



## Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	20-024
<b>Project Title</b>	Delivering sustainable forest management for Fiji's people and wildlife
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Fiji
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	BirdLife International
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	NatureFiji-MareqetiViti
<b>Project Leader</b>	<i>Dr Mark O'Brien</i>
<b>Report date and number (eg HYR3)</b>	<i>2014 HY October</i>
<b>Project website</b>	

### 1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

Progress toward delivering Outcomes (underlined) and Outputs (in bold).

**Output 1.** The multi-dimensional values (ecological, socio-economic and cultural) of Sustainable Forest Management understood and resulting in increased uptake by foresters and mataqali thereby benefitting biodiversity conservation.

Establishment of Permanent Forest Estates. Policy/Advocacy at National Level. We are now working closely with Fiji Governments Forestry Department at the national level. We report to the REDD+ Steering Committee, the Fiji Department of Forests. In recognition of the key role that Permanent Forest Estates play in the realisation of the Fiji Forest Policy we have:

1. Prepared a cabinet paper on Permanent Forest Estates;
2. Worked closely with the Protected Area Committee to ensure that forests proposed as Protected Forests are identified accordingly, remain high on the Protected Area Committee Agenda and are afforded appropriate consideration at the legislative committee.
3. Discussed within the Forestry Board the establishment of a Steering committee separate from the Fiji REDD+ Committee to focus on the wider issues of Government Forest Policy, specifically Permanent Forest Estates and Sustainably Managed Forests, rather than the details around REDD+;
4. Established a national Forest Harvesting Code of Practice Steering Committee– where NFMV have been nominated and invited to represent the Environment Sector. This is the avenue through which we report on the component of the project related to the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice.

Action/Delivery at the Local Level. We are working at 11 project sites on the main three islands of Fiji in order to establish Permanent Forest Estates. Each of these selected project sites have been engaged at the key levels: Provincial Administrators; Divisional Forestry Officers and local beat officers; and at the community level – the village headmen, administrators, mataqali heads and women and children. We have undertaken Socio-Economic survey data at 8 of the 11 study areas – with the remaining 3 due for completion by the end of the year. In addition, we have implemented the TESSA, Toolkit for Ecosystem Survey Site-based Assessment, approach at 3 sites.

**Output 2.** The first PFE established under Forest Policy (2007), with locally-trained mataqali effectively monitoring logging activities on their land.

First Permanent Forest Estate established. The first site to trial the roadmap for delivering Permanent Forest Estates, and so providing an opportunity for local communities to provide their forest resource for use in the forest industry was completed at Nadogo in North-east Vanua Levu. The process was undertaken jointly between NFMV, the district Timber Production Officers (Dept Forestry) and the district Conservation Officers (Dept iTaukei Affairs)<sup>i</sup>. This site was selected as it included relatively few of the issues related to ownership that would need to be addressed at a more complex site. We have taken the Lessons Learned from this process and incorporated them into our roadmap for establishment of further sites within Fijis Permanent Forest Estates.

Building capacity through targeted training and support. The Forest Harvesting Code of Practice Steering Committee has provided us with direct line of contact to the Forest Departments Timber Production District Officers. We have worked closely with these officers, and with the (newly-created positions of) Regional Conservation Officers of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs<sup>ii</sup> when undertaking community liaison. This has provided plenty of opportunities to raise awareness among these staff of the Permanent Forest Estate programme, and Fiji Government Forestry Policy. It has also provided us with contacts at the Fiji National University to identify and formulate courses – ranging from PhD level to trade-related. Further discussions regarding the development of a Forest Technician Certificate, within which NFMV could be involved as a guest lecturer, are ongoing.

The Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice has now been translated into the iTaukei (native Fijian) language, and prior to it being reviewed by a technical committee, will be trialed at one site. The translation team consisted of Forestry Personnel from all three major divisions in Fiji, as well as representatives from two communities currently engaged in native timber harvest. This is essential as it is not easy to translate technical language into iTaukei. Once this has been successfully completed it will be finalised for print, distribution and implementation.

**Output 3.** Locally appropriate ecosystem-based sustainable livelihoods established for forest-owning mataqali which reduce poverty and conserve forest ecosystems.

Measurable improvements in the sustainability of Livelihoods. The discussions with communities, part of the follow up to the Socio-Economic Assessment and TESSA surveys, raises awareness about a variety of alternative livelihoods. Communities have used the reporting process to identify livelihoods, measures and other poverty alleviation issues that they would like to see resolved. We are in the process of completing a series Case Studies from sites where alternative livelihoods have been put in place through previous local community forest conservation programmes. These provide examples of both Best Practice and Lessons Learned from a number of projects initiated in Fiji. It is anticipated that, by highlighting the variety of options that have already been trialed in the country, we will encourage community representatives to continue to take up a variety of livelihoods. Already, to date, we have had enquiries concerning, and have facilitated discussions between, communities interested in eco-tourism, tree nurseries, honey and sago palm harvesting and communities/industry representatives with expertise in these areas.

Our TESSA and Socio-Economic surveys have indicated that many communities are already involved in a range of sustainable livelihoods. Communities harvest a range of foodstuffs from the forests, much of which is used for personal consumption. Individuals also harvest considerable quantities of firewood, the main fuel for cooking. Firewood collection represents a significant component of time spent providing for individuals in the community. We are investigating previous attempts to introduce fuel-efficient cooking stoves – to find out why these have not been successful. Reducing the time required to harvest firewood would both improve the communities wellbeing and reduce the pressure on the standing wood in forests.

Biodiversity Surveys have been completed for the 3 TESSA sites, and compare bird populations of the current landuse with the populations associated with an alternative, proposed, landuse. As noted in the previous annual report (and comments thereof) full biodiversity surveys would be expensive, and only undertaken if funding from another source was available. A survey of Delaikoro, on Vanua Levu, co-ordinated by the University of South Pacific with some support from NFMV, may provide information that would be of use for sites within this project. In addition, it is likely that future GEF funding would enable a full biodiversity survey to be undertaken on Taveuni, but that this is now not likely to be available before the end of the Darwin project.

**Output 4.** Community conservation and Livelihoods Network (CCLN) established and increasing project impact and sustainability and facilitating the dissemination of monitoring data for national and international advocacy.

We continue to develop a Community Conservation and Livelihood Network. The Mataqalis associated with each of our sites all have a contribution to make to the network. We have also included actors from previous BirdLife Fiji and NFMV community programmes, as they provide considerable skills and experience in a range of livelihood opportunities. We have found that, by combining results from previous projects with individuals who have practical experience of delivering these results we have a highly effective means of getting ideas and concepts across to communities. We now have communities involved in the translation of technical reports, assisting us in the collection of data, providing input to the development of the roadmap for Permanent Forest Estates, and providing support and advice to government staff at the district level.

BirdLife International in Cambridge are trialling an 'app' that will facilitate discussion about between Community Conservation Groups around the globe. Called 'Naturewatch' the app has been trialled in Fiji, with the BirdLife Pacific and NFMV team helping to identify problems, and solutions. We hope that, with some further development (the app does not currently work with the 'android' platform which is what most people use here in Fiji), this will provide a useful means to help maintain and expand the Community Conservation Learning Network across Fiji.

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

The largest remaining loggable native forest on Viti Levu is owned by the mataqali living in Nabukelevu village. The Forestry Officer managing the site specifically requested if NFMV could assist him in working with the landowners on the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice. This provided us with an invaluable opportunity to develop the sustainable forest management component of the project and, although the site was not one of the original sites for assessment, it has been included in the project to provide further invaluable insight into the incorporation of the commercial forest programme into Permanent Forest Estates.

We have learnt valuable lessons from the translation of the Fiji Forest Policy – one being the need to have a person with Forestry expertise translate the document. Following discussions with the Department of Forests we have a group of people translating the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice together. The proposal was to bring together Forestry personnel, landowners and saw millers all currently involved with the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of practice, to translate the Code. This activity has been very effective – we had not appreciated the difficulty of translating technical forestry terms from the English to the vernacular, nor the type of issues that Foresters face as a result of the landowners' lack of capacity to understand the Code.

Following discussions with LTS (Lesley King) we have attempted to restructure our reporting process. We will assign each of the reports to one, or a number of, Outcome and/or Output Indicators. We will aim to capture all reports, minutes, etc associated with meetings to which either we, Forest Department or the mataqali, attend to address Forest related issues. We will ensure that all mataqali who attend meetings are listed in the meeting note. We will revise a

Communication Plan (using the Capacity for Conservation <sup>iii</sup> toolkit as the basis of our plan with the purpose of developing the capacity for NFMV to effectively undertake such work) so that it more effectively delivers the Indicators that we have identified in the project proposal. We hope that, by the time of the next annual report, this will all be in place and provide us with a more comprehensive and complete set of indicators to identify how far we have progressed in attempting to deliver the outcome, and the promised outputs, of the proposal.

**2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with LTS: Yes

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

**3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?**

Yes  No  Estimated underspend: £

**3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year.** Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

**4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

**If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.**

**Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk). The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**

<sup>i</sup> [https://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/gpap\\_home/gpap\\_news/?14377/BIOPAMA-to-engage-new-cadre-of-Conservation-Officers-in-Fiji](https://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/gpap_home/gpap_news/?14377/BIOPAMA-to-engage-new-cadre-of-Conservation-Officers-in-Fiji)

<sup>ii</sup> The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs is responsible for the 'Good governance and well being of the iTaukei people'. The iTaukei people are the native Fijians, who own 87% of all land in Fiji. Land that was permanently deeded by the British Crown in the 1880s, ie this land cannot be sold and will forever remain the property of the landowning unit (mataqali) unless sold back to the State.

<sup>iii</sup> <http://capacityforconservation.org/>