



# Diaspora engagement mapping TONGA

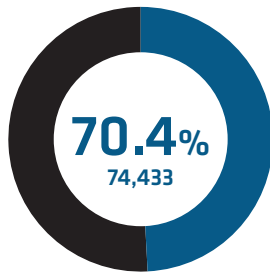
## Facts & figures

### Emigration

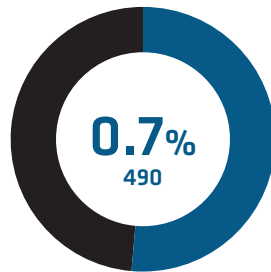
% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 49.2%  
♀ 50.8%



♂ 51.6%  
♀ 48.4%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **38.5%**  
Remittances inflow (USD million): **190**



### Top countries of destination

New Zealand	23,940
United States	21,221
Australia	13,002
Fiji	1,359
American Samoa	1,289



### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>1</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>2</sup>



Voting from abroad<sup>3</sup>



**Tonga does not have a diaspora engagement policy.**

<sup>1</sup> [www.ago.gov.to/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1915/1915-0006/NationalityAct\\_2.pdf](http://www.ago.gov.to/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1915/1915-0006/NationalityAct_2.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://matangitonga.to/2017/10/16/overseas-tongans-must-be-tonga-vote-november-16>

<sup>3</sup> Tongans living overseas must travel to Tonga in order to vote, as there is no procedure for overseas voting. *Reports of the Commonwealth Observer Group: Kingdom of Tonga National Parliamentary Election, 16 November 2017*, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2017

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2007** ● **Nationality (re-admission) regulations<sup>4</sup>** enable any person who ceased to be a Tongan subject prior to the enactment of the Nationality (Amendment) Act 2007 to apply to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for a certificate of re-admission to Tongan Nationality.
- 2015** ● **Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDFI) 2015-2025<sup>5</sup>** recognises the role of remittances for domestic development and sets out a number of concrete objectives, including improved collaboration with the Tongan Diaspora. The TSDFI recognises that effective collaboration between the diaspora and population resident in Tonga is important for the quality of life of both groups. It qualifies the understanding of the ways in which people resident in Tonga and overseas interact and the support of this interaction as strategic objectives. Other objectives of the TSDFI include encouraging the development of financial, communications and transport services which facilitate exchange between Tongan residents and the Tongan diaspora.

### » Trends:

With well over half of all Tongans living and working abroad,<sup>6</sup> notably through seasonal working programmes such as the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme<sup>7</sup> in New Zealand, Tonga's economy is highly dependent on remittances from its diaspora. In 2019, Tonga counted its highest share of remittances as a percentage of its gross domestic product worldwide, 38.5%.<sup>8</sup>

As a result, the Government of Tonga has made it a priority to improve collaboration with the Tongan diaspora, as reflected in TSDFI. The government is deploying targeted efforts to encourage the flow of remittances into the country's economy,<sup>9</sup> notably through initiatives such as the 'Ave Pa'Anga Pau' remittance voucher (see Spotlight section).

In addition, the Tongan diaspora is becoming increasingly important for the country's tourism and trade industries, as well as for the development of the local economy, as the majority of visitors to the country is made up of diaspora Tongans visiting friends or relatives.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the Government is also working to increase trade in services channelled through Tongan visitors and investors in the country, and several key ministries such as the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development have been mandated to strengthen their engagement with the Tongan diaspora in the years to come.<sup>11</sup>

4 [www.ago.gov.to/cms/images/LEGISLATION/SUBORDINATE/2008/2008-0100/NationalityRe-admissionRegulations2007\\_1.pdf](http://www.ago.gov.to/cms/images/LEGISLATION/SUBORDINATE/2008/2008-0100/NationalityRe-admissionRegulations2007_1.pdf)

5 [www.finance.gov.to/tonga-strategic-development-framework](http://www.finance.gov.to/tonga-strategic-development-framework)

6 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division (2019). Trends in International Migrant Stock

7 The RSE is a labour market arrangement between New Zealand and several Pacific countries which allows the horticulture and viticulture industries to recruit workers from overseas for seasonal work. Tonga has been involved in the scheme since it was launched 13 years ago, and more than 16,000 Tongans participated in the RSE since 2007. [www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/research-and-statistics/research-reports/recognised-seasonal-employer-rse-scheme](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/research-and-statistics/research-reports/recognised-seasonal-employer-rse-scheme)

8 Knomad, [www.knomad.org/data/remittances](http://www.knomad.org/data/remittances)

9 *Corporate Plan & Budget 2019/2020 - 2021/2022*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

10 *Touring Pacific Cultures*, Australian National University Press 2016

11 *Corporate Plan & Budget Summary 2019/20 - 2021/22*, Ministry of Tourism, and *Corporate plan for 2019/2020 - 2021/2022*, Ministry of Trade and Economic Development



## Achievements:

Tonga has succeeded in strengthening its collaboration with the Tongan diaspora by implementing several favourable policies and initiatives since the last decade. The government allowed Tongans overseas to retain their Tongan citizenship when becoming citizens of another country,<sup>12</sup> which helped preserve diaspora Tongans' land rights in Tonga<sup>13</sup> and allowed them to take part in national elections.

In addition, the Government effectively encouraged the flow of remittances into Tonga's economy by working to reduce remittance costs, notably through its collaboration with the World Bank Group and the government of New Zealand.

The Government of Tonga has also succeeded in placing a strong emphasis on the preservation of Tongan culture and heritage in its relations with the Tongan diaspora. This issue was at the heart of community dialogue activities organised in Tonga's consular missions,<sup>14</sup> and is also reflected by the involvement of Tonga's missions abroad in celebrations organised by Tongan diaspora communities on the occasion of Tonga Day.<sup>15</sup>

## Obstacles



- **Corruption and lack of opportunities:** Perceived corruption in Tonga is one of the main sources of concern been expressed by the Tongan diaspora during dialogue activities organised with the government.<sup>16</sup> A lack of economic opportunities in the country and low wages, especially compared to the main countries of residence of the Tongan diaspora, are also barriers to diaspora engagement.<sup>17</sup>
- **High cost of remittances:** The cost for sending remittances to Tonga is relatively high, in particular for the New Zealand-Tonga and Australia-Tonga corridors.<sup>18</sup> In addition, only a limited number of remittance service providers are active in Tonga.<sup>19</sup> Government initiatives such as the 'Ave Pa'Anga Pau' remittance voucher could contribute to addressing this challenge.

12 [www.ago.gov.to/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1915/1915-0006/NationalityAct\\_2.pdf](http://www.ago.gov.to/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1915/1915-0006/NationalityAct_2.pdf)

13 *Migration, remittance and development Tonga*, FAO, 2011

14 [www.mic.gov.to/news-today/press-releases/5137-cultural-diplomacy-a-tongan-youth-overseas](http://www.mic.gov.to/news-today/press-releases/5137-cultural-diplomacy-a-tongan-youth-overseas)

15 [www.mic.gov.to/news-today/press-releases/6408-completion-of-a-successful-community-dialogues-and-consular-visit-by-the-high-commissioner-of-tonga-to-australia](http://www.mic.gov.to/news-today/press-releases/6408-completion-of-a-successful-community-dialogues-and-consular-visit-by-the-high-commissioner-of-tonga-to-australia)

16 [www.mic.gov.to/health-a-ncds/community-health-a-development/2948-prime-minister-and-minister-of-health-hold-meeting-with-utah-tongan-community](http://www.mic.gov.to/health-a-ncds/community-health-a-development/2948-prime-minister-and-minister-of-health-hold-meeting-with-utah-tongan-community)

17 *The Tongan Diaspora in Australia: Current and Potential Links With the Homeland*, Australian Research Council Linkage Project, 2012

18 The World Bank, Remittance prices worldwide

19 *Strengthening diaspora engagement and remittances in the Kingdom of Tonga*, IOM, 2017

## SPOTLIGHT: effective practices



### 'Ave Pa'Anga Pau' remittance voucher, 2007, avepaanga.co.nz

#### REMITTANCES

Ave Pa'Anga ("Send Money Securely" in Tongan) is a cashless remittance voucher which was developed by the World Bank Group and the Tonga Development Bank (TDB), with support from the governments of Australia and New Zealand. This instrument, which facilitates sending remittances to Tonga at a lower cost, allows recipients in Tonga to access remittances from TDB branches in the country.<sup>20</sup> TDB is also making use of the remittance voucher as part of a loan programme to help Tongan migrant workers engaging in the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme in New Zealand to pay for local costs of the programme before their departure.

### Readmission of former citizens to Tongan nationality, 2007

#### MIGRANTS RIGHTS

The adoption of the Nationality regulations in 2007 marked an important milestone for former subjects who lost their Tongan nationality by becoming citizens of another country at a time when dual citizenship was not allowed. Through these regulations, any person who ceased to be a Tongan may apply to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for a certificate of re-admission to Tongan Nationality. The Government of Tonga made application forms available on the various websites of its missions abroad,<sup>21</sup> and readmission ceremonies have been organised for successful applicants in several of Tonga's missions abroad since 2007.<sup>22</sup>

### Tonga Day celebrations across the world

#### CULTURE & IDENTITY

The Government of Tonga celebrates Tonga National Day (or Tonga Constitution Day) on 4 November each year<sup>23</sup> to commemorate the adoption of its first constitution in 1875. Over the years, this event has become an opportunity to celebrate and promote Tongan culture and identity around the world, with a number of major celebrations and events being organised by the Tongan diaspora each year in cities such as Sydney,<sup>24</sup> Portland,<sup>25</sup> and Honolulu,<sup>26</sup> sometimes with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' consular missions abroad.<sup>27</sup>

20 [www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/news\\_ext\\_content/ifc\\_external\\_corporate\\_site/news+and+events/news/impact-stories/tonga-remittances](http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/news_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/news+and+events/news/impact-stories/tonga-remittances)

21 [www.tongaconsul.com/forms](http://www.tongaconsul.com/forms)

22 [www.mic.gov.to/news-today/press-releases/6408-completion-of-a-successful-community-dialogues-and-consular-visit-by-the-high-commissioner-of-tonga-to-australia](http://www.mic.gov.to/news-today/press-releases/6408-completion-of-a-successful-community-dialogues-and-consular-visit-by-the-high-commissioner-of-tonga-to-australia)

23 [www.parliament.gov.to/about-our-parliament/calendars/public-holidays/10](http://www.parliament.gov.to/about-our-parliament/calendars/public-holidays/10)

24 [www.abc.net.au/radio-australia/programs/pacificmornings/tonga-day-sydney/11685256](http://www.abc.net.au/radio-australia/programs/pacificmornings/tonga-day-sydney/11685256)

25 [www.oregonmetro.gov/news/tonga-day-creates-welcoming-place-share-culture](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/news/tonga-day-creates-welcoming-place-share-culture)

26 [www.staradvertiser.com/2016/11/15/food/experience-a-taste-of-tonga-at-national-day-fete/](http://www.staradvertiser.com/2016/11/15/food/experience-a-taste-of-tonga-at-national-day-fete/)

27 [www.mic.gov.to/news-today/press-releases/6408-completion-of-a-successful-community-dialogues-and-consular-visit-by-the-high-commissioner-of-tonga-to-australia](http://www.mic.gov.to/news-today/press-releases/6408-completion-of-a-successful-community-dialogues-and-consular-visit-by-the-high-commissioner-of-tonga-to-australia)



## ACP-EU Migration Action Programme technical intervention on strengthening diaspora engagement and remittances in Tonga, 2017 [acpeumigrationaction.iom.int/tonga](https://acpeumigrationaction.iom.int/tonga)

Following a request submitted by the Tongan Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) through its ACP-EU Migration Action Programme, a technical assistance intervention was carried out in 2017 on the topic of diaspora engagement and remittances in Tonga. The intervention led to the publication of a baseline assessment on remittances in Tonga, and it resulted in the formulation of a series of operational recommendations on the following three topics:<sup>28</sup>

REMITTANCES

- Encouraging the flow of remittances, including options for lowering the cost of sending remittances;
- Facilitating opportunities for the investment of remittances in local development initiatives;
- Strengthening engagement with the Tongan diaspora.

<sup>28</sup> *Strengthening diaspora engagement and remittances in the Kingdom of Tonga, Dissemination report for the Technical Assistance Intervention in Tonga*, IOM, 2017 [https://acpeumigrationaction.iom.int/sites/default/files/tonga\\_dissemination-pages.pdf](https://acpeumigrationaction.iom.int/sites/default/files/tonga_dissemination-pages.pdf)

## Annex:

# List of Actors

## Diaspora related institutions



- **At regional level**

### **Pacific Community (SPC) [www.spc.int](http://www.spc.int)**

Tonga is a member of the Pacific Community, an international development organisation which focuses on scientific and technical expertise. SPC's Social Development Programme is involved in managing the Festival of Pacific Arts (FESTPAC), which was created in 1972 as a tool for preserving Pacific culture.

### **Pacific Islands Forum [www.forumsec.org](http://www.forumsec.org)**

Tonga is a member of the Pacific Islands Forum, an inter-governmental organisation which seeks to foster cooperation between countries and territories of the Pacific Ocean. Its work covers migration issues and the forum has organised regional meetings on climate change and migration, as well as workshops between immigration officials from the region.

### **Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC) [www.pidcsec.org](http://www.pidcsec.org)**

Tonga is a member of Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC – which was known as the Pacific Immigration Director's Conference until 2018). PIDC is a regional consultative process which aims at gathering official immigration agencies of the Pacific region and enabling the heads of the participating states' immigration agencies to discuss issues of mutual interest and foster cooperation. Others objectives of PIDC include modernising national immigration legal frameworks in the region.

- **National institutions**
  - At ministerial level

### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) [www.twitter.com/TongaMfa](https://www.twitter.com/TongaMfa)**

The MFA is responsible for promoting and protecting the interests of the country and its citizens abroad. The MFA manages migration issues through its Immigration Division (MFAID), and oversees Tonga's consular missions abroad.

The MFA's Corporate Plan & Budget for the years 2019-2022 specifies that the Ministry actively engages to improve collaboration with the Tongan diaspora, with the objective of encouraging remittances and increasing trade in services channelled through Tongan visitors and investors in the country.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the MFA commissioned a technical assistance to IOM's ACP-EU Migration Action, which resulted in the publication of a report on the development potential of diaspora engagement and remittances in Tonga in 2017.

<sup>29</sup> Corporate Plan & Budget 2019/2020 – 2021/2022, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## **National Reserve Bank of Tonga [www.reservebank.to](http://www.reservebank.to)**

The National Reserve Bank of Tonga is the central bank of Tonga. It is responsible for regulating the issue and supply of domestic and international currency, as well as promoting monetary stability and economic development in the country. The National Reserve Bank monitors remittances sent to Tonga and it publishes economic releases on this issue on a regular basis.<sup>30</sup>

## **Tonga Development Bank (TDB) [www.tdb.to](http://www.tdb.to)**

Tonga Development Bank's mission is to promote the economic and social advancement of Tonga through banking products and professional services. With support from the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation and the governments of Australia and New Zealand, TDB developed the 'Ave Pa'Anga Pau' remittance voucher, which allows the Tongan diaspora to send remittances to Tonga at a lower cost.

## **Ministry of Trade and Economic Development (MTED)**

Previously known as the Ministry of Labour, Commerce and Industries (MLCI), the MTED manages the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme on behalf of the Government of Tonga. As part of this scheme, the MTED is supporting the selection of Tongan workers and their preparation, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the programme.<sup>31</sup> In its Corporate plan for 2019/2020 – 2021/2022, the MTED has been tasked of conducting market researches on the Tongan diaspora in Australia and New Zealand, as well as to develop a strategy to harness diaspora investments and remittances for inclusive economic development.<sup>32</sup>

## **Ministry of Tourism [www.tourismtonga.gov.to](http://www.tourismtonga.gov.to)**

The Ministry of Tourism is responsible for developing tourism in Tonga. It developed the website 'Tonga-Holiday.com', which promotes Tonga as a holiday destination. Considering the role played by the Tongan diaspora in the country's tourism industry, the work of the Ministry of Tourism is becoming increasingly relevant to diaspora engagement in Tonga. The Ministry of Tourism's Corporate Plan & Budget for the years 2019-2022 specifies that the Ministry must contribute to the TSDFII's objective of improving collaboration with the Tongan diaspora.<sup>33</sup>

- At sub-ministerial level

## **Tonga Embassies and High Commissions**

Embassies and High Commissions abroad are engaging with the Tongan diaspora through community dialogue activities.<sup>34</sup> Tonga's consular missions abroad organise readmission ceremonies for successful applicants to the 2007 re-admission regulations, and they take part in the Tonga Day celebrations which are organised each year by the Tongan diaspora in various cities around the world.

30 *Remittances for September 2019*, National Reserve Bank of Tonga, 2019

31 *Migration, remittance and development Tonga*, FAO, 2011

32 *Corporate plan for 2019/2020 – 2021/2022*, Ministry of Trade and Economic Development

33 *Corporate Plan & Budget Summary 2019/20 – 2021/22*, Ministry of Tourism

34 [www.mic.gov.to/news-today/press-releases/6408-completion-of-a-successful-community-dialogues-and-consular-visit-by-the-high-commissioner-of-tonga-to-australia](http://www.mic.gov.to/news-today/press-releases/6408-completion-of-a-successful-community-dialogues-and-consular-visit-by-the-high-commissioner-of-tonga-to-australia)

**Tonga Statistics Department** [www.tongastats.gov.to](http://www.tongastats.gov.to)

The Tonga Statistics Department aims at supporting government efficiency, effectiveness and organisational decisionmaking by providing high quality statistics. The Statistics Department collects data on visitors to the country, including the Tongan diaspora visiting friends or relatives under the designation of “VFR tourists”.

## Diaspora organisations in Europe



**Deutsch-Pazifische Gesellschaft (German Pacific Society)** Germany 2004  
[deutsch-pazifische-gesellschaft.de](http://deutsch-pazifische-gesellschaft.de)

The German Pacific Society association organises conferences, meetings, exhibitions, cultural events and gatherings with Pacific Islanders in Germany and Europe. An estimated 30 Tongans living in Germany are participating in the society’s activities.<sup>35</sup>

**Pacific Rugby Players Welfare (PRPW)** United Kingdom 2016 [pacificrugbywelfare.com](http://pacificrugbywelfare.com)

### Integration activities

PRPW was established by Samoan, Tongan and Fijian professional rugby players living in Europe to support players and their families in integrating to life in Europe. The association provides its members with family support, training and education opportunities, as well as social events.

<sup>35</sup> *The German-Tongan Diaspora Since 1932*, Kasia Renae Cook, University of Auckland, 2017

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# Diaspora engagement mapping FIJI

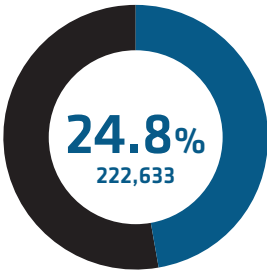
## Facts & figures

### Emigration

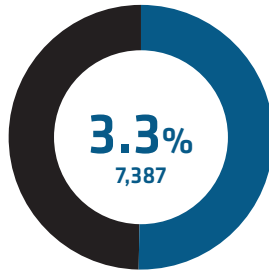
% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 47.4%  
♀ 52.6%



♂ 50.5%  
♀ 49.5%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **5.5%**  
Remittances inflow (USD million): **294**



### Top countries of destination

Australia	79,424
New Zealand	56,344
United States	50,561
Canada	26,268
United Kingdom	6,878



### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>1</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>2</sup>



### Voting from abroad:<sup>3</sup>

By postal vote



**Fiji does not have a diaspora engagement policy.**

1 2009 Citizenship of Fiji Act allows Fijian citizens to hold dual citizenship, and allows foreign citizens to claim Fijian citizenship without having to renounce their other citizenships.

2 Fijian Elections Office, *Strategic Plan 2020-2023*, available at [www.feo.org.fj/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/SP-2020-E-copy.pdf](http://www.feo.org.fj/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/SP-2020-E-copy.pdf)

3 Before each election, the Fijian Elections Office works in conjunction with the Fijian Embassies and High Commissions all over the world to facilitate the registration of Fijians abroad. At the time of elections, Fijians who have registered overseas can apply for a postal vote and receive a ballot at their postal address.

## Overview of policy and legislative framework



- 2016** ● **Fiji's Financial Sector Development Plan 2016-2025 (FSDP)**<sup>4</sup> articulates the key reform areas for the financial system until 2025. The FSDP is composed of 10 strategic objectives and 45 operational recommendations to achieve the government's vision. These recommendations include increasing awareness and encouraging the use of convenient and cheaper remittance channels, as well as to encourage partnerships between money transfer operators and financial services providers to develop and introduce remittance-linked financial products and services.
- 2017** ● **5 and 20 year National Development Plans (NDP) Transforming Fiji**<sup>5</sup> maps out the way forward for Fiji's national development and mentions remittances as an opportunity for Fiji's economic development. The five year development plan 2017-2021 provides a detailed agenda with specific targets, such as increasing the percentage of remittances sent through mobile money from 3% in 2015 to 10% by 2021.



### Trends:

Since 2017 and the publication of the National Development Plan (NDP) and Financial Sector Development Plan (FSDP), the government of Fiji has made it a priority to improve the attractiveness of the country as a destination for investments to support Fiji in achieving its development aspirations.<sup>6</sup> The government has made innovation and technology fundamental pillars for achieving its new economic development objectives,<sup>7</sup> and it refers explicitly to the growing diaspora of Fijians working overseas to justify the need to modernise the national financial system, especially in the area of remittances.<sup>8</sup> Fiji's Digital Transformation Programme, which includes initiatives such as the BizFiji online portal, is an important tool for attracting investments from the Fijian diaspora in the country.

As part of this effort, the Fijian government also reached out to several of the main Fijian diaspora communities abroad over the past years. In 2019, members of the Fijian community in Melbourne were invited to a networking event organised by the Fiji Consulate General and Trade Commission,<sup>9</sup> and Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama visited the Fijian diaspora communities in San Francisco<sup>10</sup> and Sydney,<sup>11</sup> where he encouraged the Fijian diaspora to invest in Fiji.

The Government is also committed to preserving Fiji's language and culture in its diaspora, as illustrated by initiatives such as the iVolavosa mobile application and the Fijian Cultural Programme (see below).

4 [www.rbf.gov.fj/getattachment/a8d8c890-1df5-4dc7-bacf-dc7d0046fdee/Fiji-Financial-Sector-Development-Plan-2016-2025.pdf?lang=en-US](http://www.rbf.gov.fj/getattachment/a8d8c890-1df5-4dc7-bacf-dc7d0046fdee/Fiji-Financial-Sector-Development-Plan-2016-2025.pdf?lang=en-US)

5 <https://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/15b0ba03-825e-47f7-bf69-094ad33004dd/5-Year-20-Year-NATIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-PLAN.aspx>

6 Government of Fiji, Investment Policy Statement, available at: <https://www.mcttt.gov.fj/divisions/trade-unit/investment-policy-statement/>

7 <https://www.mcttt.gov.fj/publications-resources/speeches/minister/hon-ministers-speech-pmiba-launch/>

8 Fiji's Financial Sector Development Plan 2016-2025 (FSDP), available at: [www.rbf.gov.fj/getattachment/a8d8c890-1df5-4dc7-bacf-dc7d0046fdee/Fiji-Financial-Sector-Development-Plan-2016-2025.pdf?lang=en-US](http://www.rbf.gov.fj/getattachment/a8d8c890-1df5-4dc7-bacf-dc7d0046fdee/Fiji-Financial-Sector-Development-Plan-2016-2025.pdf?lang=en-US)

9 [www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/FIJIAN-ENVOY%E2%80%99S-VISIT-CULTIVATES-STRONGER-COOPERATI](http://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/FIJIAN-ENVOY%E2%80%99S-VISIT-CULTIVATES-STRONGER-COOPERATI)

10 [www.pmooffice.gov.fj/pm-bainimarama-visits-fijian-diaspora-in-san-francisco](http://www.pmooffice.gov.fj/pm-bainimarama-visits-fijian-diaspora-in-san-francisco)

11 [www.pmooffice.gov.fj/pm-bainimarama-urges-fijian-diaspora-in-sydney-to-invest-in-fiji-13-09-19](http://www.pmooffice.gov.fj/pm-bainimarama-urges-fijian-diaspora-in-sydney-to-invest-in-fiji-13-09-19)



## Achievements:

The Fijian diaspora includes a large number of skilled workers and entrepreneurs. Fijian citizens abroad constitute one of the largest pools of highly educated migrants working in OECD countries, with important communities residing in Australia, New Zealand and the United States.<sup>12</sup>

Remittances sent to Fiji have increased noticeably since 2000, reaching 5.5% of GDP in 2019<sup>13</sup> and helping Fiji accelerating its growth rate over the recent years.<sup>14</sup> As a result, remittances have been the second largest foreign exchange earner for the country since 2004,<sup>15</sup> and their importance for the country's economic development was acknowledged in the Financial Sector Development Plan for the years 2016-2025.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, the Government of Fiji successfully reached out to its diaspora to assist with relief and rehabilitation efforts in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Winston, which destroyed over 40,000 homes in Fiji in 2016. Through its embassies and high commissions abroad, the government of Fiji received donations from the Fiji Ontario Association of Canada, the East Hawaiian Fijian Community,<sup>17</sup> the Fijian community in the Solomon Islands,<sup>18</sup> as well as from the Fijian diaspora in the Netherlands and Belgium.<sup>19</sup> Diaspora communities also contributed to the Government's 'Adopt a School' programme which was launched to rebuild schools damaged by the cyclone.<sup>20</sup>



## Obstacles

- **Corruption and political instability:** Members of the Fijian diaspora often cite perceived corruption as a major obstacle to further engaging with their country. Furthermore, the coups in Fiji's recent history has left a sense of political instability that holds back some of the potential investors from the Fijian diaspora.<sup>21</sup>
- **Lack of information:** Because of the digital gap between Fiji and some of the countries where the main Fijian communities are established, the Fijian diaspora faces difficulties in accessing the information needed for engagement, notably regarding overseas voting and business creation. This challenge is currently being tackled by the government through its Digital Transformation Programme.<sup>22</sup>

12 *Systematic country diagnostic 2017: Republic of Fiji*, World Bank Group, 2017, available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/529271512123603244/pdf/116491-revised-PUBLIC-ACS.pdf>

13 World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (updated as of Oct. 2019) Inflows, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaisues/brief/migration-remittances-data>

14 *Financing the SDGs in the Pacific islands: Opportunities, Challenges and Ways Forward*, UNDP discussion paper, 2017, available at: <http://www.sustainablesids.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/UNDP-Financing-the-SDGs-in-the-Pacific-Islands-Opportunities-Challenges-and-Ways-Forward-2017.pdf>

15 Reserve bank of Fiji, Personal Remittances in Fiji, available at: [www.rbf.gov.fj/getattachment/Publications/Newspaper-Articles/Fiji-Sun-Remittances-In-Fiji\\_241216.pdf](http://www.rbf.gov.fj/getattachment/Publications/Newspaper-Articles/Fiji-Sun-Remittances-In-Fiji_241216.pdf)

16 Fiji's Financial Sector Development Plan 2016-2025 (FSDP), available at: [www.rbf.gov.fj/getattachment/a8d8c890-1df5-4dc7-bacf-dc7d0046fdee/Fiji-Financial-Sector-Development-Plan-2016-2025.pdf?lang=en-US](http://www.rbf.gov.fj/getattachment/a8d8c890-1df5-4dc7-bacf-dc7d0046fdee/Fiji-Financial-Sector-Development-Plan-2016-2025.pdf?lang=en-US)

17 [www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/FIJIANS-ABROAD-RALLY-TO-ASSIST-TC-WINSTON-VICTIMS](http://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/FIJIANS-ABROAD-RALLY-TO-ASSIST-TC-WINSTON-VICTIMS)

18 [www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/PM-RECEIVES-SUPPORT-FROM-FIJIAN-COMMUNITY-IN-SOLOMON](http://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/PM-RECEIVES-SUPPORT-FROM-FIJIAN-COMMUNITY-IN-SOLOMON)

19 [www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/GOVERNMENT-COMMENDS-BELGIUM-MISSION-FOR-TC-WINSTON](http://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/GOVERNMENT-COMMENDS-BELGIUM-MISSION-FOR-TC-WINSTON)

20 [www.adoptaschool.gov.fj](http://www.adoptaschool.gov.fj)

21 *Understanding the Investment Potential of the Fijian Diaspora, Results of the Commonwealth Diaspora Investor Survey Country Report*, The Commonwealth Secretariat, 2018

22 [www.pmooffice.gov.fj/hon-pms-speech-at-the-launch-of-the-first-e-passport-enrolment-kit-at-the-fiji-mission-in-london-29-11-19](http://www.pmooffice.gov.fj/hon-pms-speech-at-the-launch-of-the-first-e-passport-enrolment-kit-at-the-fiji-mission-in-london-29-11-19)

## SPOTLIGHT: effective practices



### Agreement between the Fijian Elections Office and Fiji Airways to inform overseas voters of the voting registration process

#### MIGRANT RIGHTS & TOURISM

In order to reach out to potential overseas voters traveling with the airline, the Fijian Elections Office entered into an agreement with Fiji Airways in order to use its inflight magazine, FijiTime. As part of this agreement, the Fijian Elections Office was able to include information on the overseas voter registration process to the magazine.<sup>23</sup> The information included dates for registration at various Fijian embassies and High Commissions in the five main countries of destination of the Fijian diaspora, as well as practical requirements for overseas voters.

### iVolavosa mobile application and the Fijian Cultural Programme, 2017 and 2019

#### DIGITAL

The iVolavosa mobile application is an online dictionary for iTaukei language, which is one of Fiji's official languages. The mobile application was launched by the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and the iTaukei Trust Fund Board as a tool for the preservation of iTaukei culture. The Fijian diaspora is a key target audience for this service, as it allows to learn the iTaukei language from abroad.<sup>24</sup> In addition, in 2019 the iTaukei Trust Fund Board initiated a pilot project in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the University of East Anglia and Fijian communities in the UK to revitalise cultural diplomacy and develop a sustainable Fijian cultural programme in the UK. In the framework of this project, the iTaukei Trust Fund Board is developing an educational resource kit to promote Fijian language and culture.<sup>25</sup>

### BizFIJI online portal [business-fiji.com](http://business-fiji.com)

#### INVESTMENT

Launched under the Fijian Government's Digital Transformation Programme, BizFIJI acts as Fiji's centralised source of information for new business owners and investors. BizFIJI is a key element of the government's efforts to stimulate investment from its diaspora, and it was presented by Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama in its address to the Fijian diaspora in Sydney in September 2019.

### Collaboration between the Government of Fiji and IOM in the framework of the project "Engaging with Diaspora for Fiji's Development", 2019-ongoing

#### NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS

In 2019, IOM approved the pilot project "Engaging with Diaspora for Fiji's Development" to be implemented in partnership with several government ministries in Fiji, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project aims to assist the government to engage more closely and strategically with Fijian diaspora groups for the development of Fiji. Planned activities include a mapping survey of the Fijian diaspora in Australia, the development of recommendations to the Government of Fiji on strategic engagement with Fijian diaspora communities, as well as the organisation of a diaspora engagement meeting in Suva to strengthen the partnership between the Government and diaspora groups.<sup>26</sup>

23 [www.voicenet.in/Article\\_Fiji.htm](http://www.voicenet.in/Article_Fiji.htm)

24 [www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/Speeches/HON-PM-BAINIMARAMA-AT-THE-LAUNCHING-OF-THE-IVOLAVO](http://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/Speeches/HON-PM-BAINIMARAMA-AT-THE-LAUNCHING-OF-THE-IVOLAVO)

25 [www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/PARTNERSHIP-PROMOTES-CULTURAL-DIPLOMACY](http://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/PARTNERSHIP-PROMOTES-CULTURAL-DIPLOMACY)

26 <https://uncareer.net/vacancy/consultant-for-the-project-engaging-with-diaspora-for-fiji-s-development-290778>

## Annex:

# List of Actors

### Diaspora related institutions

- At regional level

#### **Pacific Community (SPC) [www.spc.int](http://www.spc.int)**

Fiji is a member of the Pacific Community, an international development organisation which focuses on scientific and technical expertise. SPC's Social Development Programme is involved in managing the Festival of Pacific Arts (FESTPAC), which was created in 1972 as a tool for preserving Pacific culture.

#### **Pacific Islands Forum [www.forumsec.org](http://www.forumsec.org)**

Fiji is a member of the Pacific Islands Forum, an inter-governmental organisation which seeks to foster cooperation between countries and territories of the Pacific Ocean. Its work covers migration issues, as the forum has organised regional meetings on climate change and migration, as well as workshops between immigration officials from the region.

#### **International Organization for Migration [www.iom.int/countries/fiji](http://www.iom.int/countries/fiji)**

Fiji became an IOM member state in 2013, and IOM and the government of Fiji signed a cooperation agreement in 2015. IOM established an office in Suva in 2017, and IOM Fiji is implementing the pilot project "Engaging with Diaspora for Fiji's Development", which aims at assisting the government of Fiji to engage more closely and strategically with Fijian diaspora groups as part of its efforts to contribute to national development.

#### **Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC) [www.pidcsec.org](http://www.pidcsec.org)**

Fiji is a member of Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC, known as the Pacific Immigration Director's Conference until 2018). PIDC is a regional consultative process which aims at gathering official immigration agencies of the Pacific region and enabling the heads of the participating states' immigration agencies to discuss issues of mutual interest and foster cooperation. Other objectives of PIDC include modernising national immigration legal frameworks in the region.





- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs [www.foreignaffairs.gov.fj](http://www.foreignaffairs.gov.fj)**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs deals with consular matters and oversees Fiji's missions abroad. As such, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is closely involved in diaspora engagement matters, in particular regarding registration of overseas voters for postal vote. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is involved in the Fijian Cultural Programme and is also working in partnership with IOM Fiji in the framework of the project "Engaging with Diaspora for Fiji's Development."

**Office of the Prime Minister [www.pmooffice.gov.fj](http://www.pmooffice.gov.fj)**

The office of the Prime Minister is instrumental in the government's efforts to attract investments from the Fijian diaspora. In 2019, the Prime Minister visited the Fijian diaspora communities in Sydney and San Francisco, where he encouraged them to invest in Fiji.

**Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism [www.mitt.gov.fj](http://www.mitt.gov.fj)**

The Ministry of Industry, Trade & Tourism is responsible for formulating and implementing policies and strategies to facilitate growth for industries, investments, trade, tourism, co-operative businesses, micro and small enterprises in Fiji. The Ministry manages the BizFIJI online portal, which is a key element of the government's efforts to stimulate investment from its diaspora.

**Ministry of iTaukei Affairs (MTA) [www.itaukeiaffairs.gov.fj](http://www.itaukeiaffairs.gov.fj)**

The MTA is responsible for developing and implementing policies focused on the governance and well-being of the iTaukei people. It has developed the iVolavosa mobile application, which allows its users in Fiji and abroad to learn the iTaukei language.

- At sub-ministerial level

**Fiji embassies, consulates, High Commissions and Trade Commissions abroad**

These bodies engage with Fijian diaspora communities on issues such as passport issuance and registration of overseas voters. In addition, they have played an important role in mobilising diaspora communities to support the relief and rehabilitation effort in Fiji in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2016. The Fiji High Commission in Australia is also involved in the project "Engaging with Diaspora for Fiji's Development" which is implemented by IOM Fiji.

**Fijian Elections Office [www.feo.org.fj](http://www.feo.org.fj)**

The Fijian Elections Office is in charge of organising and monitoring elections in Fiji. In order to allow overseas voters to vote by post in elections, the Fijian Elections Office organises registration sessions at Fiji's missions abroad before all elections.

## Department of immigration [www.immigration.gov.fj](http://www.immigration.gov.fj)

The department of immigration is part of the Office of the Prime Minister. It is responsible for providing an efficient and effective immigration service and enforce the 2003 Fiji Immigration Act. The department of immigration is working in partnership with IOM Fiji in the framework of the project “Engaging with Diaspora for Fiji’s Development”.

## iTaukei Trust Fund Board (TTFB) [www.itaukeitrustfund.com.fj](http://www.itaukeitrustfund.com.fj)

The TTFB was established under an act of parliament in November 2004. Its objective is to foster the advancement of indigenous Fijians and Rotumans by promoting initiatives that will better their standard of living, and enhance cultural traditions and values. The TTFB initiated the Fijian Cultural Programme in 2019, through which it is developing an educational resource kit to promote the Fijian language and culture among its diaspora in the UK.

## Diaspora organisations in Europe



### Communities Fiji Britain (CFB) United Kingdom 2015 [cfb.org.uk](http://cfb.org.uk)

#### Integration activities

CFB was created with the objective to assist Fijians residing in the UK and to prevent their social exclusion. CFB offers advice and practical support to Fijians living in the UK, and its areas of action include family issues, domestic abuse, and liaison with immigration services. The main recipients of CFB’s activities are Fijians serving in the UK armed forces and their families, who represent a significant part of the Fijian diaspora in the United Kingdom.

### Fiji Support Network (FSN) United Kingdom [twitter.com/FijiSupportNet](https://twitter.com/FijiSupportNet)

#### Integration activities

The Armed Forces Fiji Support Network aims at providing welfare support to Fijian Service personnel in the UK armed forces, veterans and their families, as well as preserving Fijian cultural heritage. The Fiji Support Network organises summer roadshows in UK army information centres on a yearly basis in order to consult Fijians serving in the UK armed forces on the challenges they face.

### French Fijian Support Association France

#### Integration activities

The Fijian diaspora in France is mainly composed of the approximately 300 professional rugby players who evolve in the country’s various leagues. The French Fijian Support Association, which was created in 2015 and has about 100 members, aims at assisting the integration of Fijian rugby players into their clubs and into French society. Other objectives of the association include the creation of a solidarity fund to help Fijian rugby players on a legal level, as well as assistance to Fijian rugby players in their contacts with French authorities, institutions and administrations.

**Marama Alliance UK (MAUK)** United Kingdom 2019 [maramaalliance.com](http://maramaalliance.com)

 **Integration activities**

MAUK's primary objective is to assist Fijian women as they integrate into life in the UK. MAUK's activities focus on themes such as self-care, resilience, inclusion, professional and personal development, as well as culture and identity. During the Fijian language and culture week 2019, MAUK initiated the campaign "learning my roots" on Twitter, with the objective to promote Fijian language in the UK. The network was created in July 2019, and it organises social and networking events for Fijian women living in the UK.

**Pacific Rugby Players Welfare (PRPW)** United Kingdom [pacificrugbywelfare.com](http://pacificrugbywelfare.com)

 **Integration activities**

PRPW was established in 2016 by Samoan, Tongan and Fijian professional rugby players living in Europe to support players and their families in integrating to life in Europe. The association provides its members with family support, training and education opportunities, as well as social events.

