO can pick up the phone and say, "please, we have this situation, can you resolve?" To me, that is the best way to handle it.

MR. E. MASITABUA.- Thank you, honourable Member. Just to add, the question points to the wider issues that we face in terms of ease of doing business regulations. I use this example of this tallest building that we have. I think the Investment Fiji from my engagement at the board level, they do spend a lot of time helping investors. So if I use this example, the building went up and then suddenly there were issues around quality of steel. When I think about it, like in the RBF, when we licence banks when they come in, we reach a certain point where we are satisfied that they have crossed a certain threshold, they will not meet all conditions totally and we allow them to operate because it becomes a chicken and egg type of thing. They need to recruit people, they need to rent premises and then we work with them on the balance. So when I see that stop order, people have shared that it is better that they finish the building and you have some conditional approval.

I think this leads us to that conversation in the ease of doing business and a lot of regulations. I know that Investment Fiji spends a lot of time trying to help facilitate and this is done largely behind closed doors because they take their promotion role, and we feel that there needs to be some balance and that is something that the new board is working with. Just before I went to International Monetary Fund (IMF) two or three years ago, it was something that was work in progress.

As soon as I returned, with the new board, I reached out to join because I feel this is a journey that needs to continue where we balance that promotion facilitation role a little bit more with advocacy. It is also there in the role, advocacy of raising this constraint but largely, it is done behind closed doors. We feel that it can come out more, there can be good communication around it to help some of these investments and highlighting the constraints together with the wins.

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Thank you, Governor and the team from Reserve Bank of Fiji. I wanted to just have an understanding on pipeline investment, that is quite critical because you had made a comment on it. I find that pipeline investment needs to be better qualified. I do not blame the Government in announcing a much expanded figure of about $8 billion. However, I think for Reserve Bank and Investment Fiji, there must be a better note on the investment, if you put a timeline on it, so that we can understand that this inflated investment that is announced, these are the critical amounts that you would expect in the next five to eight years. What is your comment to that?

MR. A. ALI.- If you look at any public statements that I had made over the last so many years, I had never quoted Investment Fiji's $8 billion, $10 billion or $12 billion pipeline. Part of the reason is because we are conservative and practical in things. We know that these numbers were there even under the previous government. These are pipelines. I always give this example, for those of you who follow cricket, it is about strike rate. You can face 100 balls and not score any runs, or you can face 20 balls and score a century. So it is all about the strike rate and being realistic and practical.

We had private discussions with Investment Fiji staff and when they quote these numbers, we meet them and we ask them, "what would be most realistic?" So if you look at our forecast, look at our GDP, we put in what we think is more practical and realistic. The other important thing, as I said earlier, you can have your pipeline, what we should be mindful of, what is the near term, what is the medium term, how much investments do you expect to happen from the total in the next three or maybe four years at the most. Not bear on that because really, that is too long. For most of us, surviving the next five years is important, given our age – it is like with investment as well. We need to be just mindful to say, this is our total, but what is in the next three years? I think that would be a good measure and then being able to qualify because with the next three years, then we have a rolling average because sometimes investment goes from one year to the other.

What is the strike rate? How much have we really earned? But having this thing here, the last point to this, we do not have capacity to invest $8 million to $10 million – as simple as that. We do not have people or infrastructure so if we were to do all the investments tomorrow, we will not be able to do that. To me, it is a good number, I think it is a positive thing to say – this is our pipeline. However, if we cannot get it across the board, then that means there is failure across this. One data I had quoted is undrawn loans. Banks have somewhere around a billion dollars in undrawn loans. Before you go and start a big warehouse, you will go to the bank and say, "please approve my loan and principal loan." – and we know that. We know that it is somewhere close to a billion dollars. We talk about pipeline, on the other end, we talk about undrawn loans. There is a mismatch and then the question is, what is not happening or what should happen and is not happening? I am on the same page as you, honourable Member.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Just continuing from there, Governor. I personally feel that the Annual Report needs to be improved in that area. For example, when they say that these projects are registered, they need to show us how that project has developed over a period of time. Is it still just registered? Has it gone into planning stage? Has it gone into construction? Has it gone into operational? Whatever it is, if it is an infrastructure or building types or other types of businesses, but they need to provide that kind of information so one can follow through. My opinion on the report was, the performance of Investment Fiji is not verified.

There was no performance audit conducted by Auditor General's Office or they themselves providing that data, like for example, how much money has entered the country? That would indicate that at least something is happening or how much money has been uplifted from the bank, or how many new people from these particular projects were employed and therefore you can get that data from FNPF and you can make some reference. That kind of information is not in the Annual Report. My question to you would be, if you do not want performance audit every year by the Auditor-General's Office, it is not possible, they have got a lot of other things to do. Financial audit they do but I think from the Government's perspective, financial audit is fine because we know that the money has been used wisely, but how wise was the money used is through the performance. How can we improve that verification process, if you can just throw some light on that?

MR. A. ALI.- I will come back to the point of, this is taxpayer's money that is given to that. It is important that the numbers and whatever it is, is put in a manner that people look at and say, so break it down into projects, not by companies because that is confidential information. To be quite honest, I already had discussions with the Deputy Governor and the board in making sure that some of the things that you said, hopefully we can then incorporate it or the board can then impress on the management to incorporate that in the coming Annual Reports – break it down further in terms of projects, implementation and funds. We have the data on funds on how much foreign investors bring, we can always share with them by sector, by industry, by country, et cetera. We have that information and it is important that Investment Fiji put it in their report to give value to what they are doing and maybe some justification that they doing a great job, so the Minister can then give them more money.

MR. CHAIRMAN- I totally agree with what honourable Kumar has said, emphasis on agriculture is not there, particularly when you are looking at the land that is available and the people there, 200,000 youths estimated to be going around either going to schools or employment. The potential is there in agriculture, but we need the private sector to come on board. We must have the private sector first, then know the markets. Of course, the private sector has to tell us where are the markets, where are the products and which products. I think Investment in Fiji has to concentrate on that.

The Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Agriculture will be launching a new project in Vanua Levu on the 24th July, 2026 by the Prime Minister, targeting villages - 70 villages and 60 *tikina* in Cakaudrove. The first thing I did was to get the private sector involved like Bula Coffee. I told them, "you have to look for land in Vanua Levu, get yourself established there. In this way, Investment Fiji can work with us, identifying the private sector to buy the products. The model that we have been having, smallholder has not worked. For the last 50 years, we have worked with smallholders and it has not worked.

Maybe we need bigger farms, that is the problem we are having now with Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) with 10-acre blocks, small farms, that was established in the 1960's. It is not working because it is no longer feasible. We need bigger farms, maybe the private sector. We are glad that Fiji Water is now investing in Vanua Levu and Aitken Spence is coming on board, but I think we need more bigger players there to provide that market outlet. I think you already discussed with us about the Tongan experience.

MR. A. ALI.- Two things I want to comment on. On agriculture, I just feel that we have got very fertile land. I do not know whether I shared with you, some years back we had the Deputy Governor from China come to Fiji and then the Chinese Embassy drove them from Nadi to Suva. We took them to Tiko's for lunch and they asked, "Hey, we drove all the way from Nadi to Suva. We did not see anyone working on the farm. Is today one of those taboo days where you do not work on the farm?" There is a message there for those of you who have gone to China. I have been to China a few times and you see that. So that is one.

I mentioned earlier, I think agriculture has great potential but what we really need is, as you rightly said, we need to scale up as a commercial. We need to get investors to come and smallholders can work with them. One of the areas that we have talked about for decades now is mahogany, having billions of dollars there. What are we doing in that area? Why can we not get investors who can come here and set up a factory that do upmarket furniture, for example. You go to the internet and you check out some mahogany furniture, they are going into $50,000 to $100,000. They are expensive and there is a market for that.

The last point I wanted to say is, one area that I am very passionate about is also renewable energy. We need more investments there. We have seen the crisis that has come in and it has opened our eyes in terms of energy security. We also need to involve the landowners in terms of whether it is hydro or solar. We have a lot of land that we cannot plant on. Let us be honest, some of the land are not that fertile. Can it be used for solar? I just feel that this is one area that we need to work on. I think it is so important to get the landowners to be involved with that and making sure that they get a right return. The last thing we want is people walking in, and that has happened a number of times, whereby they stop at the gates, do not allow the investor to go in, it is simply because the landowners are not getting the right return. I think we also need to relook at the old model of whether they should be just relying on the lease or whether they can be given some equity. A lot of times people get carried away with this big lump sum amount right in the beginning. I feel that the model needs to change somewhat to get the participation of the landowners into these businesses.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much, Mr. Ali and your team. I wish to thank you for availing yourselves for this submission meeting. Thank you for your time and hope that you will avail yourself if the Committee has any further queries on this matter. Our meeting is adjourned.

The Committee adjourned at 10.05 a.m.