



# Climate Resilient Islands Programme

## Fiji

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## The goal of Climate Resilient Islands

To strengthen community resilience to the impacts of climate change through nature-based approaches. The program is working with rural communities in Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Tuvalu, PNG and Solomon Islands.

Project Timeline: April 2021 - March 2025

Climate Resilient Islands supports the New Zealand Government's Resilient Ecosystems for Climate Change Adaptation (RECCA) program.

### Programme Outcomes

Communities engaged in Climate Resilient Islands will develop a community resilience profile that reflects their lived experience concerning ecosystems, natural hazards, resilient food systems, market opportunities and priorities for the future.

This profile is the foundation for the communities to determine their priorities and the pathways to strengthened resilience through three interconnected nature-based systems outcome areas:

1. Protection, restoration and maintenance of ecosystems
2. Climate resilient food systems
3. Strengthened preparedness to intensified natural hazards

The Climate Resilient Islands Programme then provides the following potential pathways for communities:

- Intergenerational Indigenous knowledge sharing
- Payments for ecosystems services (PES) models
- Protected marine and conservation areas
- Restoration and strengthening of Indigenous resilient local food systems
- Access to small grants to strengthen or establish community livelihoods

### Nature-based Solutions

Investing in nature creates jobs and brings economic benefits. Nature-based solutions increase the resilience of countries to climate change, help reduce the risk of disasters, protect human health and improve water and food security.

Nature-based solutions include restoration of forests, mangroves and wetlands; coastal restoration programs; creation and maintenance of ecosystems and the sustainable management of land and sea.



## Brief rationale for site selection

Fiji is highly vulnerable to climate change. Sea-level rise, drought and cyclones associated with climate change present challenges to livelihoods and food security.

Inland communities face unique threats and are currently underserved by climate change adaptation activities. Agricultural lands, especially sugar plantations, are highly vulnerable to climate change. People lack access to economic opportunities, driving deforestation as well as the rural to urban migration that typifies Fijian demographics. Lands that are already degraded, due to decades of unsustainable land uses like mono-crop agriculture and forestry, are now unable to provide for the people that own them.

Climate Resilient Islands will target inland rural areas of Vanua Levu in the Northern Division. These areas include extensive primary forest with unique biodiversity values as well as degraded and idle lands. Many members of landowning mataqali live outside of their lands in nearby urban centres and rely on vulnerable markets for their living. The services provided by restored ecosystems will lay a foundation for resilient livelihoods and security for those who do choose to pursue opportunities in urban centres.

Live & Learn Fiji have a strong presence in this area, reflected in the extensive community and sub-national governments that we have developed over the past ten years. Climate Resilient Islands' activities will allow Live & Learn to build on previous and current work with communities on ecosystem-based livelihoods development and climate change adaptation. The programme will generate momentum to scale and extend models developed through this experience.

This programme in Fiji aligns strongly with government priorities, including an ecosystems-based approach to climate change adaptation, tree planting, and the utilisation of idle lands. The programme will provide evidence for land use policy that focuses on land restoration, environmental protection and ecosystem services as a way to best support landowners.

Sites	Ecosystem
Dreketi, Laucala, Vunaqalutu, Naiqaqi, Valeni (Cakaudrove province)	Forest, marine, freshwater, degraded land
Naibulu, Vitina, Lutukina (Macuata province)	Forest, marine, freshwater, degraded land
Nawailevu, Kavula, Banikea, Namuavoivoi, Galoa Island, Nakalou (Bua province)	Forest, marine, freshwater, degraded land

## Work Programme Focus

Live & Learn Fiji will be guided by the Climate Resilient Islands Logic and activity framework from which annual work programmes will be developed. These will be contextually relevant, but still linked to Climate Resilient Islands outputs and outcomes.

In Fiji, this means that Climate Resilient Islands will involve activities that build on Live & Learn's experience and successes. Programme outputs will be linked with one or more activity clusters, which include:

- 1. Restoration of idle lands**, including tree planting and riparian management, incorporating climate resilient agricultural practices
- 2. Protection of forest areas**, alongside sustainable land use planning and development of PES models
- 3. Establishing a talanoa space** for indigenous knowledge sharing, youth empowerment and connecting communities with sub-national government
- 4. Developing a Rural Business Hub** that promotes alternative livelihoods based on honey, kava and tree seedlings

## Stakeholders

- iTaukei Affairs and Climate Change Division
- Provincial government
- MoF/Tree planting initiative/Land Bank
- Drawa Block Forest Communities Cooperative (DBFCC)
- Ministry of Youth
- Other NGOs (inc. WWF and IUCN)
- National REDD+ unit