



Country Summary

Targeted sectors: agriculture, livestock, forestry and health

Funded by: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Regional implementing partner: Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Key implementing partners: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests, Ministry of I-Taukei Affairs, Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development, Pacific Council of Churches

Project site: Sabeto catchment

Implementation period: 2012-2014

Building resilient communities in Sabeto, Fiji

The purpose of this brief is to inform decision-makers on food security, climate change, community-based adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is taking a community-based approach to assisting communities manage their food resources and strengthen their resilience to the effects of climate variability and climate change.

Addressing food security in the long term will emerge as a major issue in the Pacific region. Extreme weather events associated with climate change is likely to impact food production in the coming decades. SPC and USAID in collaboration with national and local governments are working with communities in Sabeto to identify adaptation strategies which will strengthen the resilience of food systems in Fiji. The partnership will also support community awareness and understanding of local disaster risk, emerging climate change consequences, and better community preparedness to respond and protect lives and livelihoods.



Food Security And Climate Change

Food Security

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations underscores four pillars for food security:

- Availability** – refers to the amount, type and quality of food that is available for consumption. This pillar implies that food can be produced, distributed and traded.
- Accessibility** – refers to the ability to access the type, quality and quantity of food required. This pillar implies that populations can afford food, allocate food and have food preferences.
- Usability** – refers to the capacity to consume and benefit from food. This pillar implies that food has nutritional and social value and is safe to consume.
- Stability** – refers to the resilience of availability and accessibility when there are changes in circumstances.

Factors affecting food security

- climate variability and climate change
- dependence on imported food
- rural to urban migration
- limited infrastructure in rural/ remote areas
- land tenure systems.

Current climate

Throughout Fiji, the average temperature ranges between 20°C and 27°C. Variations in the temperature are minimal and largely attributed to changes in the surrounding ocean temperature.

Rainfall across Fiji can be extremely variable. It is influenced by high mountain peaks – up to 1300 m on the two main islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. The south-eastern slopes of Viti Levu (close to Suva) receive an average annual rainfall of 3000 mm, whereas the lowlands on the western side of Viti Levu (close to Nadi), known for its dry season, are sheltered by mountains and receive an annual rainfall of 1800 mm.

Floods and droughts

Floods occur often during the wet season and intermittently in the dry season during La Niña events. Major floods are usually attributed to extreme weather events, such as tropical depressions and cyclones that bring high intensity rainfall.

Most reported droughts since 1920 are associated with El Niño events such as the droughts that occurred in 1987, 1992, 1997–1998, 2003 and 2010.

Future climate

Human and natural factors will shape Fiji's future climate. Comprehending climate projections for Fiji is essential to guide planning and decision-making on food security. Based on data available from the Pacific Climate Change Science Programme, climate projections for Fiji include:

- continued increase in temperatures
- very hot days
- a decrease in dry season rainfall and an increase in wet season rainfall
- more extreme rainfall days
- fewer but more intense tropical cyclones
- continued sea level rise
- continued ocean acidification.

Community-Based Adaptation

Vulnerability and adaptation assessments

In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) undertook assessments in five communities (Korobebe, Nagado, Naboutini, Koroiyaca and Narokorokoyawa). The assessment tools included land surveys, participatory rural appraisals (PRAs), and household income and expenditure surveys. Findings from the assessments highlighted communities' vulnerabilities and adaptive capacity to climate change. These findings, coupled with updated GIS data, and land-use and vegetation cover maps have been used to identify adaptation measures.

Community perspectives on climate change, adaptation and its impact can better inform future actions and strategies that should be adopted to improve the lives of people and communities vulnerable to climate change.

Vulnerabilities identified

- food insecurity and reliance on less nutritional, imported food
- limited communication infrastructure and poor roads, which restrict access to markets for locally produced foods
- increased incidence of disease outbreaks and pests
- increased incidence of landslides
- increased flooding of food gardens
- reduced crop yields.

Adaptive capacity

- low sustainable income generation capacity
- limited awareness about climate change adaptation
- limited awareness on land use
- poor roads and limited access to infrastructure
- limited technical assistance available.

Adaptation measures

- Diversify land-based food production systems through the promotion of agro-forestry, crop and livestock diversity.
- Improve farming practices through community training on plant propagation, nursery management, climate-ready crops, livestock, and land and forest management.
- Improve pest and disease control.
- Trial and assess the resilience of different varieties of climate-ready crops, such as sweet potato and taro.
- Promote contour planting and terracing on slopes.
- Promote organic farming by developing local organic markets and build farmer capacity through participatory guarantee systems.
- Increase community disaster preparedness with disaster risk reduction training and development of community disaster response plans.





FURTHER INFORMATION:

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