



STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Consolidated Review Report of the Ministry Fisheries Annual Reports 2021 – 2022 and 2022 – 2023



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Chair's Foreword



It is my honor to present on behalf of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources this review report for the Ministry of Fisheries' Annual Reports for the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 financial years.

These reports reflect an important period in the fisheries sector, the post COVID and recovery period; a time marked by both challenges and progress. The Committee undertook its oversight role with diligence, guided by the need to ensure transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability in the management of one of our country's most critical natural resources.

The review looked at the Ministry's administration, structure; budgetary allocation; programs and activities; policies; achievements and challenges for the years under review.

A key component of our scrutiny was a 9-day site visit to parts of the Central, Western, and Northern regions, during which Members of the Committee engaged directly with stakeholders on the ground. These visits provided valuable insights into the lived realities of fishing communities, the operational capacity of regional fisheries offices, and the different pressures facing both marine and inland fisheries.

The Committee wishes to commend the overall performance and achievements of the Ministry of Fisheries during the review period. In addition to the achievements for the review period. An outstanding highlight of the Ministry was that it maintained its unqualified audits for its last two financial reports from the Auditor General

In the West, the Committee noted encouraging developments in aquaculture initiatives and community-based fisheries management but also noted infrastructure challenges and the need for improved market access. In the North, the committee understood the importance of supporting inland fisheries and marine aquaculture, particularly in adapting to the impacts of climate variability, declining stocks, and limited research support.

Even though there is huge need to strengthening and narrowing the gap in data collection, the Committee commended the Ministry of Fisheries for several positive strides, including monitoring and compliance systems enhancements, a growing commitment to data-driven decision-making, and an inclusive approach to sector development. However, the Committee also identified critical gaps—such as delays in implementation of key policies, constraints in funding and staffing at the regional level, and the need for greater collaboration with local governance structures.

The Committee remains committed to constructive dialogue and oversight, working closely with the Ministry to ensure that fisheries policies are not only effectively implemented but are also inclusive, adaptive, and forward-looking. The findings and recommendations emerging from our scrutiny aim to contribute meaningfully to these objectives.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the Executive Management of the Ministry of Fisheries for their comprehensive submission and valuable input to the committee. I also wish to acknowledge and thank the staff for their dedication throughout this process, to the Ministry for its cooperation, and to the fishers, processors, researchers, and local officials who welcomed us during our site visits and generously shared their perspectives.

Together, we have a shared responsibility to safeguard the sustainability of our fisheries for current and future generations.

I thank the committee members, Hon. Kalaveti Ravu - Deputy Chairperson, Hon. Joseph Nand, Hon. Vijay Nath, Hon. Taito Rokomatu, and former Deputy Chairperson Hon. Sachida Nand - for their active participation, insightful contributions, and commitment throughout the process.

I also wish to thank the secretariat for their continuous support, coordination, and dedication behind the scenes, which was vital to the smooth functioning of the committee's work.

Your collective efforts have been instrumental in the successful completion of our work.

I commend this Report to Parliament.



.....
Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna

Chairperson

Standing Committee on Natural Resources

ACRONYMS/GLOSSARY

| | |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| | |
| COVID | Coronavirus Disease |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| SO | Standing Order |

OVERALL RECOMMENDATION

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources has conducted the review of the Ministry of Fisheries 2021 – 2022 and 2022 – 2023 Annual Reports and recommends that Parliament take note of its recommendations as stated in the report.

1.0 Introduction

The following Standing Orders of Parliament specify the role of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

- SO, 109 (c) that the mandate of the Committee is to look into matters that relates to agriculture, forests, fisheries, minerals, environment, water and marine services.
- SO, 110 (1) (c) further authorizes the Standing Committee to scrutinize the government departments with responsibility within the committee's subject area, including by
- investigating, inquiring into, and making recommendations relating to any aspect of such a department's administration, legislation or proposed legislative program,
- budget, rationalization, restructuring, functioning, organization, structure, and policy formulation.

This report presents the findings of the committee's review of the Ministry of Fisheries' Annual Reports for the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 financial years. It highlights key developments in the Ministry's work, including efforts to promote sustainable fisheries, support coastal communities, and contribute to national food security and economic recovery.

The committee examined the Ministry's policies, programs, and performance, drawing from the information on the annual reports, stakeholder engagements, and site visits conducted in a few parts of the Central, Northern and Western Divisions. The observations and recommendations in this report are intended to support ongoing improvements in fisheries sector, governance and resource management for Fiji.

2.0 Background

The reports covered the Ministry's strategic efforts to sustainably manage Fiji's marine and freshwater resources, supported community-based fisheries initiatives, and contributed to national food security and economic resilience.

The Committee undertook the review of these reports to assess the Ministry's performance against its stated objectives, evaluate the use of allocated resources, and determine the effectiveness of implemented programs. The review also considered alignment with broader government goals

such as the National Development Plan, the Blue Economy Strategy, and Fiji's international environmental commitments.

To support its review, the Committee conducted a series of consultations and site visits to selected locations in parts of the Central, Northern, and Western Divisions. These engagements allowed members to gain firsthand insights into the Ministry's operations, interact with stakeholders, and assess the on-the-ground impact of its programs and policies.

The findings and recommendations presented in this report are based on these activities and demonstrate the Committee's commitment to enhancing oversight and fostering effective governance in the fisheries sector.

The 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 Annual Reports provided accounts of the Ministry's operations, achievements, and challenges over the two financial years. These reports are submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Financial Management Act 2004 and other relevant legislation, to ensure transparency, accountability, and informed parliamentary oversight.

During this period, the Ministry implemented several key initiatives, including resource conservation programs, aquaculture development, and the enforcement of fisheries regulations aimed at protecting vulnerable species and supporting long-term sustainability.

In 2021–2022, the Ministry focused on post-COVID recovery strategies, strengthening regulatory frameworks, and enhancing community-based fisheries management. In 2022–2023, significant emphasis was placed on expanding aquaculture production, introducing climate-resilient fisheries initiatives, and strengthening partnerships with stakeholders, including regional and international development partners.

3.0 Committee Remit and Composition:

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources is one of the parliamentary oversight committees established under Standing Order 110 (1) (c) of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji. Its primary role is to scrutinize the policies, administration, and performance of government ministries and statutory bodies that fall within the natural resources sector, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, water and marine resources, mining, and the environment.

The Committee is mandated to examine annual reports, examine subordinate legislations, bills, consider petitions and papers referred to committees, review international treaties and conventions ratified by the Government and monitor their implementation and perform any other functions and duties as are conferred on the committee by the Standing Orders or by resolutions of parliament, other relevant documents tabled in Parliament. This includes reviewing the effectiveness of government programs, assessing the use of public funds, and ensuring compliance with relevant laws and policies.

As part of its remit, the Committee engages with the ministry officials, subject-matter experts, stakeholders, and the private sector to gather evidence and reports its findings. It also undertakes site visits and field inspections to better understand on-the-ground impacts of government programs and policies.

Through its work, the Committee helps promote transparency, accountability, and good governance in public administration, especially in areas critical to Fiji's sustainable development and resilience.

The composition of the Committee includes Members of Parliament appointed from both the government and opposition sides, ensuring a balanced and bipartisan approach.

3.1 Committee Membership



Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna
Chairperson
Assistant Minister for Agriculture



Hon. Kalaveti Ravu
Government MP



Hon. Joseph Nand
Opposition MP



Hon. Vijay Nath
Opposition MP



Hon. Taito Rokomatu
Government MP

4.0 Procedure and Program

In accordance with its oversight mandate, the Standing Committee on Natural Resources undertook a systematic review of the Ministry of Fisheries Annual Reports for the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 financial years. The Committee followed a structured program to ensure a comprehensive and evidence-based scrutiny process.

The Committee thoroughly examined the Ministry of Fisheries' annual reports for the reporting period, concentrating on important aspects such as strategic goals, program implementation, financial performance, and policy outcomes. Relevant questions were formulated using insights from the site visits and annual reports. The Research Unit of Parliament compiled information briefs of the Annual Reports to aid the Committee's examination.

From Monday, 7th to Thursday, 17th April 2025, the Committee carried out a nine-day (9) visit to parts of the Central, Northern, and Western divisions to gather firsthand insights into the fisheries program implementation and infrastructure and support services. The visit included project inspections and briefings from local officers.

The Committee also invited the Ministry of Fisheries to Parliament on Friday, 25th of April 2025, for oral and written submissions. The session allowed the Committee to discuss key issues, such as budget execution, project outcomes, and challenges during the reporting period.

Following its analysis, the Committee compiled its findings, observations, and recommendations into its final report for tabling in Parliament. The report aims to assist Parliament in assessing the performance of the Ministry and in making informed decisions on future directions, policy and resource allocation.

The Committee carefully and fairly reviewed how public resources were used to make sure Fiji's fisheries are managed responsibly and sustainably.

4.1 Evidence and Advice Received - Please Refer to Annexures 1 – 5 (site visit report)

5.0 Committee Deliberations and Analysis

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources reviewed and discussed the Ministry of Fisheries' 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 annual reports. The Committee carefully analysed the reports to assess the Ministry's performance, identify strengths and weaknesses, and ensure that the Ministry of Fisheries' fisheries sector is being managed efficiently and sustainably.

5.1 COMMITTEE FINDINGS

5.1.1 Infrastructure and Service Delivery

Site Visit Summary: The Committee noted that Fisheries programs are helping communities to benefit economically from their sustainable fisheries resources, however, remote stations face significant challenges like old, deteriorated infrastructure, staff shortages, and limited financial resources.

5.1.2 Decentralization of Funding

The Committee acknowledges the unqualified status of the Ministry's accounting system. The Committee also noted that the Ministry allocates significant funds to divisional offices, however, the centralized budgeting system and staffing issues have hindered effective fund use. Granting divisional offices more financial autonomy would improve responsiveness to local needs and ensure funds are used efficiently.

5.1.3 Policy Development and Strategic Plans

The Committee noted that the Aquaculture Development Plan and National Fisheries Policy offer strong frameworks for sustainable growth in Fiji's fisheries. However, effective implementation and adequate resources are crucial to achieving their goals.

5.1.4 Monitoring and Compliance

The Committee highlighted the need for improvement in data collection from rural communities. The Committee also noted that while regulatory measures, e.g., size restrictions and seasonal harvesting closures, are in place to protect marine resources, policing the restriction is by far the most difficult task. The huge challenge in data collection is due to limited human resources, absent of a specified budgetary allocation, and the difficulty or lack of transportation means.

5.1.5 Lack of Coordination Between Divisions

The Committee identified gaps in coordination between headquarters and divisional offices, which had delayed programme and policy implementation resulting in impediment to effective service delivery.

5.1.6 Limited Public Awareness

The Committee noted that there was a need for more national public awareness and consultation on fisheries regulations and policies, especially in rural areas. Limited awareness programmes often lead to the ineffectiveness of key policies, strategies and actions.

6.0 COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Fisheries provide well-defined, targeted support to remote stations, prioritizing the upgrading of infrastructure and increasing financial resource allocation to ensure effective service delivery. The Committee also recommends a review of staffing restructuring, remuneration, and the formulation of staff retention policies.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Committee recommends decentralizing the budgeting allocations to give divisional offices more financial control, enabling them to address local needs more effectively and ensure efficient use of funds.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Fisheries prioritize the effective implementation of the Aquaculture Development Plan and National Fisheries Policy by ensuring adequate resources, staffing, and training at the divisional level. Regular monitoring and evaluation should be conducted to ensure the goals of these policies are achieved.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Fisheries allocate a dedicated budget for data collection, increase staffing to support these efforts, and provide necessary transportation resources to ensure effective and timely data gathering for informed decision-making and improved fisheries management.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Committee recommends improving coordination between headquarters and divisional offices to ensure the timely and effective implementation of policies and programs.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Committee recommends a national outreach strategy to improve public awareness of fisheries regulations, with a focus on rural communities through education and stakeholder engagement.

7.0 Gender Analysis

SO, 110 (2) states that “Where a Committee conducts an activity listed in clause (1) the Committee shall ensure that full consideration will be given to the principle of gender equality

to ensure all matters are considered with regard to the impact and benefit on both men and women equally”.

While the Ministry's annual reports do not provide a detailed gender analysis, the highlighted initiatives and policy alignments indicate a recognition of the importance of gender considerations in the fisheries sector during the review period.

8.0 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Committee noted that the Ministry of Fisheries' Annual Reports for 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 do not explicitly outline their alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the Ministry's strategic documents and initiatives reflect a commitment to several SDGs, particularly those related to sustainable fisheries and community development.

8.1 Highlighted below are the key SDGs addressed:

1. SDG 2 – Zero Hunger:

Efforts to enhance food security through improved fisheries management and support for aquaculture contribute to the goal of ending hunger, achieving food security, and promoting sustainable agriculture.

2. SDG 5 – Gender Equality:

Initiatives like the Women in Fisheries Network – Fiji aim to empower women in the fisheries sector, supporting the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

3. SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth:

The Ministry's programs that promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture contribute to economic growth, employment, and decent work for all.

4. SDG 13 – Climate Action:

The Ministry's focus on climate resilience in fisheries management supports the goal of taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

5. SDG 14 – Life Below Water:

The Ministry's focus on sustainable fisheries management, including the implementation of size restrictions and seasonal closures, aligns with conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas, and marine resources.

The Committee noted that while the Annual Reports do not provide a detailed analysis of SDG alignment, the Ministry's strategic initiatives, however, had indicated full commitment to these global goals.

9.0 Conclusion

The Committee recognizes the Ministry of Fisheries' ongoing efforts to manage and develop Fiji's fisheries sector sustainably, as reflected in the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 Annual Reports. While the Ministry has made notable progress in implementing key initiatives, such as the Aquaculture Development Plan and National Fisheries Policy, challenges remain in areas like resource allocation, infrastructure, staffing, and public awareness. The Committee also identified gaps in coordination between divisional offices and headquarters, which may impact the timely execution of policies and programs.

Despite these challenges, the Ministry's commitment to enhancing food security, promoting gender equality, and addressing climate change through sustainable practices demonstrates its alignment with national and international development goals. The Committee encourages continued focus on addressing these challenges and recommends the adoption of measures to strengthen coordination, improve public engagement, and ensure the effective implementation of the Ministry's programs. Regular monitoring and evaluation will be essential in tracking progress and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Fiji's fisheries sector.

Member's Signature:

We, as Members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources do concur with the content of this report.



.....
Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna
Chairperson



.....
Hon. Kalaveti Ravu
**Deputy Chairperson,
Opposition MP**



.....
Hon. Taito Rokomatu
Government MP



.....
Hon. Vijay Nath
Opposition MP



.....
Hon. Joseph Nand
Opposition MP

APPENDICES

1) WRITTEN SUBMISSION BY MOFISHERIES

2) RESEARCH PAPERS – MOFISHERIES

3) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4) SUBMISSION PHOTOS

5) SITE VISIT PHOTOS

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Written Submission by the
Ministry of Fisheries 2021 –
2022 and 2022 -2023 Annual
Reports

MINISTRY OF FISHERIES 2021 – 2022 ANNUAL REPORT SCRUTINY

FORMULATED QUESTIONS

1. **Page 4 – Contribution to Fiji’s Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**

The combined fisheries-related activities within the fisheries sector contributed FJD 56.9 million (0.7%) GDP to the national real GD in 2021.

Can the Ministry please clarify whether these figures include raw fish exports, processed or value-added products, or both?

The GDP contribution is from all export data recorded by the Ministry during the period. The low projection was due to COVID 19 and market restriction at the time.

2. Can the Ministry of Fisheries clarify who is responsible for determining fish market prices in Fiji?

The current fish market prices in Fiji is usually determined by the fisherman and middleman themselves. The Ministry does not have the regulatory authority to regulate the fish price.

b) how the Ministry regulates or influences these prices?

The Ministry does not have the regulatory authority to do so.

Offshore: In terms of the Offshore Sector, the suppliers of tuna from Fijis domestic market are at the mercy of the various markets that they access.

3. What is the Ministry’s plan to fill the 59 vacant project officer positions?

Currently the Ministry has aggressively completed the filling in of all these vacant positions.

4. Were staff shortages caused by incomplete projects? How has this affected the Ministry's performance?

During the 2021-2022 there was high staff turnover in the Ministry and coincidentally this was also during the COVID 19 pandemic. However this did not affect the service delivery.

5. How and why were the established vacancies reduced from 192 to 189?

This was due to the tradeoff of certain posts to upgrade certain critical position that is needed by the Ministry.

6. Page 8 - All boats that were under repair, how long has it been repaired?

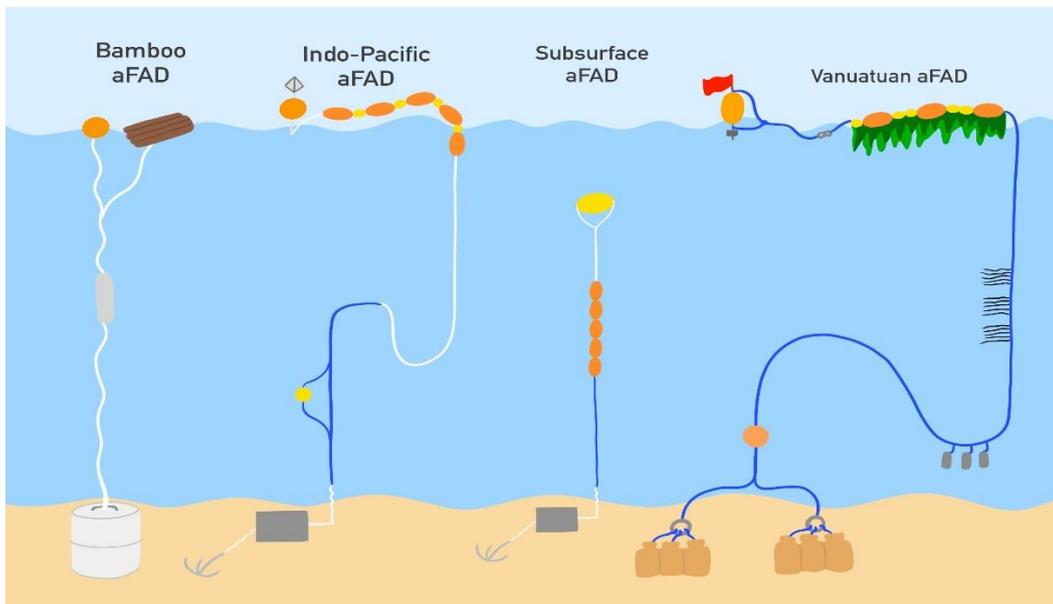
It can take up to a month depending on the availability of the required parts and material

7. Page 8 - All Vessels were for 2016 not in operation, can they advise how long have they have not been operating?

Of the four vessels that were not operating during the reporting period, two (Onaga and Long Tom) have been written off, one (Civa loa) is operational and One (Bull shark) is to be written off.

8. Page 9 – FAD What is FAD? How did they lose FAD? Was a loss and found the Ministry did report to ascertain whether officers were adhering to the rules?

FAD is Fisheries Aggregation Device. Deploying these FADS assists our local fishers to instead of going further to seas but can just go straight to these man made devices used to attract pelagic fish. Most of the time these devices are swept away during cyclones or tidal waves and the Ministry from time to time always try to assist communities in deploying FADs. (Below is the diagram of a FAD)



9. Fisheries Law Enforcement – What’s preventing the Ministry from achieving better enforcement percentage?

The challenger include staffing and budgetary capacities relative to the 411 fishing grounds across the 4 divisions. More staff means more visibility, more coverage and greater enforcement percentage.

10. Page 10 - What is fresh fish re-export and what are fresh fish markets?

Re-exports consist of fresh fish imported and re-exported to other countries. Fresh fish markets are the local unprocessed fresh fish that packaged and sealed for export.

11. Can the Ministry please explain the process of obtaining fishing licenses for local fishermen?

The SOP for a fishing license to be issued, requires the Divisional Commissioner to issue a permit first before the Ministry issue a fishing license. However, this has been changed for Qoliqoli owners to give consent before the Divisional Commissioner office issues a permit.

- a) What are some of the challenges local fisherman face in their day-to-day operations?

Mostly market access to sell their catch. Secondly, is current threat posed by climate change. The Ministry is trying to address this climate change threat by deploying FADs.

- b) How many ice plants does the Ministry have and of that how many are in operation?

Fiji’s Ministry of Fisheries operates 24 ice plants across the country, providing essential cold storage services to support the fisheries sector. These ice plants are vital for fish preservation, food security, and livelihoods. The operation of these ice plants is increasingly challenged by climate change—including aging ice plant, frequent power outages, extreme weather, and rising fuel costs.

- c) Does the Ministry have a periodic preventative maintenance plan?

Yes, the Ministry of Fisheries in Fiji oversees a network of 24 ice plants across the country, which are vital for supporting local fishing communities by preserving fish and maintaining quality during transport. We implement a Preventative Maintenance Schedule for all ice plants to support service delivery and ensure continuous operation.

Apparently, we are facing challenges in maintaining the Taylor ice machines due to limited availability of spare parts, especially when compared to our newer models. To address these maintenance challenges with Taylor ice machine. The Ministry would gradually replace older Taylor units with newer units.

There is ongoing efforts to maintain and upgrade these facilities. For instance, in 2020, the Ministry signed a memorandum of understanding with the Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation of Japan (OFCF) to enhance plant services. This agreement included the provision of spare parts for ice plants, technical training to upskill maintenance personnel to improve repair efficiency as well as the supply of working tools and equipment to support our technical services division.

Additionally, a solar power system was installed at the Kubulau and Rabi Fisheries Station, boosting the operation of these ice plants. This initiative aimed to enhance ice production and support the livelihood of about 3,000 people in the Districts of Kubulau and Wainunu and 5000 people in Rabi Island. These examples indicate a commitment to the maintenance and improvement of ice plant facilities.

- 12) How is the Ministry assisting the resource owners in poaching and avoiding illegal fishing in their “qoliqoli”?

The Ministry assist with MCS (Monitoring, Control and Surveillance) operation both sea patrol and land patrol. We also have MOU with Fiji Police and Fiji Navy to address this issues.

- 13) Page 13 – Can the Ministry please provide who the two farmers were, and the scope of work done?

Impact pacific limited and Aqua link were supported through the commercial aquaculture development project.

-END-

MINISTRY OF FISHERIES 2022 – 2023 ANNUAL REPORT SCRUTINY

FORMULATED QUESTIONS

Economic Contributions and Sector Performance

1. Page 2 – 2022 – 2023 Annual Report - PS Foreword

The fisheries sector contributed \$207.1 million in 2022, accounting for 8% of national export earnings.

Can the Ministry provide a detailed breakdown of this contribution across offshore fisheries, inshore fisheries, and aquaculture?

The breakdown is as follows; Offshore is 70% (\$144.97m), Inshore is 25% (\$51.775m) and Aquaculture is 5% (\$10.355m).

2. 2021 – 2022 Annual Report - Page 2 PS Foreword

Given that offshore fisheries contributed 70% of the sector's earnings in 2022,

Can the Ministry please explain as to what measures are being implemented to ensure the sustainability and long-term viability of this segment?

Currently the Ministry is assisting the Tuna Industry by paying MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) audit so we can have access into the EU market.

Budget Allocation and Utilization

3. The Ministry's budget decreased by approximately \$1.9 million in the 2021–2022 fiscal year compared to the previous year.

How did the Ministry adjust its programs and operations to align with this reduced budget? Please explain?

With the reduced budget, the Ministry still achieved targets already outlined in the revised AWP and SDP, in collaboration with our development partners.

Inshore Fisheries Expansion

4. The Ministry has committed to expanding inshore fisheries to benefit coastal and rural communities.

Can the Ministry please explain what initiatives are being implemented to explore and establish markets for inshore fisheries, and how will these efforts impact local livelihoods?

Currently the Ministry is working on establishing Fisherman cooperatives as a way forward to ensure access to market initiatives.

Legislative and Policy Developments

5. With the passing of Fiji's first Aquaculture Act in 2024, Can the Ministry provide an update on the following questions.
 - a) what regulatory changes can stakeholders expect,
 - b) and how will these changes facilitate sustainable aquaculture development?

The main changes that we are foreseeing for this Act to bring about is Aquaculture farms to be licensed and the Ministry can collect relevant data to be forecasted as GDP contribution from the Sector. Likewise the designation of Aquaculture land to be designated as primarily for Aquaculture is a huge step in ensuring the sustainability of the sector.

Aquaculture Development

6. a) How does the Ministry plan to promote Fiji's aquaculture products internationally,

At the moment the focus is still on trying to meet the local market and try to reduce our import on Aquaculture products. Given the high local production cost, we still cannot compete with the overseas market, but is considered as a way forward for the Ministry.

- b) and what steps are being taken to ensure these products meet global sustainability standards? Please explain?

The Ministry is working towards the importation of genetically compliant broodstock with genetic strains to ensure global sustainability.

Monitoring and Surveillance

7. The Offshore Fisheries Management Division has prioritized modernizing the national fleet and enhancing monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) capabilities.

(a) Conducted discussions with the Ministry of Finance on the TSF with the aim of furthering this with lending facilities.

(b) Acquired

Offshore: Presently, the current Fiji national long line fishing fleet is an aging one with various tuna stakeholders indicating that there are more maintenance and repair costs on their vessels during fishing activities, which reduce the catch efficiency; especially in noting that the stocks are highly migratory and move through Fiji's EEZ.

As such, the industry sought the assistance of the Ministry in assisting with the modernization of the Fiji domestic long line tuna fleet. It was noted that the few companies that had bought newer vessels then, were more efficient in fuel consumption especially in the searching events, required less maintenance and repairs and were more efficient in fishing activity overall.

Strategy:

The industry, therefore, firstly sought the Ministry of Fisheries assistance in increasing the license tenure from 3 years with annual renewals processes, to a 20 year tenure. This would not only secure their licenses but should have the effect of allowing for banks to have more comfort in providing loans noting the tenure, as an indicator of staying power in the industry.

This would also be supported by the concept of the Tuna Support Fund (TSF), then with the Ministry of Economy, as the fund collected from the fuel levy which supported the TSF would be for the benefit of the modernization of the Fiji long line tuna fleet. The concept was to use the TSF for the benefit of the industry as a whole and not a few companies. More so, in that this fund will assist in the facilitation of an effective lending facility in terms of a deposit.

The Ministry has made efforts to secure a lending facility with the Fiji Development Bank however, there will need to be a concerted efforts to secure the TSF to supplement the industry. Note that the industry is willing to make an initial deposit and requests a lowered interest rate. The ultimate aim is that this lending facility will become a revolving fund that could be used for other developments.

The Ministry, in anticipation of this process, has facilitated three actions to assist with the modernization of the Fiji national long line fishing fleet.

(i) Is presently engaged with the Ministry of Finance and FDB etc. on securing a lending facility for the modernization of the Fiji national long line fleet.

(ii) Is presently engaged with the Ministry of Finance on the TSF to be for the whole of the industry in terms of contribution to the lending facility.

(iii) Investigate Fiji's participation into two tuna-Regional Fisheries Management Organizations such as the Convention on the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC).

Technology:

The industry continues to work with the Ministry of Fisheries in the utilization of the Vessel Monitoring System, e-log sheets, e-port sampling forms that are loaded directly into the SPC tuna database. This coupled with the development of the e-Port State Management Agreement data base housed within its national surveillance centre, an element that complements the Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) systems of the Offshore Fishing Management Divisions (OFMD) work. An additional element is the continued use of Electronic Monitoring Systems onboard the fleet that captures near 24/7 video footage information on fishing activities.

8. a) Given the challenges of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, what collaborative efforts is the Ministry engaged in to improve policing

The MOU with Fiji Navy is one of the key document that we foresee as a necessary tool to combat IUU.

- b) and surveillance of Fiji's maritime zones?

The Ministry of Fisheries is engaged in the following:

- (i) In terms of staffing, the Ministry encourages the continued capacity building and utilization of its MCS staff in observer, port sampler, debriefer, data analysis, enforcement, surveillance, compliance, licensing and permitting, investigation, prosecution, case handling, ship rider capacities, to name a few. These trainings are facilitated under the Country Partnership Agreement with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and extends to, fisheries legislation trainings and other upcoming capacity building avenues.
- (ii) The Ministry engages with various naval and aerial assets, both nationally and regionally on various ship rider events and engages in regional MCS operations with attachments with the FFA.
- (iii) The Ministry continues to address the various aspect of IUU through its Flag State, Port State, Market State and Coastal State responsibilities through the lens of the Port State Measures Agreement.
- (iv) The Ministry complies with stringent Conservation and Management Measures under its obligations to the Western and Central Pacific Commission process and furthermore contribute consistently to the regional MSC strategy process.

9. Stock Assessment and Data Collection Methods

- a) What specific scientific methodologies and stock assessment models were used during the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 periods to monitor fish populations, particularly for key commercial species such as tuna, sea cucumbers, and reef fish? Please explain?

Offshore:

The Ministry consistently provides above 96% reconciliation between each of the Fiji national long line fleets trips log sheets and landings data. This is verified by observer port sampling activities, observer placements on vessels during these fishing trips at random in addition to the EMS tool. These information sets are submitted into the SPC data base and assist with the region wide stock assessments of these highly migratory species.

Sea Cucumber and reef fish:

The Ministry is periodically undertaking targeted sea cucumber stock assessments and catch data collection from our market surveys.

- b) Can the Ministry explain how it ensures data accuracy and consistency across inshore and offshore monitoring programs?

Offshore:

The OFMD continuously updates its information sets after each of its Fiji national long line fleets vessels trip with its extensive process that cross verifies various data collected sources from the captain's log sheet, cross referenced against the industries landing and processing data. This information can be validated against observer and EMS collected information. Ultimately, these verified information sets are reinforced when they assist with the permitting process allowing them to place as IUU free to premium markets such as the EU and the MSC. All these information sets are daily verified into the SPC database housed with the OFMD and are submitted in aggregated formats to the SPC for the regional stock assessment process.

10. Aquaculture Productivity and Biosecurity

- a) Can the Ministry please explain what performance indicators were used to assess the productivity and biosecurity compliance of aquaculture hatcheries and farms during the 2021–2023 period?

The quantity of Post larvae and fry's (fingerlings/juveniles) produced in a year determines the productivity. The Ministry is biosecurity compliant as it sources its brood stock from biosecurity approved facilities.

- b) Were there any recorded incidents of disease outbreaks or biosecurity breaches, and how were these managed to minimize economic and environmental impacts? Please provide an update to the Committee.

There has never been a disease outbreak or biosecurity threat on Aquaculture recorded in Fiji so far. The enactment of the Aquaculture Act also address this threat as well.

- 11) What specific actions has the Ministry of Fisheries taken to address staffing shortages and improve staff welfare in the Northern Division, particularly in light of the acknowledged lack of adequate housing and the impact of staff turnover on service delivery?

The Ministry is looking at recruiting more project officers under respective Capital projects like Freshwater and Food Security Program in order to address staff shortages. In our Budget submission this financial year as well, the ministry is seeking funding on the 2017 Cabinet approved positions/structure for posts that are already approved but not budgeted under the current P2P. Refer to the Cabinet Decision 153/2017 on the new

structure then but some posts were unfunded by the Ministry of Finance hence affecting our services.

-END-

Appendix 2

Research Brief



Annual Report Summary – Standing Committee on Natural Resources

Ministry of Fisheries 2021-2022 Annual Report

1.0 Introduction

This brief is provided to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources (“SC-NR” or “Committee”) as requested through its secretariat. This comparative analysis is a summary of some of the key issues in them Ministry of Fisheries annual reports (“AR”) for the financial year 2021-2022. The summary is designed to assist Honourable Members of Committee undertake their comparisons and related analysis of the Ministry’s performance as discussed in the 2021-2022 financial year annual report. 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 Ministry’s performance.

2.0 Review of Ministry of Fisheries Annual Report

| Activities | Fisheries 2021-2022 AR ¹ Summary |
|--|---|
| <p>Overview of the Fisheries Sector in Fiji</p> | <p>The fisheries sector comprises three key sub-sectors: offshore fisheries, inshore or coastal fisheries; inclusive of commercial and subsistence fishery, and fresh and brackish water Aquaculture.</p> <p>The <u>offshore fisheries</u> mainly involve the use of longline gear targeting tuna (mainly albacore, yellowfin, and bigeye) for export markets, but a wide variety of species are caught for both local and overseas consumption. The amount of catch in offshore fisheries is determined by several factors, including the number of active vessels, oceanographic conditions, and the movement of fish.</p> <p>The <u>coastal commercial</u> fisheries of Fiji involve fishing in lagoons, reefs, deep slopes, and in nearby open ocean waters. Most boats involved in these fisheries are less than nine metres in length, but some of the fishing does not make use of a vessel. Coastal fisheries use many different kinds of gear (for example lines, nets, spears, traps) to harvest a very diverse range of finfish, invertebrates, and algae.</p> <p>The <u>coastal subsistence</u> fisheries of Fiji as the name implies, are focused on the production of food for home use. Significant amounts of fish are, however, given away to friends and relatives. Often attempts are made to market any valuable species captured if a market exists (e.g., lobster to a resort). Subsistence fishery landings occur at coastal villages throughout the coastal areas of the country, roughly in proportion to the distribution of the population.</p> <p>The <u>freshwater fisheries</u> of Fiji are relatively small compared to the other fishery sub-sectors. Harvests of freshwater finfish and invertebrates in Fiji consist mainly of freshwater clams (“kai”), eels, various species of freshwater crustaceans, and introduced fish, such as tilapia and carp. Of these, the freshwater clams are by far the most important and fishing for this species occurs in all major river systems in Fiji.</p> |

¹ AR – Annual Report

| Key Economic Indicators – Highlights | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--------------------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-----|------|-------|------|-------|-----|------|------|-------|------|------|-----|----|
| <p>Contribution to Fiji's Economy (Real GDP)</p> | <p>Figure 1: Fisheries Sector Contribution to Real Gross Domestic Product 2019 – 2021 - FJD (Millions)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Figure 1: Fisheries Sector Contribution to Real Gross Domestic Product 2019 – 2021 - FJD (Millions)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Processing and preserving of fish, crustaceans and molluses (FJD Million)</th> <th>Fishing and Aquaculture (FJD Million)</th> <th>Total contribution to RGDP FJD (Million)</th> <th>% contribution to RGDP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>6.2</td> <td>66.2</td> <td>72.4</td> <td>0.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>6.9</td> <td>61.1</td> <td>68.0</td> <td>0.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021</td> <td>7.1</td> <td>49.8</td> <td>56.9</td> <td>0.7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>fishing and aquaculture contributed FJD 49.8 million to Fiji's real gross domestic product (Real GDP) in 2021, a decline of FJD 11.3 million (-18.5%) in comparison to the 2020 contribution of FJD 61.1 million. The sector also contributed FJD 7.1 million to real GDP growth in the manufacturing industry in 2021, an increase of FJD 83,596 (1.2%). The combined fisheries-related activities within the fisheries sector contributed FJD 56.9 million (0.7%) to the national real GDP in 2021.</p> | Year | Processing and preserving of fish, crustaceans and molluses (FJD Million) | Fishing and Aquaculture (FJD Million) | Total contribution to RGDP FJD (Million) | % contribution to RGDP | 2019 | 6.2 | 66.2 | 72.4 | 0.7% | 2020 | 6.9 | 61.1 | 68.0 | 0.8% | 2021 | 7.1 | 49.8 | 56.9 | 0.7% | | | | |
| Year | Processing and preserving of fish, crustaceans and molluses (FJD Million) | Fishing and Aquaculture (FJD Million) | Total contribution to RGDP FJD (Million) | % contribution to RGDP | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2019 | 6.2 | 66.2 | 72.4 | 0.7% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2020 | 6.9 | 61.1 | 68.0 | 0.8% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2021 | 7.1 | 49.8 | 56.9 | 0.7% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Exports</p> | <p>Figure 2: Fish Exports by Standard International Trade Classification 2019 – 2021 - FJD (Millions)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Figure 2: Fish Exports by Standard International Trade Classification 2019 – 2021 - FJD (Millions)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Total Fisheries Exports (FJD Million)</th> <th>Fresh fish (FJD Million)</th> <th>Prepared/preserved fish (FJD Million)</th> <th>*Fresh fish - Re-exports (FJD Million)</th> <th>% of Total Exports</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>241.2</td> <td>90.3</td> <td>145.1</td> <td>5.9</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>187.0</td> <td>62.3</td> <td>116.9</td> <td>7.8</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021</td> <td>149.8</td> <td>49.0</td> <td>94.4</td> <td>6.4</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The fisheries sector contributed FJD 149.8 million (8%) to the national export earnings in 2021. A sharp decline of FJD 37.2 million (-19.9%) was seen as the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in comparison to the 2020 export earnings of FJD 187 million.</p> | Year | Total Fisheries Exports (FJD Million) | Fresh fish (FJD Million) | Prepared/preserved fish (FJD Million) | *Fresh fish - Re-exports (FJD Million) | % of Total Exports | 2019 | 241.2 | 90.3 | 145.1 | 5.9 | 11% | 2020 | 187.0 | 62.3 | 116.9 | 7.8 | 10% | 2021 | 149.8 | 49.0 | 94.4 | 6.4 | 8% |
| Year | Total Fisheries Exports (FJD Million) | Fresh fish (FJD Million) | Prepared/preserved fish (FJD Million) | *Fresh fish - Re-exports (FJD Million) | % of Total Exports | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2019 | 241.2 | 90.3 | 145.1 | 5.9 | 11% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2020 | 187.0 | 62.3 | 116.9 | 7.8 | 10% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2021 | 149.8 | 49.0 | 94.4 | 6.4 | 8% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Imports</p> | <p>Figure 3: Fish Imports by Standard International Trade Classification 2019 – 2021 - FJD (Millions)</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | <table border="1"> <caption>Import Data (2019-2021)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Total Imports</th> <th>*Fresh fish</th> <th>Prepared or preserved fish and crustaceans</th> <th>% of total Imports</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>73.6</td> <td>51.5</td> <td>22.0</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>95.8</td> <td>71.0</td> <td>24.8</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021</td> <td>66.7</td> <td>39.1</td> <td>27.6</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The fisheries sector imports amounted to FJD 66.7 million in 2021. A massive decrease of FJD 29.1 million (30.4%) was seen due to a change in consumer preference toward prepared and preserved fish and crustaceans during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ministry’s economic recovery targets of import substitution.</p> | Year | Total Imports | *Fresh fish | Prepared or preserved fish and crustaceans | % of total Imports | 2019 | 73.6 | 51.5 | 22.0 | 1% | 2020 | 95.8 | 71.0 | 24.8 | 3% | 2021 | 66.7 | 39.1 | 27.6 | 1% |
|-------------------|--|-------------|--|--------------------|--|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----|------|------|------|------|----|------|------|------|------|----|
| Year | Total Imports | *Fresh fish | Prepared or preserved fish and crustaceans | % of total Imports | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2019 | 73.6 | 51.5 | 22.0 | 1% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2020 | 95.8 | 71.0 | 24.8 | 3% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2021 | 66.7 | 39.1 | 27.6 | 1% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Employment | Findings of the FBOS 2019, Annual Employment Survey showed an estimate of 180, 106 employees for the registered establishments as of June 2019 in Fiji. 1,048 employees were directly employed in the fishing sector the 5,745 employees were employed within the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing industries. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Finance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Budget | <p>Budget Allocated: \$13.5 Million</p> <p>Budget Utilised: \$11.4 Million</p> <p>Utilisation Rate: 85%</p> <p>Auditor General – unqualified audit opinion</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3.0 Sources

1. Ministry of Fisheries 2021-2022 Annual Report, Accessed on 27 August 2024;
<https://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Ministry-of-Fisheries-Annual-Report-2021%E2%80%932022.pdf>

27 August 2024 [As Amended 09 October 2024]

Disclaimer

This Annual Report Summary was prepared to assist the Standing Committee on **Natural Resources** in its review of the **Ministry of Fisheries 2021-2022 Annual Report**. This summary should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. Other sources and information should be consulted. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate, the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji will not accept any liability for any loss or damage which may be incurred by any person acting in reliance upon the information. The Parliament of the Republic of Fiji accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. For further information please email: Siteri Gaunalomani on email siteri.gaunalomani@parliament.gov.fj or siteri.gaunalomani@legislature.gov.fj

Appendix 3

Additional Information

Ministry of Fisheries



Briefing to the Natural Resource Standing Committee

Lautoka Fisheries Office

16/4/25

Brief Background of Ministry of Fisheries in the Western Division

Western Division Fisheries Stations

The Station has 13 Technical Officers, 9 Support Officers, 2 vehicles, 3 ice plants, 1 aluminum boat and 2 fiberglass boats. The stations looks after 7 districts namely Vuda, Vitogo, Nacula, Yasawa, Naviti, Waya and Viwa. As a regional headquarters, it also assists other districts

The Station has 1 Technical Officer and looks after 7 districts namely Nadi, Vaturu, Sikituru, Malolo, Nawaka, Rukuruku and Sabeto.

The Station has 2 Technical Officers, 1 vehicle and 1 ice plant. The Stations looks after all the districts of Nadroga/Navosa province.

Ba Fisheries Station

Lautoka

The Station is housed at the government building with 2 Technical Officers. The Station looks at 2 districts namely and Savatu.

The station has 2 Technical officers, 1 support staff, 1 vehicle and a tilapia hatchery. It also looks after 6 districts namely Nailaga, Magodro, Votua, Qaliyalatini, Naloto and Nalotawa.

Nadi Fisheries Station

Sigatoka Fisheries Station

Caboni Fisheries Station

The Station has 4 Technical Support Officers, 1 Shrimp Production and research on finfish culture

Rakiraki

The Station has 1 Technical Officer, 1 Support Officer, 1 vehicle and 1 ice plants. The Station looks after 3 districts namely Rakiraki, Saivou and Nalawa.

Namarai Fisheries Station

The Station has 1 Technical Officer, 1 Support Officer, 1 vehicle, 1 fiberglass boat and 1 ice plants. The Station looks after Nakorotubu district

- 3 Provinces, 62 districts and 317 villages
- 1 regional office, 6 district/provincial offices across the division which include Sigatoka, Nadi, Ba, Tavua, Rakiraki and Namarai.
- 26 Technical Officers and 16 Support Staff so total of 42 Staffs in the division
- 7 ice plants
- 6 vehicles, 1 aluminum boat and 3 fiberglass boats
- 2 hatcheries; one for Tilapia and the other one for Shrimp

Fisheries Development Projects & Activities

Inland Aquaculture

| Species | Nadrog/ Navosa | Ba | Ra | 2022-2023 Production |
|---------------|----------------------|--------------|--|----------------------------|
| Tilapia farms | 9 | 46 | 34 | 3.12 tons @ \$27,278.50 |
| Prawn farms | 0 | 3 | 1 | 275kg @ \$12,755.00 |
| Shrimp farms | 2 (Momi, Lomawai) | 1 (Matawalu) | 3 (Vitawa, Vunitogoloa, Naivuvuni) | 2.21 tons @ \$98,512.00 |



Mariculture

| Type of farms | Farm Ownership | Location | 2022-2023 Production |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Spat Collector | Togovere youth club | Togovere, Ra | 153 Penguin & 24 Blacklip oyster |
| | Malake community | Malake, Ra | 228 Penguin & 54 Blacklip oyster |
| | Namarai community | Namarai, Nakorotubu, Ra | 1,255 spat @ \$2,915.49 |
| | Naocobau community | Naocobau, Nakorotubu, Ra | 1,882 spat @ \$4,090.00 |
| | Vatutavui community | Vatutavui, Ba | No harvest, 2 trial lines deployed |
| | Soso community | Soso, Yasawa | No harvest, 2 trial lines deployed |
| | Yalobi community | Soso, Yasawa | No harvest, 2 trial lines deployed |
| Seaweed farm | Yaqeta & Vuaki | Yasawa | No harvest yet, ~450 lines for 11 farmers |

Mariculture Photos



Coastal Fisheries Developments

Fisheries Cooperatives

- Nadroga/Navosa
 - Ekubu Fishermen Co-operative Ltd.
- Ba
 - Lautoka Fishermen Cooperative Ltd. of Lautoka
 - Kekeiaki Cooperative Ltd. of Lautoka
 - Lomati Cooperative Ltd. of Yasawa
 - Nabouono co-operative Ltd. of Yasawa
 - Teci Co-operative Ltd. of Yasawa
 - Vatukarawakarawa Co-operative Ltd. of Yasawa
 - Yasawa-i-rara Fish folks Co-operative Ltd. of Yasawa
 - Viwa Fishers Co-operative Ltd. of Yasawa
 - Somosomo Women's Co-operative Ltd. of Yasawa
- Ra
 - Tikina Navolau Women's Co-operative Ltd. of Namuaimada

Support for fishing cooperatives and coastal communities

- Solar freezers
- Post-harvest and fish handling, deepsea fishing and value adding trainings
- Boats and engines
- Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)



IDA License Issued

- 2022-2023 records

| Station | Total | Women | Men |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Namarai | 99 | 34 | 65 |
| Rakiraki | 106 | 5 | 101 |
| Tavua | 118 | 31 | 87 |
| Ba | 125 | 10 | 15 |
| Lautoka | 330 | 3 | 327 |
| Nadi | 95 | 2 | 93 |
| Sigatoka | 48 | 20 | 28 |
| Total | 921 | 105 | 816 |

MPAs/Eco-tourisms Activies

- Restocking of giant clams and coral planting in the MPAs or marine parks like Naidiri, Tavarua, etc.



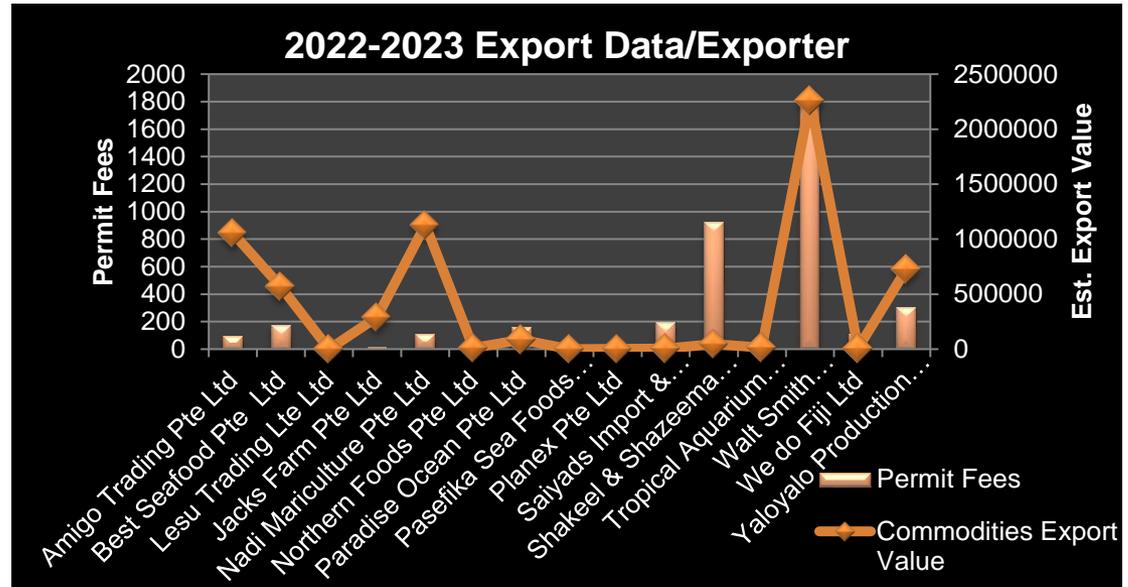
2022-2023 Market Survey Data

- Lautoka Fisheries Market
 - 112,221.55kg finfish @ a value of \$1,708,989.30
 - 8,316.53kg non-finish @ a value of \$325,690.20
- Lautoka Municipipla Market
 - 3,157.69kg finfish @ a value of \$31,461.00
- Ba Municipal Market
 - 1,684.74kg finfish @ a value of \$17,242.00



2022-2023 Fish Export

- 409 export permits issued with total weight of 1,101,418.43kg @ an estimated value of \$5,267,479.91



2022-2023 Fish Import

- 167 import permits issued with a total weight of 945,523.11kg @ an estimated value of \$6,988,095.18



Challenges

- Improving service delivery
 - Manpower @ district offices
 - Vehicles @ Nadi & Tavua Offices
 - Office space @ Sigatoka & Lautoka
 - Ba office upgrade
 - Upgrade of positions from FA to FTO
- Improving data collection
 - Manpower and regulating Middlemen specifically for data reporting
- Aquaculture
 - Inconsistent supply of frys/PLs and feed
 - Hatchery for farmers to supplement the government hatchery & feed processing facility for farm clusters
- Fisheries Cooperatives
 - Financial constraints to start a business
 - Capital to start their business
 - Set up mini processing facility
- Fisheries Wharf
 - Uncontrolled usage of fisheries wharf
 - Need a Port Attendant
- Combating illegal fishing
 - strengthening MCS unit through capacity building and the use of technologies like drone

Appendix 4

Submission Photos





Appendix 5

Site Visit Photos



