



IUR - SIDS INTEGRATED URBAN RESILIENCE IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES AND COASTAL CITIES

NATIONAL AND CITY 'STATE OF PLAY'
NADI, FIJI



ABOUT IUR - SIDS

The Integrated Urban Resilience in Small Island Developing States and Coastal Cities (IUR-SIDS) is a Joint global Programme by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) processed through a Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) for urban risk reduction and resilience building action. The Joint global Programme will unfold during a 2023-2025 first phase reaching 10 countries/cities, which will lay the foundation for potential scaling-up and scaling-out of the approach to support more cities and countries in a second phase from 2026 to 2030. The overall goal of the IUR-SIDS programme is that, by 2030, at least 100 small and medium-sized cities are supported to develop risk-informed urban development plans and implement urban resilience building interventions addressing all resilience dimensions viz. physical, environmental and socio-economic -- while strengthening urban governance informed by a systems' thinking to secure resilient development outcomes. Through delivering as One, the two UN agencies will maximize synergies of action, opens opportunities and provide coherent results in SIDS and coastal cities.

About UNDP

UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet.

About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat supports national and local governments, academia, civil society and the private sector, with the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and SDG11, which aims for sustainable cities and communities. We support processes of institutional capacity-building regarding sustainable urbanization and knowledge-transfer between regional counterparts, in particular through key initiatives like National Urban Policies, the City Prosperity Initiatives, Urban Integrated Solutions and others.

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01.

CONTEXT FOR RISK-INFORMED URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND RESILIENCE-BUILDING

I. National / City policies and strategies – Priorities for action (sustainable development, climate action, urban/town planning, DRR, NAPs, etc.)

The 5-Year and 20-Year National Development Plan (NDP) 2017: “Transforming Fiji” maps out the way forward for Fiji as a nation through a 20-Year Development Plan (2017-2036) and a comprehensive 5-Year Development Plan (2017-2021). These plans work together, as the 5-Year Development Plan provides a detailed action agenda with specific targets and policies that are aligned with the long-term transformational 20-Year Development Plan. The 20-Year Development Plan provides the forward-looking vision for “Transforming Fiji” and outlines a framework that encompasses strategic policy manoeuvres, new approaches to development, and the aspirations of all Fijians. The Plan consists of two approaches to transform Fiji into a modern and prosperous nation by 2036 which are “Inclusive Socio-economic Development” and “Transformational Strategic Thrusts”. As for the comprehensive 5-Year Development Plan, the long-term national development plan is translated into individual sector development plans to be implemented over 5 years, from 2017 to 2021. The emphasis of the individual sector development plans is placed on access to basic services for all Fijians, such as water, electricity, housing, medical services, and education.

The Republic of Fiji National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) 2018 - 2030 is a central policy instrument to protect Fiji’s development priorities from present and future climate risks while maximising long-term development gains. The NCCP articulates national climate adaptation and mitigation objectives and strategies. The Policy seeks to provide the high-level guidance, principles, institutional architecture and objectives required to establish and support a long-term climate-resilient development. It is approached through three clusters: 1. foundations (national risk governance, and leadership and global climate action), 2. dimensions (climate change adaptation and resilient development, climate change mitigation and resilient development), and 3. pathways (capacity development, sustainable financing, and private sector transition and engagement).



Flickr/ Dennis Sylvester Hurd - Fiji

The Republic of Fiji National Adaptation Plan (NAP), launched in 2018, provides a clear vision for adaptation and identifies priorities to be addressed in partnership with academic institutions, development agencies and private sector entities over five years and beyond. It functions as a strategic high-level action plan for adaptation builds upon the existing policy and planning landscape, and shifts development planning processes towards a pathway of ‘climate-resilience’. It includes 160 prioritised adaptation measures split across a total of 10 systems and sectoral components that represent the most urgent actions. System components and adaptations seek to support the creation of an enabling environment for climate-resilient development and to overcome the current financial barriers to scale up climate adaptation priorities. Sectoral adaptations represent components and actions especially relevant to both society and the economy, which are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

The Fijian Sustainable Bond Framework 2022 was launched at COP27 in November 2022. The Framework has been developed by the Fijian Ministry of Economy with technical and financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office in Fiji, to enable the issuance of thematic bonds related to Fiji’s sustainable development ambitions. It offers a robust taxonomy for green, blue, and social projects to help Fiji better communicate its sustainable development finance priorities with bilateral, multilateral, private, and philanthropic investors. The Framework outlines the government’s commitment to using the proceeds of sustainable bonds to finance climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, as well as projects that have positive social and environmental benefits that are in close alignment with national SDG targets.

The Republic of Fiji National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2018-2030 is a key part of Fiji's ambition for accelerated integrated and inclusive sustainable development, aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. It outlines Fiji's approach to disaster risk reduction, including measures for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. It emphasises the importance of building resilience to disasters and reducing vulnerability to hazards. The Policy promotes good disaster risk governance, emphasizes the need for better risk assessment, establishes clear priorities for future action, and highlight the importance of monitoring action.

II. Administrative / Political structure, electoral cycle and next elections (National government; city nodal authority)

Fiji is a unicameral parliamentary republic with three spheres of government: national, provincial, and local. The President is elected by the Parliament of Fiji after nomination by the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition, for a four-year term, being the last on September 12, 2021. The President is elected as the Head of state and a Prime Minister as the Head of government. Yet, the role of the President is largely an honorary one, modelled after that of the British Monarchy. As for the Parliament, elections are held every four years and the number of members can change depending on the increase or decrease in the total population of Fiji. In the last election in 2022, the Electoral Commission approved 55 seats for the Parliament. The Leader of the political party with a majority of members of Parliament becomes the Prime Minister.

The Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment (MLGUDHE) is responsible for the formulation and implementation of several policies and programmes. Through its Department of Local Government, the Ministry is responsible for the overall administration and regulation of Municipal Councils and monitoring their performance. Its primary responsibility is to improve local governance through the effective implementation of the Local Government Act 2005 [Cap. 125].

The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) was established as the coordinating centre of the Fiji Government for disaster activities. The NDMO operates under the National Disaster Management Act and coordinates the national management of all disaster activities through the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management.

Nadi is governed by the Nadi Town Council (NTC) and headed by a Special Administrator (SA), appointed by the central government. The town is managed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Both posts answer to the Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment (MLGUDHE). The performance of the Special Administrator is evaluated often, and the position has clear objectives.

III. Local competencies and jurisdictions (relevant to interventions; key sectors and stakeholders)

The Nadi region is currently administered by two governing bodies: Nadi Town Council (NTC) is responsible for the current municipal boundary area; and the Ministry of Provincial Development through its Commissioner Western's Office looks after the peri urban and rural areas that surround the town and lie within the Western Division. This partnership between the two governing bodies has been created by the central government to advocate for an integrated approach to local level development. The goal is to foster a formal interorganizational collaboration for improved coordination of urban stakeholders and increased support for rural and urban linkages to address urbanisation and proper management of urban resources.

The powers and duties of councils are set out in the Local Government Act 1972. It requires a council to 'do all such things as it lawfully may and as it considers expedient to promote the health, welfare and convenience of the inhabitants of the municipality'. The Local Government Act provides for the manner a Council may function, levy and collect rate, exercise its powers and expend its funds. The Nadi Town Council is responsible for the provision and maintenance of a wide range of services such as sanitation services, roads, carparks, business licensing, gardens, parks and public recreational facilities such as the municipal library, markets and the civic auditorium. They are financed from rates, fees and charges as the Town Council does not generally receive grants from the central government for the management of these services.

Nadi is a major tourist destination in Fiji – even considered the tourist capital of Fiji – known for its beautiful beaches, resorts, and cultural attractions. The tourism and hospitality sector plays a vital role in Nadi's economy. Nadi is home to Fiji's main international airport, and the transportation sector, is significant in the town. A master plan is under preparation presently aiming at facilitating Nadi's transition from the status of town to city for which there is ongoing real estate development and construction.



UN Photo/ Mark Garten - Secretary-General Visits Fiji in 2019

IV. Revenue and financing streams – national budgeting for city level planning, development and implementation, etc.

The estimated budget for the Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment (MLGUDHE) for the FY 2022-2023 is FJD\$ 20,614.8 thousand, which represents a considerable increase when compared with the budget for the last FY 2021-2022 which represents only half of the current FY. Based on the official document, the increase corresponds mainly to capital grants and transfers (FJD\$ 2,716.3 thousand FY 21-22 and FJD\$ 11,872.9 thousand FY 22-23), travel and communication (FJD\$ 34.7 thousand FY 21-22 and FJD\$ 62.7 thousand estimated for FY 22-23) and purchase of goods and services (FJD\$ 46.9 thousand FY 21-22 and FJD\$ 107.4 thousand FY 22-23). This increase may correspond to the reopening of frontiers for tourist activities worldwide after the pandemic of COVID-19, with Nadi and its international airport being one of the main hubs for commercial activity and tourism in Fiji. The central government's investments in the town and its region would seem adequate as tourism plays a vital role in Fiji's economy.

The Nadi Town Council (NTC) collects rates, fees, and charges, with the exception of capital works, which are generally financed from loan funds. The Council does not always receive grants from the Fijian Government. As a tourist-oriented town, activities and services constitute revenue sources for the NTC, including through general rates, special rates, business licences, market fees, rent generated from NTC properties, bus stand charges, public car parks and parking metres. Collection of rates is around 85%, yet recovery of rates in arrear is still under 14%. In general, the slow collection of rates by the town council impedes its ability to provide adequate services.



FlickrR/ Dennis Sylvester Hurd - Fiji

V. Regional and international partners' engagement and investments – development investments by IFIs, regional or other entities, etc.

In 2022 Fiji secured a second “Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme” (Readiness Programme) Funding support project from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The project, “Enhancing Direct Access to Climate Finance in Fiji-Phase 2”, focuses on supporting the Ministry of Economy, the Fiji Development Bank, the private sector and non-government entities to access climate finance. The project will be implemented by the Ministry of Economy through the Climate Change and International Cooperation Division (CCICD) with technical support from the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) as the implementing agency. The GCF is one of the key mechanisms of the UNFCCC that provides Fiji with access to climate finance in addressing the climate change priorities in the country. So far, around US\$ 50.6 million grant financing has been secured from the GCF for projects in Fiji, such as “Global Fund for Coral Reefs Investment Window”, “Fiji Agro Photovoltaic Project in Ovalau” and “Fiji Urban Supply and Wastewater Management Project”.

Since Fiji joined the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 1970, ADB has been helping the country's strategic objectives through policy analysis and advice, sovereign and private sector financing facilities, and strategically targeted technical assistance and knowledge services. ADB operations in Fiji are guided by a country partnership strategy that is endorsed by the government to ensure it reflects their priority assistance areas. Recently ADB focused on economic recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, and on building resilience to future economic shocks through investments in transport infrastructure, water supply and sanitation, and public sector management. To date, ADB's engagement to Fiji spans 127 public sector loans, grants, and technical assistance totalling US\$ 1.08 billion, supporting a range of activities contributing to improved environmental outcomes and climate and disaster resilience.

The collective response of the UN system to the development priorities of 14 Pacific Island countries and territories, including Fiji, was achieved through the United Nations Pacific Strategy (UNPS) 2018-2022, a five-year strategic framework to support governments and peoples in the Pacific to advance a localised response to the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UNPS has been localized in each country through an individual Joint Country Action Plan. In Fiji, the UNPS complements the National Development Plan “Transforming Fiji” particularly in the areas of environment and natural resource management, gender, social and community development, health, education, governance, and human rights. The UN has been present in Fiji since 1984, with 18 agencies implementing programmes: FAO, IFAD, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNCDF, UNDP, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNISDR, UNOCHA, UN Women, WHO and WMO.

The World Bank Group - International Finance Corporation (IFC) advisory work in Fiji is guided by the Fiji Partnership, supported by the governments of Australia and New Zealand. Through the Fiji Partnership, IFC, Australia and New Zealand are working together to stimulate private sector investment and boost shared prosperity. The Fiji Partnership has led to some significant achievements including the World Bank Group IFC support for Fiji to become the first emerging nation in the world to launch a sovereign green bond. The proceeds of the US\$50 million green bond will be going to projects to help build up Fiji's resilience to climate impacts.

Since the launch of its operations in the Pacific in the 1960s, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has been actively engaged in Fiji, having invested over €180 million (FJD 425 million). The EIB supports EU external priorities in Fiji and the Pacific, lending to public and private sector projects in countries in the Pacific region that have a strong development impact and promote economic stability, sustainable growth and employment. In March 2023 EIB Global – the EIB Group’s specialised arm dedicated to increasing the impact of international partnerships and development finance – opened the Bank’s new representation office for the Pacific in Suva, Fiji. As the EU climate bank, the EIB will continue to support and accelerate Fiji’s ambitious climate action and green transition goals, in particular by investing in hydropower projects.

The Pacific Resilience Partnership (PRP) is the umbrella implementation mechanism established in 2017 for the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2017–2030 (FRDP). The FRDP provides high-level strategic guidance to different stakeholder groups on how to enhance resilience to climate change and disaster in ways that contribute to and are embedded in sustainable development. As a partnership, the PRP is set up to enable members to pool their resources, capacities and expertise to jointly address and drive resilience action at national, sub-national, regional, and international levels, coming together under a single umbrella mechanism in a coordinated and cohesive manner. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Pacific Community (SPC) provide support to the PRP Taskforce composed of representatives from the UN system, development partners and banks, countries and territories, civil society and others. The 3 strategic goals of the PRP are 1. strengthened integration adaptation and risk reduction, 2. low carbon development, and 3. strengthened disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.



UNICEF/ Alice Clements - Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Winston caused widespread destruction in Tamavua, Suva, Fiji.

VI. Development challenges and gaps

Fiji, located on the Pacific tropical cyclone belt, is highly vulnerable to extreme weather conditions. Climate-related events, including cyclones, have become more frequent in the country. Fiji has a distinct wet season from November to April, influenced by the South Pacific Convergence Zone, and a dry season from May to October. The El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomena also affect Fiji, with El Niño events bringing dry conditions and La Niña events bringing wetter conditions. Flooding is a common occurrence in Fiji, with over 40 floods experienced since 1975. These floods are usually associated with heavy rainfall during tropical cyclones or convergence zones. Flash flooding during the wet season is also common. Fiji's reef systems, spanning over 10,000 km², are affected by coastal pollution and unsustainable activities. The health of the reefs is crucial for the population dependent on fishing and the tourism industry.



ISDR/ Courtesy of Anglican Church - Floods in Nadi, Fiji



FlickrR/ GEM - Fiji

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Fiji faces unique development challenges due to its small size, limited resources, and geographic isolation. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Fiji had a well-developed economy driven by tourism, but the crisis caused a severe recession, high unemployment rates, and negative socio-economic impacts. The recovery is slow due to travel restrictions. Around 44.1% of Fiji's population lives in resource-rich but underdeveloped rural areas, leading to urban migration and the strain on urban systems and infrastructure. Access to medical and educational facilities is limited in rural areas, contributing to the migration trend.

Water supply capacity is a concern in Fiji, particularly in the Nadi and Lautoka regions, where there is a growing demand for water. The existing water facilities have limitations, and water leakage and illegal connections further exacerbate the issue. Sanitation is also challenging, with over 50% of the rural population lacking proper waste disposal services. Septic tanks are used where sewerage connections are unavailable, and peri-urban populations, including informal settlements, have limited access to sanitation facilities. Efforts are underway to expand urban sewerage systems to these communities.

Nadi is also facing the same national challenges related to urban poverty, environmental risk, infrastructure and land management, amongst others. Within the Nadi Town Council boundary, there are five indigenous Fijian villages (iTaukei) exempt from complying with the Local Government Act due to their proclaimed status as traditional villages. As they are not complying with local government

regulations, it makes difficult for the Council to control health, sanitation, and development in those areas. Despite this, the villages rely on municipal infrastructure and services. Illegal developments are a significant issue in Nadi, as the demand for urban development surpasses the council's capacity for development control. Urban sprawl has led to considerations of extending the town's boundaries and improving revenue collection to support urban services. Insufficient resources and capacity within the local government have made it challenging to address the rapid urban growth in the region.

Other critical urban issues in Nadi include limited access to land, housing with inadequate amenities, inadequate water supply and sanitation, insufficient urban infrastructure (such as roads and sewerage systems), solid waste management problems, and extensive environmental degradation from human activities. Inadequate municipal drainage systems and slow adoption of flood risk reduction initiatives further exacerbate flood risks in the area. In recent years Nadi has experienced heavier rainfall and extreme flood events, prompting discussions about the possibility of relocation due to the town's location in the Nadi River floodplain.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT 02.

I. Global policy frameworks and positioning

Fiji Prime Minister, Josaia Voreqe "Frank" Bainimarama, has been vocal about the country's vulnerability to climate change in the international arena. Fiji's global leadership on two important SDGs on climate change and oceans has been demonstrated through the co-hosting of the 2017 United Nations Ocean Conference and the Fijian Presidency of the 23rd UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) held in Bonn, Germany, in 2017.

Fiji has been at the forefront of promoting the concept of the Blue Economy in the Pacific region, that emphasises the sustainable use of ocean resources while ensuring the well-being of coastal communities, and has advocated for the inclusion of the Blue Economy principles in the development plans of Pacific Island countries.



UN Photo/ Cia Pak - Prime Minister of Fiji at UNGA



UN Photo/ Eskinder Debebe - 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference
Secretary-General António Guterres greets Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji

II. Agenda 2030

VNR: Voluntary National Review 2019, a new version will be released in July 2023.

NDC: Fiji's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) released in 2015.

Fiji's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution released in 2020.

NAP: Republic of Fiji National Adaptation Plan released in 2018.

NUA national report: Not available.

III. National / local engagement (networks, MCR2030, inter-regional forums, etc.)

Fiji is a founding member and the host country of the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), a regional organisation focused on sustainable development in the Pacific Islands. Fiji is also an active member of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), among other international forums and groups. The country actively engages in the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) agenda, which focuses on addressing the specific challenges and vulnerabilities faced by island nations.

Since 2017, Nadi is a member of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. The town was part of the Making City Resilient Campaign (MCRC), but has not joined yet the Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030).

03

ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES IN DRR, CC-CCA, RESILIENCE

The Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA): Making Fiji Climate Resilient is a report aiming to better quantify and understand the challenge that natural disasters and climate change pose to Fiji's development prospects. Developed by the Government of Fiji in 2022 and supported by the World Bank and the GFDRR-managed ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program (ACP-EU NDRR), the CVA provided significant new analysis of Fiji's vulnerability to climate change, with projections outlining potential impacts over the medium to long-term. The Fijian government is using the CVA as a resource for planning its climate-related expenditures and crafting more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

The Nadi Flood Alleviation Project is one of the major works undertaken by the Fijian Government to avoid future floods, including building five retention dams in flood prone areas. The Government of Fiji requested the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to provide support by lending for the proposed Nadi Flood Alleviation Project. The ADB Technical Assistance is supported by funding coming from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, a financing facility provided by the Government of Japan and administered by ADB. In parallel, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP) complemented the investment. The project involves a combination of structural and non-structural measures to achieve, in a cost-effective manner, a level of flood hazard protection for the Nadi town and the lower Nadi river floodplain that is desired and accepted by stakeholders.

Fiji: National Urban Profile and Fiji: Nadi Town Urban Profile. Developed by UN-Habitat and launched in 2012, the Fiji Urban Profiles consist of an accelerated, action-oriented assessment of urban conditions, focusing on priority needs, capacity gaps, and existing institutional responses at local and national levels. The purpose of the study was to develop urban poverty reduction policies at local, national, and regional levels, through an assessment of needs and response mechanisms. To effectively engage Fiji's challenges, and seek solutions to them, these urban profiles documents and analyses six key components of Fiji's urban context: urban governance and finance, urban planning and management, land development and administration, urban infrastructure and services, urban housing and shelter, and climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Fiji: Sustainable and Resilient Recovery Program. This Asian Development Bank (ADB) programme supported Fiji's efforts to restore fiscal sustainability and inclusive climate-resilient economic growth, which have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and coinciding disasters, while building fiscal, community, and private sector resilience to climate change and future shocks. The programme comprised three reform areas and complemented ADB's previous engagement while responding to policy challenges intensified by the pandemic. All programme policy actions have been completed by 2022 and reforms are under implementation in Fiji.

The Disaster risk reduction in the Republic of Fiji report provides a snapshot of the DRR progress the Republic of Fiji has achieved under the four priorities of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Developed by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and launched in 2029, the document highlights some of the key challenges surrounding the issue of creating coherence among the key global frameworks at the country level; and makes recommendations for strengthening the overall Disaster Risk Management (DRM) governance by government institutions and other stakeholders at national, sub-national, and local levels.



UNDP/ Pacific - Marine resources in Fiji

ADDITIONAL PARTNERS TO CONSIDER FOR ENGAGEMENT

04.

The Centre for Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development (CCCEESD) has been established as a think tank to complement the work of the University of Fiji's Department of Science and contribute to professional development, research and publications, policy-oriented project management and consultancies. This Centre has been formed to strengthen the research capacity and to harness it in the service of policy-making, planning, and sustainable development in areas of climate change, energy, environment, science and technology in Fiji and the Pacific region.

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