Fiji Forest Policy Statement

November 2007

Summary
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FIJI FOREST POLICY STATEMENT
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1 NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR FOREST POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The first National Forest Policy for Fiji was adopted in 1950 and gave rise to the 1953 Forest Act, which together placed forestry primarily in the context of forest management for timber production. The Forest Act was replaced in 1992 by the Forest Decree which simplified the preceding legislation and made an initial attempt to address several decades of changing and broadening requirements of the forestry sector to include social, economic, environmental, cultural and political developments. In the 21st century, forestry’s policy environment continues to change with increased emphasis on sustainable forest management, increased landowner's aspirations, climate change and globalization.

Due to the changes in the operating environment the need for reforming Fiji’s general forest policy has become more acute not only because of the recent development of the forestry sector and the latest results from Fiji’s forestry and environment review, but also because of global concern for the environment.

The review of the national forest policy started in 2003. A number of public consultations have taken place involving a wide cross-section of Government departments, agencies, statutory bodies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. An Expert Panel was appointed and members of the panel invited to contribute to four Expert Groups: (1) Forest Management and Landowners; (2) Environment; (3) Industry; and (4) Cross-cutting issues. The Expert Groups reported their findings to a plenary session of the Expert Panel which resulted in the 4th Draft of Revised Forest Policy Statement. The Draft was widely circulated and presented in the final Public Consultation held 16–17 August 2007, to ensure that stakeholders are fully aware of the issues contained in the Draft of Fiji Forest Policy Statement and to collate their final views and comments. The resulting Draft is now considered by the Forestry Department to be complete and to undergo due process for presentation and consideration by the Cabinet of the Government of the Fiji Islands.
2 OBJECTIVES OF THE NEW FOREST POLICY FRAMEWORK

Involving all stakeholders of the forestry sector, the revised forest policy will:

- Create a unified vision of the role of the forest sector in Fiji;
- Lead strategic planning for the Board and Department of Forestry;
- Provide analysis, policy and planning expertise, information about forests and forestry, and forward-looking ideas for decision- and policy-makers;
- Promote policies that encourage sustainable forest management and support Government’s strategic planning for the sustainable development of Fiji.

3 REFORMULATION OF THE FOREST POLICY AS RESPONSE TO CHANGES IN THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Determinants of forest policy development at national level

- Challenges
  - Endorsed rural land use policy for Fiji.
  - Fiji Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (enforcement for conservation, especially in native forest areas).
  - Results of National Forest Inventory.

- Limiting factors
  - Absence of comprehensive regional and national land use plans.
  - Limited protection and enforcement for conservation, especially in native forest areas.
  - Inadequate knowledge of forest resources.
  - Inadequate research effort.
  - Poor fire protection capabilities and procedures.
  - Institutional weaknesses and difficult bureaucratic processes.
  - Outdated forestry legislation.
  - Absence of detailed forest management and harvesting plans.

Determinants of forest policy development at international level

- Globalization of the economy and trade.
- Internationalization of environmental and nature protection.
- Privatization and a changing understanding of the role of the State.
- Participation of stakeholders and the public.
- Influence of non-governmental organizations in public decisions.
- Diversification of society’s demand for forest goods and services.
4 GENERAL GOALS AND ORIENTATION

Vision: SUSTAINABLE WELLBEING AND PROSPERITY FROM DIVERSIFIED FORESTS

The national goal for the forest sector is:

Sustainable management of Fiji's forest to maintain their natural potential and to achieve greater social, economic and environmental benefits for current and future generations.

4.1 Objectives

1. Ensured ecosystem stability through conservation of forest biodiversity, water catchments and soil fertility.
2. Ensured sustainable supply of forest products and services by maintaining a sufficiently large permanent forest area under efficient and effective management.
3. Increased engagement by landowners and communities in sustainable forest management and an equitable distribution of benefits from forest products and processes including ensured protection of intellectual property rights.
4. Increased employment in the forestry sector, sufficient supply of domestic markets and increased foreign exchange earnings through sustainable forest-based industry development and trade.
5. Enhanced national capacity to manage and develop the forest sector in a collaborative approach with involvement of all stakeholders.
5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Conservation and sustainable use of Fiji’s forest resources is the foundation for all development in the forest sector and for ensuring intergenerational equity.

- Conservation and sustainable use of the forest resources is a collective responsibility of all levels of government, the private sector, resource user and landowners.

- To ensure sustainable forest management and taking into account the multiple role of the forest, a sufficient area must be determined as Permanent Forest Estate (PFE).

- Conservation and sustainable management of Fiji’s natural forests are the most important means of conserving the vast majority of Fiji’s endemic fauna and flora, therefore the establishment of a comprehensive system of reserves and conservation areas at the national and local level is integral part of the national forest policy.

- Forest management should be implemented in a way that local communities are actively involved in its planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- Through active participation in the administration and implementation of sustainable forest management, the resource owner should receive stable income from forest products and diversified employment opportunities.

- The Government will develop guidelines and a scheme for compensation of landowners dedicating their land for protection and conservation purposes.

- Sustainable forest management is anchored in an adequate information and knowledge base. Decision-making towards sustainable forest management will be based on scientific research and systematic monitoring.

- The paradigm shift of management focus from timber production to the conservation and sustainable management of the forest resources needs extensive promotion through information and awareness campaign for both the resource owner and civil society.

- The intellectual property rights are recognised. An appropriate mechanism will be adopted at national and regional level to ensure that local knowledge is conserved and valued.
6 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PILLARS

6.1 Change from forest sector planning to an integrated natural resources management

A fundamental ingredient for sustainable land use planning and the management of natural resources is an integrated approach. It has immediate and far-reaching consequences for the status and uses of different categories of forest land. Ecological and landscape inventories become an important source of information for planning and monitoring of forestry activities. Forest owners and managers as well as public forest service providers have to consider ecological and protection aspects more intensively than in the past. This calls for broad and consistent consultation processes among public and private stakeholders, with explicit coordination among governmental agencies that have competencies in forestry matters, environmental protection, land use planning and rural development.

Main actions

1. Establish the Permanent Forest Estate based on forest functions derived from the National Forest Inventory in line with the National Rural Land Use Policy and stakeholder interest.
2. Creation of a protected area system for the conservation of representative sites of Fiji’s indigenous forest types with their typical flora and fauna.
3. Protection and conservation of biological diversity (including gene conservation areas), ecological and environmental forest values for the benefit of present and future generations.
4. Incorporation of watershed management and soil conservation in the management of all forest types.

Figure 1: Policy fields related to Policy Development Pillar 1: Integrated Resource Management
6.2 Transition from timber exploitation to sustainable forest management

Sustainable management of forest resources is an important element for sound land use. The new forest policy includes the provisions to maintain a natural forest cover that is adequate for the full range of economic, ecological and social functions for present and future generations. The principle of sustainable forest management leads to new approaches in regulating forest uses, management requirements and current forestry practices.

The forest resources will be managed under different forest management systems according to the biological potential and the forest functions in order to maintain and improve the production potential while maintaining their genetic diversity and resilience against natural disasters and the impact of climate change. Silvicultural research will be conducted to improve knowledge about natural regeneration, growth processes, and management of indigenous trees and NTFPs.

Main actions

1. Delimitation of management units for sustainable forest management (SFMU)
2. Elaboration, approval and implementation of forest management plans according to different forest management systems
3. Re-defining forest management standards by revision of the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code and the development of national Forest Certification Standards
4. Introduction of new forest licence system based on long-term agreements and aimed to ensure sustainable supply on forest goods and services

Figure 2: Policy fields related to Policy Development Pillar 2: Sustainable Forest Management
6.3 Empowerment of landowners

The Government will encourage landowners and forest resource users to adopt sustainable forest management principles for the management of natural forest and plantations as well as monitoring adherence to these principles. Specific attention will be given to rehabilitation of degraded forest areas, regeneration of logged over forests and sustained productivity of plantations and their expansion, where ecologically unobjectionable and economically viable.

It is an integral part of the forest policy to provide more opportunities for local stakeholders to intervene and participate in forest management planning. The promotion of local management arrangements includes mechanisms for the devolution of forest management to local communities or user groups in order to facilitate co-management agreements and for the promotion of joint ventures for logging, timber processing and commercialisation.

Main actions

1. Promotion of the community forest management approach
2. Development and promotion of agroforestry systems
3. Implementation of an awareness raising programme on sustainable forest management for resource owners and communities
4. Capacity building for establishment of landowner associations, for contract negotiations, business enterprises, and monitoring of forest management and entrepreneurial activities.

Figure 3: Policy fields related to Policy Development Pillar 3: Landowner Development
6.4 Streamlining and upgrading forest industries

The forest sector’s contribution to the economy will be enhanced through the provision of a favourable environment for investment in sustainable and value-added production. Improvement in the performance of the timber industry is the main lever to generate necessary income that is needed to implement sustainable forest management. Sustainable forest management and an export-driven wood production strategy must be promoted simultaneously. This involves: long-term security of log supply; investment in efficient logging equipment; sawmills and technology for further processing plants; market research and development; and quality assurance.

Main actions

1. Encouragement of expanded value-added processing of timber by timber processing plants and furniture manufacturing industries
2. Supporting the certification of the chain of custody in view of the increasing requirements in international trade and domestic markets
3. Support for the development of new products, promotion of the use of domestic timber products in local constructions
4. Availability of skilled work force through the provision of apprenticeship training and specialised training courses delivered by the Timber Industry Training Centre (TITC) or Forest Training Centre (TC), or training providers accredited by FD.

Figure 4: Policy fields related to Policy Development Pillar 4: Promotion of High Quality Forest Products
6.5 Reform of the institutional framework

Successful forest resource management will depend on reforming the organisational structure and administration of the forest sector. The intuitional changes are already initiated in the course of the general administration reform. The launch of the Forest Policy Statement should be taken as an opportunity to define the roles and responsibilities of institutions that are or need to be involved in forest resource management.

The focus in the reform of the institutional framework within the forest sector will be based on more explicit coordination among the governmental agencies that have competencies in forest-related matters. The FD will concentrate its activities on its core responsibilities and devolve functions that could be effectively implemented by others, including the landowners.

The new policies are intended to become more proactive and rely more widely on incentive and monitoring measures. Effective reforms need to correspond with the capacity and willingness of governments and other private and public actors to implement new regulations and commitments.

The way in which governments interact with civil society on matters such as awarding forestry concessions or monitoring environmental compliance will be based on participation in decision-making, access to information, transparency and accountability.

Main actions

1. The Government will initiate a National Forest Programme as a broad-based societal dialogue process including all major stakeholders to achieve consensus on the details for the reorientation of the forest policy. This process will be conducted in line with the internationally-agreed concept of national forest programmes, principles and elements, as defined by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Forests (IPF).

2. Revision of the national forest-related legislation in order to remove the present deficiencies in scope and quality, and create an enabling legal base with proactive and stimulating instruments and guidelines.

3. Review of the mandate, structure, functions and resources of the FD and revision in accordance with the requirements of the approved forest policy. The role of the forest administration will focus on policy development, regulation, monitoring and facilitation of sustainable forest management. The FD shall have the regulatory authority for the sustainable management of all forest resources in Fiji. It has the
administrative responsibility for the natural forest areas and regulatory functions with regard to plantation management. The services provided by FD will be strengthened through organisational and human resources development in order to contribute to the self-financing of FD in the long run.

4. Encouragement of the participation of a wider range of private sector and civil society organisations in the sustainable management of forest resources by establishing stakeholder associations and developing an adequate framework to regulate and facilitate greater engagement of different partners in the development of the forest sector.

5. Fiji’s participation in the international and regional forest-related processes, initiatives and programmes in order to represent national interests, to ensure implementation of international commitments, and to attract assistance to achieve national and global goals.

Figure 5: Policy fields related to Policy Development Pillar 5: Reform of Institutional Framework
7 FINANCING

The policy sets medium to long-term vision for the sector’s development in which sustainable management of the forest resources and poverty reduction, social development, and environmental protection are well integrated. To implement such policy, the Government has to ensure that the required funding will be available. The financial resources mobilisation necessarily is not limited to public funds, but addresses the private sector, communities as well as national and international development agencies.

The Government will review the current financing mechanisms and develop a financing strategy to ensure long-term financing for sustainable forest management and a viable forest industry as part of the sustainable national development programme. The Financing Strategy will aim at ensuring self-sufficiency in the development of the forest sector in the long term through financing mechanisms targeted to fund part of the programmes and activities of FD; contribute to financing forest sector development as well as contributions to macro-economic development and national budgetary policies.

The essential elements of the financial strategy are characterised in the following.

7.1 Forestry Department Revenue

The reorganisation will also provide that FD develops and applies instruments and mechanisms to overcome fiscal and budgetary constraints which slow down the institutional strengthening and restructuring process.

Actions

1. The review of the system of fees in order to create a transparent and simple system that on one hand generates adequate revenue to ensure funding of the services of FD and forest-related Government tasks; and on the other hand stimulates investment in sustainable forest management and processing.
2. The revenues generated through the revised system of fees will be acknowledged as agency revenues of the FD and the financial management will be the responsibility of the FD under its own account.

3. The FD will commission a study on the efficiency of the current system to attribute forest products utilisation licences, the roles of FD and NLTB with focus on a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of both institutions and a transparent and equitable distribution of the licence fees based on the real amount of allocated resources by both institutions.

4. The FD will offer its services to the private sector on a cost-recovery basis. Commercialisation of some research activities will be promoted so as to increase self-financing.

5. New mechanisms for cost-sharing of training expenses by different users, and development of commercial activities by training institutions for increased self-financing will be promoted. Cost-sharing mechanisms will also be promoted to improve the sustainability of the forestry extension services.

7.2 Forest Sector Development Fund

The establishment of the Forest Sector Development Fund would provide an efficient instrument to promote the transition from exploitation to sustainable forest management. The Fund aims to support stakeholders’ investments in a wide range of forest-related activities.

The Forest Sector Development Fund should be set up as an independent institution outside the public administration. The leading body will consist of a Board of Directors which represents the stakeholder in the forest sector. The operational management will be the responsibility of a management unit headed by an Executive Director.

The Forest Sector Development Fund is conceived as an open system which can mobilize and absorb financial resources from different sources including: contributions from national budget; loans and grants from international agencies; monies from taxes and levies; contributions from stakeholders; and revenues generated through the marketing of environmental services.
Actions

1. The FD will commission a study to evaluate the options and feasibility for the creation of the Forest Sector Development Fund including the precise description of the organisational and administrative structure, the decision-making bodies, and the supply and allocation of financial resources.

2. Parallel to the feasibility study, potential sources of funding should be identified such as the “classic” sources like financial contributions from the national budget, fees for reforestation, compensation payments for environmental damages in the context of logging operations or levies on export of timber products; and innovative instruments such as the introduction of payment schemes for environmental services of the forest or the commercialisation of carbon sequestration certificates.

7.3 Financing conservation and protection measures

The Government recognises the right of the landowners to compensation for forgone opportunities in the context of protection and conservation measures. In accordance with the landowners, NLTB, Department of Environment, National Trust for Fiji and the private sector, FD will take steps forward to establish a financing scheme for compensation of forgone income options due to the integration of forest land into the national system of protected areas or other conservation measures.

The National Trust for Fiji has the mandate for biodiversity conservation and protection measures, but insufficient funding and limited human and technical resources. To overcome the structural and operational deficiencies, various initiatives have been taken by national and international NGOs in cooperation with the Department of Environment and the FD seeking new approaches which involve the local communities in the establishment of protected area and its management. The FD will continue to support this approach and strengthen the cooperation rather than to create a separate Forest Conservation Fund.

Actions

1. The FD will investigate mechanisms for funding forest conservation on an ongoing basis including compensation payments for ecological damage
resulting from inadequate forest utilization practices, licences for bio-
prospecting and use of local intellectual property rights

7.4 Financing through International and regional forestry cooperation

Numerous multilateral agreements relevant to sustainable development are of
special importance in the implementation of the forest policy. Under the Kyoto
Protocol, afforestation and reforestation are included in the activities that are
eligible under the Clean Development Mechanism. Discussions are ongoing at
the international level with regard to whether ‘avoided deforestation’ and the
restoration of grasslands should be included in the catalogue of acknowledged
measures. The Convention of Biological Diversity, through the Global
Environmental Facility (GEF), offers financial mechanisms to integrate
biodiversity concerns in forest sector strategies, plans and management. In the
context of the policies referring to climate change mitigation and adaptation, the
potential of forests for addressing catastrophic events can be valued.

Comprehensive capacity building is needed to master the policies, institutional
and administrative issues in the context of international agreements and related
financial mechanisms as well as an open dialogue among public and private
agencies to join partnership agreements and generate synergies.

Actions

1. Strengthening the skills and capacities in the public administration to
   facilitate access to international financing mechanisms and successfully
   conduct the negotiations.

2. Encouragement of stakeholders in the forestry sector to build up alliances
   and partnership agreements in order improve the acquisition potential from
   international funding sources and to create synergies.
The new forest policy is expected to result in higher quality decision making, fewer implementation problems and more result-focused impact. During the implementation, stakeholder participation will be encouraged to ensure that the activities are consistent with local needs and that the benefits are equitably distributed.

This implies changes in management practices in the wider context of land use, forest utilization, and in the institutional framework that supports the coherent development of the forest sector. The commitment of all stakeholders will be required to make the necessary changes that would ensure the utilization of the forest sector for national development; while ensuring forests maintain their role and functions to support prosperous livelihoods, for present and future generations.

The driving forces to initiate and force the changes are:

1. Pursuing an area-based, local needs-oriented approach. This cross-sector approach is seen as more efficient since it stimulates the collaboration among the public agencies, and between public and private stakeholders and the communities. The dialogue and coordination reduces the duplication of effort and focuses on activities which are really needed.

2. Changing the roles of stakeholder from that of purely resource owner, user and controller to that of partners in sustainable forest resource management. Partners may include individual households, groups of land or resource owners, forest enterprises, community organisations, NGOs and public authorities. Key factors to be addressed include security of tenure, knowledge about forest resources and value of forests, equitable distribution of benefits and responsibilities, and an enabling framework for assistance and monitoring.

3. Financial requirement and political will are the two factors that will drive institutional reform; and furthermore, stakeholders will need to understand the timeframes needed to set targets in which to contribute toward the reform.
Campaigning measures include communicating the forest policy to all stakeholders including:

- land and forest resource owners;
- logging companies and forest industries;
- related natural resource management agencies in the public and civil societies;
- national and international development agencies, and;
- society in general.

Material should be prepared explaining the new approach to sector development and be widely disseminated through conventional means, such as the extension services, and the creation and maintenance of a Forestry Department website.

The National Forest Programme initiative will provide the platform through wide consultation with stakeholders, and the newly-constituted Forestry Board will ensure the appropriate support.

Monitoring and evaluation of the forest policy in view of progress in the policy implementation, incorporation of the forest policy in the relevant natural resources management and environmental policies, allocation of financial, human, technical and logistical resources, and performance data regarding forest conservation and utilization will have an impact on forest products industrialization and benefits accrued to rural livelihoods. The Fiji Forest Policy will need to be reviewed regularly in parallel with the preparation of the National Development Plan.
### 9 FIELDS OF FOREST POLICY AND ACTIONS

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| 1. Ensured ecosystem stability through conservation of forest biodiversity, water catchments and soil fertility | **1.1. Land use planning & forest classification** | - Prepare land use plans at the national, provincial and district levels.  
- Elaborate and issue a Forest Function Map, based on forest functions, ecological differences and management criteria; four categories of forest will be identified – multiple use forests, protection forest categories, forest plantations and mangroves.  
- Develop and disseminate effective programmes to raise landowner awareness and ensure that resource owners are able to contribute to land use planning and forest classification. |
|   | **1.2. Forest inventory** | - FD will conduct a National Forest Inventory (NFI) that covers natural forests and plantations.  
- The FD will develop, maintain and, on a periodic basis (10 years), update a National Forest Inventory database.  
- The results of the NFI will be made public by FD. Specific data and information will be accessible for interested parties on request.  
- Forest inventory at forest management unit level will be required for the elaboration of forest management plans.  
- Resource owners and timber company personnel will be trained in basic forest inventory techniques. |
|   | **1.3. Biodiversity conservation** | - The FD will lead the work with resource owners, NLTB, Ministry of Environment, National Trust for Fiji, the private sector and other stakeholders towards establishing a system of conservation areas  
- Conservation of mangrove ecosystems to maintain their ecological, cultural and social values will be a priority.  
- Biodiversity conservation will be incorporated into the management regimes of natural forests and plantations.  
- Forest management will be based on multifunctional approaches including areas for eco-tourism will be created in forest management units, where appropriate.  
- FD will work with the Department of Environment and NGOs to deliver environmental awareness programmes. |
|   | **1.4. Watershed management & soil conservation** | - FD will liaise closely with organisations and communities concerned with watershed management in the identification and management of watershed areas.  
- FD in collaboration with stakeholders will develop guidelines for forest management in designated watershed management areas.  
- Watershed management and soil conservation will be included in forest management plans.  
- Reduced impact logging will be promoted to avoid soil erosion as a consequence of harvesting operations.  
- The FD will assist communities to establish soil conservation projects & to implement rehabilitation works on severely eroded sites. |
|   | **1.5. Mangrove management** | - FD will contribute actively to a Government review of mangrove management and will undertake the role assigned to it following the review.  
- FD will advocate for the permanent conservation of mangroves to serve sustainable customary uses. |
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| 1.6. Forestry and international agreements | • The FD will strengthen its internal capacity through awareness programmes for understanding the scope and importance of the conventions and agreements at national and global level, and the opportunities arising from international networks to promote sustainable resource management through awareness programmes referring to the scope and importance of the conventions.  
• The FD will ensure that the National Climate Change Policy devised by the Department of Environment takes into consideration forest-related issues.  
• The FD will cooperate with other public agencies, national and international NGOs related to natural resource management in attracting bilateral and multilateral assistance for partnership projects within the framework of international agreements and the related financial mechanisms. |
| 2.1. Delimitation of management units for sustainable forest management (SFMU) | • The FD will develop criteria for the delimitation of management units for sustainable forest management taking into account the geographical and ecological conditions, the availability of forest resources, the socio-economic situation of the landowners, and the existing or potential capacities for the utilisation of forest products and their processing and commercialisation.  
• The FD will encourage resource owners to consolidate their land into forest management units (FMU) of a size suitable for effective forest management. The area of forest management units will be determined in collaboration with resource owners. |
| 2.2. Management plans | • For all native and plantation forest management units, the FD has to approve a management plan before harvesting operations can take place.  
• FD will, in collaboration with key stakeholders, develop guidelines for the preparation of management plans, their submission and approval procedures.  
• Resource owners will be involved in the development of forest management plans to guide all forest protection and development measures and the preparation of harvesting plans.  
• Forest management licensees will be required to prepare a strategic harvesting plan each year showing the locations of proposed road-making and harvesting operations for the next two years.  
• The FD ensures that all plans comply with the provisions in the Environmental Management Act. |
| 2.3.1. Management systems / Natural forest management | • FD will issue the regulations concerning the selection of silvicultural system.  
• FD will foster the introduction of RIL techniques in natural forest.  
• FD will encourage the development of cooperative silvicultural research programmes. |
| 2.3.2. Management systems / Rehabilitation and stand improvement | • FD will develop and issue guidelines and standards for silvicultural treatments in natural forest.  
• Management plans must include the assessment of the needs for silvicultural treatment measures, and specifications for methods and techniques to be applied under the different stand conditions.  
• The management plans and strategic harvesting plans can only be approved by the FD when the execution of the silvicultural treatment is secured by guarantees such as bank guarantees, bonds or payment of fees. |
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| 2. Ensured sustainable supply of forest products & services by maintaining a sufficiently large permanent forest area under efficient & effective management | **2.3.3. Management systems / Plantations** | • Forest plantation and woodlot owners, managers and operators shall establish forest management plans for plantation areas.  
• Plantation areas will be confined to existing plantation areas or areas identified suitable for forest plantations.  
• Plantation establishment with mixed indigenous or exotic timber species will be promoted subject to compliance with quarantine requirements.  
• The measures needed to ensure the sustainability of the resource base (reforestation, regeneration) will be specified in the licences taking into account the specific conditions for long-term forest management licences and short-term special harvesting licences. The attachment to the licences specifies the responsibilities for implementing restitutory measures as well as the obligation and modalities for the provision of guarantees.  
• The FD will provide technical advice to industry and landowners for planning plantation establishment programmes.  
• The FD will undertake activities which support reforestation including seed collection, nursery production, tree breeding, silvicultural management, and forest protection and research. |
|  | **2.4. Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice** | • The FFHCOP will be revised for conformity with the Rural Land Use Policy 2005 and the Environmental Management Act 2005.  
• Regular revision of the FFHCOP will involve consultation with key stakeholders such as harvesting contractors and FD.  
• Requirement for compliance with the FFHCOP will be written into an amended Forest Decree or superseding legislation.  
• Compliance with the FFHCOP will be monitored and enforced by the FD in conjunction with Forest Wardens selected from resource owners and communities.  
• All supervisors, chainsaw and machinery operators working in forestry operations must be trained and certified.  
• The FD will encourage the adoption of the standards specified in the FFHCOP by all Government departments and agencies for any other land-based operation, including road-making.  
• The FD will establish a Steering Committee to drive the implementation, monitoring and review of the FFHCOP. |
|  | **2.5. Forest Certification Standard** | • The Standard for forest certification of native and plantation forests will include adherence to domestic and international laws and agreements.  
• The Standard will be developed along internationally accepted guidelines to be used in forest management audits.  
• The Government will endorse the Standard.  
• The FD will actively support landowners and the forest industry to implement sustainable forest management according to certification standards and in marketing of certified forest products.  
• The Government will revise the Fiji Forest Certification Standard every 10 years. |
|  | **2.6. Forest licences** | • The FD will introduce a new licensing system to promote a long-term sustainable approach to utilisation of Fiji’s forest resource for the mutual benefit of key stakeholders.  
• The FD will charge appropriate fees for processing and monitoring of all licences.  
• The licensing system will include managing, harvesting and milling licences.  
• FD will conduct a periodic review of performance and compliance with the stipulated licence conditions. |
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| 2. Ensured sustainable supply of forest products & services by     | 2.7. Log scaling                                   | • The FD will train and licence all log scalers and encourage resource owners to be trained in log scaling procedures and to scale logs to be removed from their land.  
• The FD will use its own trained staff as log scale checkers, who will randomly check logs measured by licensed log scalers.  
• New regulations will be introduced to the forest legislation to govern the measurement of logs. |
| maintaining a sufficiently large permanent forest area under        | 2.8. Forest protection                             | • The FD will develop appropriate measures to protect forests from fire, pests and pathogens, including preventive forest health and quarantine measures.  
• The FD will develop fire protection protocols for pine and mahogany plantations, and request FPL and FHCL to develop fire management systems.  
• The FD will prepare extension materials on fire prevention and management, conduct awareness and education campaigns, and encourage community cooperation in the implementation of fire prevention and fire management programmes. |
| efficient & effective management continued                          | 2.9. Environmental standards in forest management and environmental impact assessments (EIA) | • The FD shall, in consultation with the Department of Environment and environmental NGOs, SPC, SPREP, NLTB, FAB and other stakeholders, review the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice which will set the minimum environmental standards required for all forestry operations.  
• The scope for EIA in the forest sector will be defined and guidelines will be prepared in accordance with requirements of the Environment Management Act 2005.  
• The FD will train managers and harvesting licensees about their environmental responsibilities under the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice.  
• The FD will train resource owners on the environmental requirements of the FFHCOP and any other environmental protection requirements. |
| 2.10. Non-timber forest products                                    | 2.10. Non-timber forest products                  | • Resource assessment of non-timber forest products will be incorporated in forest inventories, research and resource assessments for forest management planning.  
• The FD will prepare and implement a strategic development plan to encourage and facilitate the sustainable use of non-timber forest products by resource owners, communities, and private investors.  
• The FD will support the sustainable production of high value multiple purpose species, or the harvest of non-timber forest products and items of cultural significance through the provision of extension advice, technical services and market information to villages and communal groups.  
• Private sector investments will be promoted in order to utilise the full potential of the forest resource base, as well as to domesticate and commercialise products with high demand.  
• Non-timber forest products should be protected during harvesting operations in consultation with resource owners. |
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| 3. Increased engagement by landowners and communities in sustainable forest management and an equitable distribution of benefits from forest products and processes including ensured protection of | 3.1. Community forestry | - The FD will support community-based management of natural forests, and foster the active cooperation and support of forest management licensees in such management activity, based on fair benefit-sharing arrangements.  
- The FD will encourage the development of community forestry plantation projects with adequate attention to ecological, economic and marketing aspects.  
- The FD will provide extension and technical support to resource owners and communities for planning, implementation and monitoring of sustainable forest management.  
- Community-based forest industries for value added production will be promoted. |
|                            | 3.2. Agroforestry   | - FD will conduct research and studies to identify/develop appropriate and reliable agroforestry systems suitable to local environments and which will provide regular returns to the communities involved.  
- FD will take the initiative to establish agroforestry farm models in cooperation with other public agencies and NGOs and ensure that new and appropriate technologies are applied.  
- The FD to provide appropriate advice, assistance and technologies to communities in order to improve and sustain their livelihoods and to strengthen and promote their socio-economic, environmental and cultural values.  
- The FD will conduct awareness and education campaigns for landowners/resource owners to emphasize the importance of agroforestry to the socio-economic betterment of the communities. |
|                            | 3.3. Participation  | - The Government will encourage establishment of forest associations to promote more effective participation by resource owners in forest utilisation.  
- The FD will promote business management training for forestry businesses whereby the resource-owner would be the proprietor.  
- The Government will encourage the development of resource-owner owned forestry businesses.  
- The Government will periodically review the operation of forestry assistance programmes, joint venture forestry enterprises and other mechanisms for their effectiveness in promoting local participation, and will facilitate the establishment of successful ventures within Fiji. |
|                            | 3.4. Awareness & training | - FD with community groups and NGOs will conduct forestry awareness programmes in the relevant areas and strengthen the implementation of awareness programme formulated with the assistance of ITTO.  
- FD will work closely with the forest industries to provide technical training to all people working in the forestry sector. |
|                            | 3.5. Compensation payments | - The Government will amend the forest legislation to provide for compensation payments to resource owners when logging causes specific damage.  
- The Government will develop clear guidelines & mechanisms for conflict resolution and for compensation assessment.  
- The FD will work with the Department of Environment and NGOs to deliver environmental awareness programmes to resource owners and resource users and assist interested resource owners to protect forests with significant environmental values  
- The Government will develop and establish financial instruments and mechanisms for the payment of forest ecosystem services and the compensation for forgone income due to protection and conservation measures |
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| intellectual property rights | 3.6. Indigenous intellectual property rights | • The FD, in cooperation with DOE, will develop legislation and guidelines for bio-prospecting and economic use of genetic material and products which incorporate fair provision for traditional knowledge and ownership, and the Government will amend the Forest Decree to provide for recognition of Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights.  
• The FD will encourage collaborative research and exploration for economic use of genetic materials and products.  
• The FD will develop and adopt guidelines for all research activities which, amongst other requirements, ensure that the community owner has an understanding of and approves the research. |
| 4. Increased employment in the forestry sector, sufficient supply of domestic markets and increased foreign exchange earnings through sustainable forest-based | 4.1. Industry development and investment for value added processing | • The Government will work with forest industries to improve coordination of planning, development, and optimisation of the wood flow from the forest to the export markets, and on expansion, upgrading of harvesting and production facilities and marketing.  
• The Government will address the need to overcome disincentives which currently constrain investment in the forestry sector, including investment security, and financial and administrative constraints.  
• The Government will support investment in the development of value-added timber processing and furniture manufacturing industries, by considering granting exemption from duty for imports of equipment, machinery and materials to be used for value-added processing, and by introducing export tax rebates for value-added timber products.  
• The Government will encourage the development of local value-adding industries for high value non-timber forest products, especially in a village or community forestry context.  
• The Government will promote domestic and overseas market development for high value-added forest products. |
| | 4.2. Certification of the Chain of Custody | • The FD will actively support resource owners and the forest industry to implement sustainable forest management according to certification standards and in marketing of certified forest products.  
• The Government will support the tracking of products from certified forests as it is processed by various companies.  
• Certification of forest management units and chain of custody will remain voluntary, and forest management companies wanting to gain an internationally recognised certification label would make their own arrangements to do so at any time.  
• The Government will support certification of wood packaging material in accordance with internationally accepted standards. |
| | 4.3. Export and import controls | • The importation of logs and flitches will continue to be subject to strict quarantine control, and will be free of import duty if they are to be processed into value-added products for export.  
• The Government will review current export and import procedures to strengthen biosecurity control in compliance to domestic and international standards.  
• The Government will collaborate with international partners and trade partners to establish or join voluntary agreements on verification of legality for imported timber. |
| | 4.4. Employment and training | • The FD will promote apprenticeship training  
• The FD will provide training for the forestry industry and allied workers at FTC and TITC or through additional training providers. FD will accredit courses and programmes to TPAF to ensure the retrieval of training levy paid by the sector to TPAF |
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| industry and trade development | 4.5. *Species classes* | • The First Schedule Amendment to the Forest (Amendment) Regulations 1990 under the repealed Forest Act Cap 150 will be further amended with respect to the listings of Species of Timber Tree in each Class.  
• Classification will be based on actual market value. |
|  | 4.6. *Timber utilisation, product development and marketing* | • The FD shall provide research information as well as support the industry in developing new products as demanded by viable market segments and supported by sustainable resource base.  
• The FD will coordinate with the relevant line Ministry to revise the Building Code on a regular basis to give greater recognition to the use of sustainably-sourced domestic timber in construction.  
• The FD will revise the standards for seasoning and grading by species and end use in consultation with the forest industries, and prepare new regulations for timber seasoning and grading.  
• The FD will monitor timber preservation standards, and ensure training is provided for industry personnel in the proper use of preservation plants.  
• The FD will cooperate closely with the Fiji Trade and Investment Bureau and market information relevant to forest-based commodities domestically manufactured and processed. |
| 5. Enhanced national capacity to manage and develop the forest sector in a collaborative approach with involvement of all stakeholders | 5.1. *Framework for forest policy, planning and coordination* | • The institutional reform will be based on the concept of stewardship and defines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in managing the forest resources.  
• The Forestry Board will be strengthened to fairly represent stakeholders, taking into account existing institutional structures that would provide advice to the Minister responsible for the forest sector on policy issues, development and administration of the sector to promote cross-sector and inter-agency coordination.  
• A strategically focused National Forest Programme process will be established to guide the Forestry Board on further policy development, and outline strategic planning and implementation of policy instruments, based on multi-stakeholder involvement and according to internationally agreed principles.  
• The outcome of the National Forest Programme process would, inter alia, include a revised Forest Act, a Forest Sector Master Plan, and a Forest Sector Financing Strategy. |
|  | 5.2. *Forestry legislation* | • The Government will revise the Forest Law and Regulations, and ensure the legislation is consistent with other natural resources, land use and environmental legislation as well as with the financial and economic regulations.  
• The FD will make efforts to raise public awareness on forest legislation, rules and regulations as part of its public education programme on forests and environment.  
• Awareness materials will be in the three official languages of Fiji. |
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| 5. Enhanced national capacity to manage and develop the forest sector in a collaborative approach with involvement of all stakeholders continued | 5.3. **Forest administration** | • The FD shall provide advice to the Minister responsible for forestry on forest policy, legislative matters and sustainable forest management, and will administer and enforce the Forest Decree, Regulations and Ordinances.  
• The FD will station officers in each Division in proportion to the level of forestry activity in that Division and ensure adequate infrastructure, transportation and operational funds for the Division to effectively undertake its responsibilities. FD will also develop mechanisms to share these responsibilities with industry and resource owners.  
• The Government will review the FD’s mandate and activities, its structure, roles of staff, administrative and financial arrangements to ensure that the Department can efficiently discharge its responsibilities in line with the approved forest policy.  
• The roles and responsibilities of FD and NLTB with regard to natural forest will be clarified. Cross-sectoral coordination between FD and other Government institutions will be promoted at all levels. Effective coordination of the activities of FD, FPL and FHCL with regard to forest management will be ensured.  
• The capacity of the FD to regulate, monitor and facilitate the implementation of sustainable forest management will be strengthened by organisational development and provision of adequate resources. To ensure professional and technical competence of the personnel, in-service and further training programmes will be conducted.  
• The Government will seek assistance from international or regional development assistance agencies to review the structure, administrative procedures, resources and revenue stream of the FD. |
| 5.4. **Associations** | • The FD will assist the establishment of a Forest Industries Association, which the Government will recognise as the legitimate body representing the forestry industries of Fiji. Membership would include sawmillers, logging contractors and forest industry representatives.  
• The FD will assist the establishment of a Resource Owners or Forest Owners Association, which the Government will recognise as the legitimate association representing the interests of resource owners and communities with regard to sustainable forest management.  
• The FD will assist the establishment of a forestry professional association, which will focus on human resource development and establishment of professional standards for carrying out different management functions. |
| 5.5. **Extension** | • The FD will work closely with Fijian Affairs Board, Native Land Trust Board, Department of Agriculture staff to form nationally integrated extension teams.  
• Forest extension programmes will be targeted in all forest areas with a need and potential for sustainable forest management or plantation development, and in areas with high conservation value.  
• The forestry extension curriculum will be revised with a bias towards sustainable forest management. Extension packages for different ecological zones will be developed in close collaboration with the respective users.  
• Forestry extension activities to promote tree planting programmes by schools and youth groups will be undertaken to help educate students on the value and utility of trees.  
• The FD will phase out its subsidised production of nursery seedlings to charge the full commercial price and thereby assist the financially viable production of nursery stock by the private sector and resource owners. |
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| 5. Enhanced national capacity to manage and develop the forest sector in a collaborative approach with involvement of all stakeholders continued | 5.6. Forestry research | • Forestry research priorities will be reviewed based on the principle of demand-driven research. Research focusing on improved forest and tree management, chemical compounds and processes from, especially, indigenous species, and development of plantations and competitive industry will be promoted.  
• FD will develop close linkages with research users through information exchange, seminars, and joint development of demand-oriented research programmes.  
• Collaborative forestry research with NGOs and industry, and international and regional research cooperation will be promoted by development of partnership programmes.  
• The FD will undertake research on behalf of the private forest industry, including plantation forestry, on a fee-for-service basis to address the need for applied research. |
| | 5.7. Forestry training and education | • Based on a training needs assessment with the forest industries and other relevant stakeholders, the FD together with relevant training institutions will develop demand-oriented curricula and training programmes. Adequate attention will be given to technical and vocational training.  
• The Government will review the viability of the training centres and give further consideration to their development and operation as Pacific regional centres of training excellence, staffed by outsourced specialist forestry training providers.  
• The FD will co-ordinate a forestry scholarship scheme and will assist students, staff and industry personnel to undertake professional forestry and management training to meet the needs of sustainable forest management.  
• The FD will have training courses conducted for forestry personnel and resource owners in all aspects of sustainable forest management, timber utilisation principles and practices, log scaling, and protection of environmental values.  
• The Government in collaboration with the media, NGOs and other stakeholders will conduct national awareness programmes for public education on the value of forests and the need for conservation and sustainable forest management. Introduction of environment and natural resources education in primary and secondary schools will be promoted. |
| | 5.8. International and regional forestry cooperation | • Fiji will actively participate in regional programmes such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the South Pacific Regional Initiative on Forest Genetic Resources.  
• Fiji will actively participate in the international forest policy dialogue and other forest related international processes and instruments to represent national interests and to ensure effective implementation and information exchange.  
• The Government will seek international bilateral and multilateral assistance for the further development and implementation of its National Forest Programme and related priority measures towards sustainable forest management.  
• Effective coordination of international assistance will be ensured in the context of overall sector coordination involving Government departments with a mandate for natural resource management as well public–private sector partnerships, involving local and national level stakeholders. |
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| 6. Financing | 6.1. Financial strategy | • The FD will work with all stakeholders to assess current financing mechanisms and fiscal instruments in the forest sector to define options for improvement and innovative approaches. For example, a National Sustainable Forest Management Trust Fund.  
• As part of the process to consolidate a National Forest Programme, a financing strategy will be outlined to ensure long-term financing for sustainable forest management, related Government services and macro-economic development of the sector geared towards value-adding and downstream processing.  
• The financial strategy will be part of Government’s Financial Management Reform. |
| 6.2. Forestry Department revenue | • The Government will review the system of fees in order to create a transparent and simple system that (i) generates adequate revenue to ensure funding of the services of FD and forest-related Government tasks and (ii) stimulates investment in sustainable forest management and processing.  
• The revenues generated by the revised system of fees will be acknowledged as agency revenues of the FD and the financial management will be the responsibility of the FD under its own account.  
• The FD will commission a study on the efficiency of the current system to attribute forest products utilisation licences, the roles of FD and NLTB with a focus on defining clearly the roles and responsibilities of both institutions, and a transparent and equitably distribution of the licence fees based on the real amount of allocated resources by both institutions.  
• The FD will offer its services to the private sector on a cost-recovery basis.  
• New mechanisms for cost-sharing of training expenses by different users, and development of commercial activities by training institutions for increased self-financing will be promoted. |
| 6.3. Forest Sector Development Fund | • FD will commission a study to evaluate the options and feasibility for the creation of the Forest Sector Development Fund including the precise description of the organisational and administrative structure, the decision-making bodies, and the supply and allocation of financial means.  
• Parallel to the feasibility study, potential sources of funding should be identified such as the “classic” sources such as financial contributions from the national budget, fees for reforestation, compensation payments for environmental damages in the context of logging operations, or levies on export of timber products; and innovative instruments such as the introduction of payment schemes for forest ecosystem services or the commercialisation of carbon sequestration certificates. |
| 6.4. Macro-Economic Development | • Export levy on forest produce will be based on a decreasing scale according to the amount of value-added processing undertaken in Fiji.  
• In consultation with the industry, tariffs on the importation of logs and flitches will be removed to support investments in domestic processing where there is a shortage in domestic supply to meet processing plant capacity.  
• Financial incentives in plantation development such as tax deductions for investment into the forest plantation sector or preferential tax rebates encouraging investment will be revised and further developed.  
• The feasibility of payment for environmental services to generate financing for sustainable forest management will be investigated; for example, a user-pay system whereby water consumers contribute to the management costs of watersheds. |
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| 6. Financing     | 6.5. Financing                             | • The Government will investigate the use of existing National Trust for Fiji or Fiji Heritage Trust mechanisms to support the establishment of forest conservation areas and scrutinise the opportunities for national, regional and international funding.  
• The FD will investigate mechanisms for funding forest conservation on an ongoing basis including compensation payments for ecological damage resulting from inadequate forest utilisation practices, licences for bio-prospecting and access to local intellectual property rights. |
|                  | 6.6. Financing through international and multilateral agreements | • The Government will strengthen the capacities to facilitate access to international financing mechanisms such as the opportunities in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).  
• The FD will address biodiversity conservation priorities, and assist and cooperate with other relevant public agencies and NGOs in preparing project proposals in the context of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).  
• The FD recognises the predominant role of forest ecosystems in the mitigation and adaptation of the impact of climate change and will give close attention to the potential acquisition of funds emerging in the context of the international debate on these issues. |