



Inception Workshop Report

Strengthening the Adaptive Capacity of Coastal Communities in Fiji to Climate Change through Nature-Based Seawalls



Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva, Fiji

4–5 May 2026

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1. Background and Objectives

The 5-year Adaptation Fund (AF)-supported project “Strengthening the Adaptive Capacity of Coastal Communities in Fiji to Climate Change through Nature-Based Seawalls” will enable the Government of Fiji (GoF) to implement nature-based solutions (NbS) in 14 vulnerable coastal communities to enhance their resilience to increasing climate impacts. The project is executed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Waterways, and Sugar Industries (MoAWSI), with the Pacific Community (SPC) serving as the Regional Implementing Entity (RIE).

All 14 project sites are Indigenous iTaukei communities with strong historical connections to their land, subsistence-based livelihoods, and demonstrated climate vulnerability. The communities were selected based on their level of climate vulnerability, technical assessments of the suitability, and their willingness to actively support project design and implementation.

The overall goal of the project is to increase the climate resilience of these vulnerable coastal communities through the adoption of nature-based coastal protection approaches for adaptation. To achieve this, the project is structured around two key objectives:

- Create an enabling environment for scaling up and rolling out NbS coastal protection approaches across Fiji.
- Construct NbS interventions in 14 climate-vulnerable coastal communities to enhance community resilience and increase institutional and extension service capacity to implement NbS projects.

An inception workshop for the project was held on 4–5 May 2026 at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva, Fiji. The workshop brought together representatives from the MoAWSI, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), SPC and other key stakeholders from government, multilateral partners and civil society to launch the project and:

- Familiarise stakeholders with the project context, objectives, and components
- Present the project implementation arrangements and governance structure, including the Project Steering Committee (PSC), and agree on dates for its first meeting
- Present the project work plan and budget for the first year of implementation
- Present the logical framework and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan, and discuss and finalise roles and responsibilities related to:
 - Monitoring progress
 - Social and Environmental Management Plan
 - The Gender Action Plan and other safeguard requirements
 - Project-level grievance redress mechanisms
 - AF and SPC reporting requirements, including financial reporting and monitoring procedures

2. Workshop Overview

The workshop was structured in seven sessions comprising an opening session followed by six technical sessions as follows:

- Project Context and Overview
- Governance and Management
- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
- Safeguards
- Financial Management
- Annual Workplan and Budget

Each technical session included a presentation followed by an open discussion with stakeholders to respond to questions and receive suggestions for project implementation. The detailed agenda and participants lists are attached as Annexes I and II to this report.

3. Summary of Sessions

Opening Session

The workshop opened with remarks from Mr Dirk Snyman, Climate Finance Coordinator for SPC, followed by a keynote address from Dr Andrew Tukana, Permanent Secretary for MoAWSI. The speakers emphasised the urgency of addressing climate change impacts on coastal communities and the importance of coordinated action.

Mr Snyman highlighted the importance of this project in supporting MoAWSI's vision in strengthening the resilience of coastal communities across Fiji through the construction of nature-based seawalls. Permanent Secretary Dr Tukana highlighted Fiji's increasing exposure to climate risks, including sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events, and underscored the role of NbS as a sustainable and cost-effective approach to coastal protection. The opening also stressed the importance of partnerships between government institutions, communities, and development partners to ensure successful implementation of the project.



Figure 1: Permanent Secretary Dr Tukana delivering a keynote speech

The second day of the workshop opened with remarks from Dr Sivendra Michael, Permanent Secretary for MoECC. Dr Michael emphasised the need for practical and achievable solutions that directly address the needs of vulnerable communities. He encouraged stakeholders to provide honest and realistic input, particularly those working closely with affected communities, to ensure that interventions are effective in practice. He also highlighted the importance of strengthened coordination and accountability, noting that climate initiatives should be nationally driven and aligned with Fiji's development priorities.



Figure 2: Permanent Secretary Dr Michael delivering opening remarks

Session 1: Project Context and Overview

The first technical session consisted of two presentations. The first presentation, by Mr Matereti Mateiwai, Principal Adaptation Officer at MoECC, focused on the national context of the project, Fiji's climate change priorities and how the project and the AF sit within this context. Fiji is among the most climate-vulnerable countries in the Pacific, facing sea-level rise, increased cyclone intensity, and coastal degradation. These impacts significantly affect livelihoods, food security, and infrastructure in coastal communities. Mr Mateiwai further highlighted the number of requests MoAWSI has been receiving from communities, with over 117 requests received, outlining that the demand for similar approaches is beyond the current capacity of MoAWSI and what is being addressed through this AF project and similar initiatives financed by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and other donors.



Figure 3: Director Waterways Marau Vuli presenting the project design

The second presentation, by Mr Marau Vuli, Director of Waterways at MoAWSI, introduced the AF project to the audience. The project targets 14 highly vulnerable coastal communities to strengthen their resilience through the implementation of nature-based seawalls. The approach combines traditional knowledge and local materials (such as boulders, mangroves, and vetiver grass) with technical design to provide effective coastal protection. MoAWSI is the Executing Entity of the 5-year project. Key elements presented included:

- Project background
- 14 project sites and community profiles, including the selection criteria for the communities
- Project objectives and components, including the Theory of Change
- Design features of the nature-based seawalls
- Project budget and cost-effectiveness of the approach

Session 2: Governance and Management Structure

The session on governance and management structure of the project, led by Marau Vuli, consisted of two parts. The first part outlined the institutional arrangements for project implementation, clearly defining the key entities and their roles and responsibilities.

MoAWSI serves as the Executing Entity, responsible for day-to-day implementation, while SPC as RIE provides oversight, ensures compliance with SPC and AF policies, and overall quality assurance. The AF provides financing and sets compliance requirements.

A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be established within MoAWSI to manage daily operations, including technical supervision, monitoring and evaluation, safeguards compliance, and financial management. The recruitment process of the PMU is ongoing and will be completed by June 2026. Key PMU roles include:

- Project Coordinator
- MEL Officer
- ESS Officer
- Finance & Procurement Officer
- Administrative support

The PMU is further supported by a Technical Engineer embedded in MoAWSI. Currently an interim Project Coordinator from the Department of Waterways is leading the inception phase.

The second part of the session focused on the PSC, introducing its overall mandate as well roles, responsibilities and draft terms of reference. The secretariat of the PSC will be the project PMU, with MoECC (as Fiji's Designated Authority to the AF) and MoAWSI acting as Co-Chairs. Other members will be representatives from key ministries and civil society. SPC and selected technical partners will be invited as observers. The PSC will provide strategic guidance and implementation oversight through review of progress reports and guidance on cross-cutting issues requiring stakeholder consensus. It will also appraise and approve the annual work plan and budget.

Key discussion points:

Several suggestions were raised by participants regarding the composition of the PSC. These included expanding membership to incorporate key technical partners such as World Wildlife Fund, Global Green Growth Institute and ADB, given their involvement in related initiatives, particularly on nature-based seawalls and NbS. It was also recommended to include additional government stakeholders, notably the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and the Ministry of Forestry.

To enhance coordination and avoid duplication, participants proposed the establishment of a joint steering mechanism for both the AF project and the ADB-supported nature-based seawalls initiative. As both projects are led by the MoAWSI and involve overlapping stakeholders, such an approach could streamline engagement and reduce the burden of multiple meetings while strengthening alignment between the initiatives.

The inclusion of community perspectives in higher-level decision-making was also discussed. While direct representation of all communities at the PSC level may not be practical, it was suggested that the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs could facilitate representation through provincial structures.

Finally, noting the absence of some key stakeholders at the workshop, it was agreed that formal communication should be sent to all relevant institutions requesting nomination of PSC representatives. The first PSC meeting should then be scheduled once the PMU has been fully established.

Session 3: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

This session introduced the project's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework and its alignment with AF requirements. The MEL framework will ensure tracking of progress across activities, outputs, and outcomes using defined indicators. It will support adaptive management, accountability, and learning throughout the project lifecycle. The session also presented the Project Results Framework, including the set indicators, targets and means of verification. It further outlined the alignment of the project with the AF's Results-based Framework and discussed the responsibilities for project monitoring and evaluation. The PMU will be responsible for all day-to-day project data collection, monitoring, and reporting, while SPC provides oversight, quality assurance, and reporting to the AF. Independent evaluations (mid-term and final) will be coordinated by SPC.

Further it was highlighted that Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) monitoring is mainstreamed across the day-to-day management of the project and will be part of the reporting to the AF. The presentation concluded with the key M&E milestones for the project

Key discussion points:

A suggestion was made to ensure that the project achievements are also tracked towards achieving Fiji's climate change targets, such as set as part of Fiji's National Climate Change Policy. In addition, it was suggested to include an indicator that would track improvements of income or livelihoods brought about by project activities.

Session 4: Safeguards and Risk Management

This session was split in two parts. The first part focused on ESS and GESI requirements for the project. It emphasised the importance of integrating safeguards and inclusion principles throughout the project lifecycle to ensure that interventions are equitable, inclusive, and do not cause harm. Participants were guided through key safeguard instruments, including the project's Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), and the need for continuous monitoring and reporting of environmental and social risks. The session also highlighted the importance of meaningful community engagement, including Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and the integration of gender-responsive approaches.

The second part of the session focused on identifying and managing risks that could affect project implementation. Participants discussed the project's risk landscape, including environmental, operational, financial, and social risks, and explored mitigation strategies to reduce their potential impact. The session emphasised the importance of proactive risk management, continuous monitoring, and adaptive responses to emerging challenges. It also highlighted the need to integrate risk considerations into implementation, and reporting processes.

Key discussion points:

Participants emphasised the importance of involving provincial offices in operationalising the grievance redress mechanism (GRM), given their proximity to communities and role in facilitating access and follow-up. It was suggested that simple, visual communication tools, such as infographics, be used to raise awareness of the GRM in target communities, ensuring accessibility and understanding across

different groups. The importance of maintaining robust FPIC processes throughout implementation was reaffirmed, particularly as activities move from planning to execution.



Figure 4: Workshop participants

A concern was raised regarding potential environmental impacts caused by extraction of materials for NbS construction. Participants highlighted the need to ensure that mitigation measures are applied not only at project sites but also at locations where materials are sourced. It was confirmed that these risks are addressed within the ESMP.

On risk management, participants recommended undertaking a comprehensive review of the project risk register once the PMU is fully onboarded, including updating risk rankings and identifying any emerging risks. It was further noted that external factors, such as fluctuations in fuel prices linked to global developments, could impact transport and implementation costs, and should be considered within the project's risk monitoring framework.

Session 5: Financial Management and Reporting

This session, led by Mr Gulam Dean of Department of Waterways, provided an overview of the project's financial management arrangements, including budgeting, fund flow, procurement processes, and audit requirements. Participants were introduced to the financial reporting obligations of the AF, including timelines and compliance expectations.

The session highlighted the importance of transparency, accountability, and adherence to established procedures to ensure effective use of resources. It also clarified the roles of the PMU, SPC, and relevant government systems in financial oversight.

Session 6: Annual Workplan and Budget (Year 1)

This session presented the Year 1 Annual Workplan and Budget (AWPB), outlining key activities, timelines, and milestones for the first year of implementation. The workplan includes preparatory activities such as baseline assessments, community engagement, and initial capacity-building, as well as the commencement of NbS design and implementation. Participants were invited to review the proposed timeline and sequencing of activities, ensuring alignment with institutional capacities and seasonal considerations.

Key discussion points:

Participants raised the question of whether a dedicated communications strategy should be developed to complement existing awareness-raising activities. It was noted that while communication activities are included, a more structured approach could support knowledge sharing and visibility. The role of the PSC in guiding communication and dissemination of lessons learned was also highlighted.

A discussion was held on the current relevance of the selected communities, given the time elapsed since project design. It was noted that priorities at the community level may have shifted. MoAWSI indicated that a budget review is currently underway to assess whether all 14 communities can be supported within available resources. Should adjustments be required, communities with reduced demand may be reconsidered, while alternative communities from an existing pipeline could be included. Any such changes would require further assessment and consultation with the AF Secretariat prior to finalisation.

4. Key Outcomes and Decisions

The workshop successfully established a shared understanding among stakeholders of the project's objectives, implementation arrangements, and first-year priorities. Key outcomes and decisions include:

- Validation of the project design and approach with stakeholders confirming the continued relevance of the project design, including the focus on nature-based seawalls as a cost-effective and scalable adaptation solution for coastal protection in Fiji.
- The roles and responsibilities of MoAWSI as Executing Entity, SPC as RIE, and the PMU were clarified and broadly endorsed. The structure and mandate of the PSC were also discussed and agreed upon to be finalised once an interim PSC is in place.
- Participants proposed expanding PSC membership to include additional technical partners and government stakeholders, as well as exploring a joint coordination mechanism with related initiatives to improve alignment and reduce duplication.
- Other key suggestions included strengthening MEL alignment with national climate indicators, considering the inclusion of livelihood-related indicators, enhancing communication approaches, and reviewing the relevance of selected communities.

5. Next Steps and Action Plan

Action	Responsible	Timeline
Finalise the Inception Report	SPC with inputs from MoAWSI and MoECC	Within 4 weeks
Complete recruitment and onboarding of the PMU	MoAWSI and SPC	Ongoing

Establish and convene the first PSC meeting, including nomination of members	MoAWSI / PMU	Following PMU onboarding
Review and update the project risk register	Project Coordinator with inputs from MoAWSI, SPC and PSC	Ongoing
Finalise budget review and Year 1 AWPB	PMU/ MoAWSI	Ongoing

6. Annexes

Annex 1: Workshop Agenda

Day 1: Monday, 4 May 2026

Time	Session	Speaker
9:00-9:30	Arrival and registration of participants	
Opening		
9:30 – 9:35	Opening and prayer	
9:35 – 9:50	Opening Remarks	Dr Sivendra Michael, Permanent Secretary for Climate Change (MoECC) Dirk Snyman, Climate Finance Coordinator (SPC)
09:50 – 10:05	Keynote address	Dr Andrew Tukana, Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, Waterways, and Sugar Industries (MoAWSI)
10:05 – 10:10	Group Photo	
10:10 – 10:30	Morning tea	
10:30 – 10:40	Overview Agenda and housekeeping	Anna Deinhard, Climate Finance Adviser (SPC)
Session 1: Project Context and Overview		
10:40 – 11:10	Context of the Project - Fiji's climate strategy, priorities, and commitments - AF and SPC's relevance to these strategies - High-level objective of project and climate rationale	Matereti Mateiwai, Principal Climate Change Officer (MoECC)
11:10 – 12:15	Project overview - Presentation of components, outcomes and outputs - Project sites - Q&A	Marau Vuli, Director for Waterways (MoAWSI)
12:15 – 13:15	Lunch buffet	
Session 2: Project governance and management structure		
13:15 – 13:45	Implementation arrangements - Project governance structure - Roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders - Project Management Unit - Stakeholder engagement - Q&A	Marau Vuli (MoAWSI)

13:45 – 14:45	Establishing the Project Steering Committee • Terms of Reference • Composition/structure • First meeting • Q&A	Marau Vuli (MoAW)
Session 3: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning		
14:45 – 15:30	• Donor Requirements and Expectations • Roles and responsibilities • Overall monitoring and evaluation strategy • Q&A	Anna Deinhard (SPC)
15:30-15:45	Wrap up and summary Day 1	Dirk Snyman (SPC)

[Day 2: Tuesday, 5 May 2026](#)

Time	Session	Speaker
9:00-9:10	Recap Day 1 and Overview of workshop Day 2	Anna Deinhard (SPC)
Session 4: Safeguards Requirements		
9:10 – 10:10	Environmental and Social Safeguards / Gender Equality and Social Inclusion • Environmental Social Safeguards • Gender Equality and Social Inclusion • Q&A	Dirk Snyman (SPC)
10:10 – 10:30	Morning tea	
10:30 – 11:15	Risk Management • Understanding the Risk Landscape • Development of Risk Mitigation Strategies • Review and Recommendations • Q&A	Anna Deinhard / (SPC)
Session 5: Financial management and reporting		
11:15 – 12:00	• Project budget and funding sources • Financial management • Procurement and audit requirements • Q&A	Marau Vuli (MoAWSI)
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch buffet	
Session 6: Annual Workplan and Budget		
13:00 – 14:00	• Presentation of Y1 implementation plan including key milestones • Y1 activities • Y1 budget • Q&A	Marau Vuli (MoAWSI)
14:00 - 14:15	Wrap up of the workshop and next steps	Anna Deinhard (SPC)
14:15 – 14:30	Closing remarks	Marau Vuli (MoAWSI)

Annex 2: List of Participants

Attendance Sheet
Inception Workshop –
Strengthening the Adaptive Capacity of Coastal Communities in Fiji to Climate Change through Nature-Based Seawalls
4-5 May 2026
Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva, Fiji

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5	Sunayna Nandini	SPC	Comm.	F			✓		sunayna.nandini@spc.int	[Signature]
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4-5 May 2026, Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva, Fiji

	NAME	ORGANISATION	ROLE / DESIGNATION	GENDER	AGE GROUP (y/o)				EMAIL ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
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Annex 3: Presentations



Workshop slides.pdf