

Final Narrative Report: Joint Programmes in the Seed Funding Tracks

INTRODUCTION

Reporting period: From the start date to the end date of the joint programme (JP).

- Please be succinct and to the point, focusing on the most important accomplishments and issues that you want to bring to the attention of the Joint SDG Fund at the global level.
- Please do not exceed the word limit for each narrative question.
- Kindly ensure that the information provided is duly reviewed and approved by the RC and all PUNOs involved in the JP.
- Please contact rena.hinoshita@un.org, maria.berenguer@un.org, vittoria.gemelli@un.org, and/or maya.marquez@un.org for questions and support.

Submission deadline from RCOs to the Joint SDG Fund: No later than 2 months from the JP end date via MS Form (<https://forms.office.com/e/zYeyMiXjAv>)

PROFILE

JOINT PROGRAMME (JP) PROFILE:	
UN Country Team	Fiji
JP Title	Accelerating Multi-Level Action for SDG Localization in Fiji
Funding Round (Select the applicable funding round for the JP)	<input type="checkbox"/> Decent Jobs and Universal Social Protection <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Transformation <input type="checkbox"/> Education and Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Access and Affordability <input type="checkbox"/> Food Systems Transformation <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Policy and Capacity Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG Localization
Cross-fertilized SDG Transitions (Select up to 2 main SDG Transitions that are reflected in the JP progress to date)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, Pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Decent Jobs and Universal Social Protection <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Transformation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education and Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Access and Affordability <input type="checkbox"/> Food Systems Transformation
Contribution to Cooperation Framework Outcomes	<Verbatim from the ProDoc>
Actual Start Date (i.e. fund transfer date)	07/10/2024
Duration	12 months
Actual End Date (i.e. operational closure date)	07/10/2025
Total Approved Funding from the Joint SDG Fund	USD 529,000 250 USD Joint Fund and in kind 279 USD (partners)
Planned Financial Closure Date	07/04/2026

Fund Management Modality: Administrative Agent (Pass-through Only)	Mult-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) - Mari Matsumoto, Portfolio Manager, mari.matsumoto@undp.org - Sara Ansari, Finance Manager, sara.ansari@undp.org
JP TEAM:	
Resident Coordinator	Dirk Wagener, dirk.wagener@un.org
JP's RCO focal point	Fiona Schmid, Associate Expert, fiona.schmid@un.org , Kerry Mara, Partnerships Specialist
Lead PUNO focal point	Andie Fong Toy, Head, Subregional Office for the Pacific, ESCAP andie.fongtoy@un.org
Other PUNOs focal points	Curt Garrigan, Chief Sustainable Urban Development Section, EDD, UNESCAP curt.garrigan@un.org Roi Chiti, Regional Coordinator for the Pacific, UN-Habitat Roi.Chiti@un.org
JP's designated communications focal point	Rebecca Purba, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Rebecca.purba@un.org

OVERVIEW

1. Overall self-assessment of the JP achievements.

The primary objective of the Joint SDG Fund's seed funding track is to provide countries with support and resources to incubate and pilot transformative solutions and approaches (including actions to develop and implement national roadmaps or priorities) that can subsequently lead to accelerating progress across [key SDG Transitions](#) at scale. Towards this objective, please evaluate the performance of the JP.

1.a. Rate the overall performance of the JP: Did the JP deliver its key results as planned in the ProDoc?

Unsatisfactory, Marginal Achievement: Less than 50% of expected results delivered.

Satisfactory Achievement: 50-75% of expected results delivered.

Very Good, Solid Achievement: 100% of expected results delivered; implementation completed on schedule.

Exceptional, Outstanding Achievement: 100% of expected results delivered ahead of schedule, with additional results or improvements delivered.

1.b. Incubation and validation of solutions/approaches/roadmaps: How much results did the JP reach in incubating innovative approaches/national roadmaps and/or piloting transformative solutions during the 12 months?

Limited Results: None of planned incubation activities/roadmaps or pilot solutions were rolled out.

Moderate Results: Planned incubation activities/roadmaps or pilots began but remain at the early stages or within the limited scope at the time of the JP closure.

Good Results: Planned incubation activities/roadmaps and pilot solutions are fully operational and validated.

Excellent Results: All planned incubation activities/roadmaps and pilot solutions are completed and validated ahead of schedule, showing promising potential or early sign of scale-up.

Not Applicable: The JP did not plan to incubate ideas, roadmaps or conduct pilots during this phase.

1.c. Sustainability and scalability potential: To what extent did the JP achieve in establishing pathways for future viability and scale-up of the innovations/solutions beyond the 12-month implementation?

Marginal Achievement: Concrete sustainability or scale-up plan was developed but not operationalized; only preliminary discussion with potential partners/funders took place.

Moderate Achievement: Sustainability and scale-up strategies were rolled out; potential scale-up pathways identified; active engagement with potential partners/funders underway.

Solid Achievement: Comprehensive sustainability and scale-up strategies achieved a broad uptake; viable pathways for expansion secured; engagement with potential partners/funders deepened and showing promising outcomes.

Exceptional Achievement: Robust sustainability and scale-up plans were implemented ahead of schedule; multiple viable scale-up pathways activated; strong commitments from partners/funders obtained; additional opportunities for expansion identified beyond initial plans.

Not Applicable: The JP has not yet reached the stage of planning for sustainability and scalability.

RESULTS OF THE JP

A. Results-Based Narrative

2. Overall results of the JP (600 words / 1.5 pages max)

Using bullet points, describe the key achievement made by the JP, especially around how it contributed to incubating and piloting new ideas and approaches (including actions to develop and implement national roadmaps/priority areas) to propel the [key SDG Transitions](#). Your response should cover how the JP made changes around '[enabling actions](#)': 1) developing new policy and regulatory frameworks; 2) identifying new pipelines of solutions; 3) strengthened capacities of key stakeholders; 4) enhanced partnerships and financing mixes to ensure sustainability and scale, and other transformative shifts. Please include specific reference to the SDG targets identified in the ProDoc.

(579 words / 1.5 pages max)

Key Progress and Contributions of the Joint Programme (JP)

1. Developing New Policy and Regulatory Frameworks (SDG 11.3, 11.A; CF Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 2.6)

- Suva City Council (SCC) reviewed its 2021–2025 Strategic Plan and developed a new 2026–2030 plan, integrating VLR recommendations into its mission, vision, and long-term development framework. This strengthens alignment between municipal planning, the SDGs, and the National Development Plan. SCC will also revise its Town Planning Scheme in 2026 to incorporate SDG-aligned indicators and improve policy coherence. Its 2026–2036 Strategic Development Plan, endorsed in November 2025 and scheduled for publication in December, reinforces the importance of strategic spatial and urban planning for long-term resilience and service delivery.

2. Identifying New Pipelines of Solutions (SDG 10.2, 11.3, 16.B; CF Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 2.6)

- Lautoka City Council (LCC), Labasa Town Council (LTC), and SCC each developed SDG-aligned project pipelines through extensive consultations under their VLR processes. Lautoka’s pipeline includes a city-wide Masterplan, an Economic Development Strategy, and a Workforce Strategy, supporting long-term spatial growth and economic resilience. Labasa identified an Open Space Strategy, Flood Protection measures, digital system upgrades, and an accessible Transport Plan as key foundations for a coordinated Master Plan. These projects form structured frameworks for future development planning and investment.
- All councils highlighted data gaps and proposed a Ministry-led Local Government Data Hub to strengthen data governance and evidence-based decision-making. SCC’s VLR identified social vulnerabilities such as homelessness and rising HIV cases and Lautoka and Labasa similarly emphasised inclusive, community-driven planning through multi-stakeholder co-design and validation workshops.
- Regional cooperation is increasing, with councils encouraged to jointly pursue shared infrastructure funding, including integrated waste management across the Greater Suva corridor.

3. Strengthened Capacities of Key Stakeholders (SDG 5.5, 16.B; CF Outcome 4.2)

- Capacity-building initiatives—such as the “SDG at the Centre” workshop and the National SDG Localization masterclass—strengthened municipal understanding of SDG integration, inclusive governance, and results-based management. Supported by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), the Australian Volunteers Programme (AVP), and Australian local governments, the masterclass engaged council CEOs, department heads, and Special Administrators.
- LCC and LTC strengthened ownership of their VLR processes through targeted training on SDG prioritization, data mapping and integration with development plans, and broadened their VLR taskforces to include ministries, CSOs, and service providers.
- Technical support from AVP and Pro Bono Planners Australia helped address the eight-year gap in qualified urban planners across Fiji’s municipal councils, significantly improving planning and policy development capacity.

4. Enhanced Partnerships and Financing Mixes (SDG 11.A, 17.3; CF Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 2.6)

- Between December 2024 and August 2025, SCC conducted 26 inclusive dialogues for its Strategic Development Plan, engaging women (70%), youth and elderly groups (20%), and persons with disabilities (3%). Lautoka and Labasa held similar dialogues and public consultations for their VLRS, involving more than 200 participants across both towns.
- These processes fostered strong community ownership of development priorities and highlighted opportunities to institutionalize Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) for financing, data sharing, and monitoring frameworks. Co-financing for SDG localization increased from USD 80,000 to USD 135,000 through strengthened development partner engagement.

5. Other Transformative Shifts [SDG Targets 11.3, 16.B; CF Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 2.6, 4.2]

- All three councils strengthened inclusive planning systems and institutional arrangements that support long-term SDG alignment. SCC launched Fiji’s first VLR in May 2025, followed by Lautoka and Labasa in October 2025. Each council identified priority projects for integration into future strategic plans, reinforcing

improved governance, stronger multi-stakeholder engagement, and enhanced capacity for sustained SDG localization.

Kindly refer to the [Progress Report by Output](#) (pp. 13-15) for an expanded overview of key progress and contributions of the JP.

3. Constraints, adjustments and lessons (500 words / 1 page max)

In bullet points, please explain any constraints, including risks identified in the ProDoc's Risk Matrix, that were encountered and any adjustments that were made or mitigation actions taken by the JP team to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the JP and the coherence and coordination of UN system support.

In describing lessons learned, please be candid about both successes and failures, explaining what was learned from each experience and how these insights can inform future programming or scale-up efforts.

(442/500 words)

Constraints and Adjustments

- **Limited Local Government Capacity:**
 - **Constraint:** Local governments lacked the necessary expertise and resources to engage effectively in SDG localization efforts. Challenges included inadequate staffing, limited technical skills, and insufficient familiarity with the VLR process.
 - **Adjustments/Mitigation:** Focus on practical, phased milestones for local government deliverables, such as strategic planning and urban planning alignment.
- **Funding Shortfall Risk:**
 - **Constraint:** Dependence on external funding sources poses risks to the sustainability of planned activities, such as data collection, stakeholder engagement, and capacity-building efforts.
 - **Adjustments/Mitigation:**
 - Leverage partnerships with volunteer organizations, UN agencies, CSOs, and academia to share resources and technical expertise.
- **Change in Local Leadership and Priorities:**
 - **Constraint:** Expected leadership changes in local governments created uncertainties regarding continued support for SDG-aligned projects.
 - **Adjustments/Mitigation:**
 - Demonstrate how project outputs, such as the VLR and Strategic Plan revisions, could align with and enhance local leadership priorities.
 - Establish institutional mechanisms, such as steering committees, to ensure continuity irrespective of leadership changes.
- **Data systems and coordination limitations:**
 - **Constraint:** Data dissemination across levels of government remains inconsistent, and significant gaps in digitized records persist. This hinders the ability to reliably track progress, establish credible baselines, and coordinate actions effectively across sectors and institutions.

- **Adjustment/Mitigation:** Use of proxy data—validated and mapped in collaboration with local councils and relevant ministries—as an interim measure. Strengthening data governance and promoting digital systems remains a longer-term priority.

Lessons Learned

- **Successes:**
 - **Partnerships:** Collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including technical training institutes and academia, improving resource mobilization and technical expertise, and mitigating funding constraints. For instance, the new partnership with the Australian Government’s Volunteer Programme (AVP) has led to full-time in-house international volunteers being posted in two local councils (Lautoka and Labasa), and possibly in Suva City Council as well as in the Ministry of Local Government to support the implementation of the JP with support beyond the project, supporting its sustainability after its closure. The co-financing for the JP from the Australian Government has increased from USD 80,000 to USD 135,000.
- **Failures:**
 - **Underestimating Capacity Gaps:** Initial planning underestimated the depth of resource and technical gaps in local governments, leading to delays in project timelines.

Future Insights

- **Institutionalize Capacity Building:** Develop long-term, standardized training programs to ensure sustained capacity enhancement for local governments.
- **Embed Continuity Mechanisms:** Establish robust governance structures to mitigate disruptions from leadership changes, ensuring alignment across political cycles.
- **Establish national-level information sharing mechanisms:** Support the development of a coordinated national platform for SDG-related data collection, validation, and sharing. This system should integrate local government data flows, enable real-time monitoring, and support evidence-based policy decisions. Standardized reporting protocols and interoperable digital tools will improve transparency and coherence across sectors and levels of government.

4. Scale up and pathways for transformative systems change (Select all that apply)

Please select all relevant pathways that the JP applied with the aim of scaling up systematic transformation:

- Capacity-building & local ownership:** Strengthening capacity of individuals, local institutions and communities to independently implement and sustain activities; or transferring ownership and management to local organizations for sustained impact.
- Cross-sectoral collaboration & partnerships:** Partnering with diverse stakeholder groups to address interconnected issues and amplify impact; engaging with private and public sector to replicate successful programme components; or institutionalize participatory governance mechanisms to ensure inclusivity and intensify effectiveness.
- Policy integration & mainstreaming:** Incorporating successful programme elements into national or local policies and regulations to ensure wider adoption and impact; or integrating programme components into existing systems and structures for wider reach, efficiency and sustainability.

Resource mobilization & financial sustainability: Developing innovative financing mechanisms and attracting new donors/investors to ensure financial sustainability and expansion; or influencing existing financing mechanisms or diversifying resource streams to support long-term programme viability and growth.

People-centred technology adoption & innovation: Leveraging technology and solutions to increase reach, efficiency, impact of activities; or using technology and innovation to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration and scale-up of impact.

Others. Please specify: _____

5. Measures taken with a focus on sustainability (500 words / 1 page max)

In bullet points, please elaborate how the JP has ensured the mid- to long-term sustainability and scalability of the JP results beyond its 12-month implementation period. Your response should focus on 1) measures taken to ensure financial, institutional, and community-level sustainability of the JP outcomes, 2) 'enabling actions' that supported sustainability and ownership, 3) the exit strategy that facilitated the scalability and replication of the successful JP interventions.

(410/500 words)

1. Financial, Institutional, and Community-Level Sustainability Measures

- Embedding SDG Alignment in Long-Term Planning:
All three councils integrated VLR recommendations into their multi-year strategic and spatial planning frameworks. Suva embedded SDG alignment into its 2026–2030 Strategic Plan and 10-year Development Framework, while Lautoka and Labasa initiated SDG-aligned project pipelines—including strategies for land use, economic development, public spaces, mobility, and digital systems—to guide long-term municipal development.
- Sustaining Technical Capacity:
The programme addressed an eight-year planning capacity gap by securing long-term technical support from the Australian Volunteer Programme and Pro Bono Planners Australia. This has strengthened planning departments across Suva, Lautoka, and Labasa and supports continued implementation and scaling beyond the project's lifespan.
- Strengthening Data Governance:
Councils jointly proposed a Ministry-led Local Government Data Hub to improve data quality, monitoring, and evidence-based planning—critical for sustaining SDG localization outcomes over time.
- Inclusive Planning Structures Embedded in Municipal Processes:
Multi-stakeholder taskforces, consultation platforms, and community advisory groups established under the VLR process will remain active, ensuring ongoing public participation and accountability.

2. Enabling Actions Supporting Sustainability and Ownership

- Institutionalizing Partnerships for Training and Support:
Partnerships with Fiji National University, CLGF, and AVP are being leveraged to extend the SDG Localization Training Programme, embed a train-the-trainer model, and maintain technical placements across multiple councils.
- Policy and Governance Alignment:
VLR outputs are being used to influence updates to strategic plans, town planning schemes, and sectoral strategies in all three councils, ensuring SDG-aligned frameworks remain institutionalized within governance processes.

- **Resource Mobilization and Financial Sustainability:**
Co-financing increased significantly (from USD 80,000 to USD 135,000) as development partners expanded their financial and technical commitments. Joint council proposals for shared infrastructure—such as integrated waste management—create opportunities for future scalable investment.
- **Deep Community Ownership Through Inclusive Engagement:**
Structured consultations, surveys, and dialogues conducted across Suva, Lautoka, and Labasa have built strong community ownership. Councils institutionalized participatory mechanisms to ensure sustained citizen engagement in planning, prioritization, and monitoring.

3. Exit Strategy Supporting Scalability and Replication

- **National Scaling Through the VLR Model:**
With Suva, Lautoka, and Labasa completing their VLRs, Fiji now has a replicable national model for SDG localization. Other councils have already expressed interest in adopting the approach.
- **Cross-Council Collaboration for Scalable Solutions:**
Regional workshops facilitated coordinated planning on shared issues, creating pathways for multi-council, scalable submissions to development partners.
- **Permanent Institutional Arrangements:**
Strengthened planning units, multi-stakeholder taskforces, and improved data systems form the backbone of long-term replication and scaling, well beyond the JP implementation period.

B. Indicator-Based Performance Update

This section is based upon the JP results framework and workplan.

6. The JP results framework (Upload Excel)

Please assess the JP performance against the indicators identified in the ProDoc's Annex 1: Integrated results framework, namely 1) JP outputs and 2) JP contribution to Joint SDG Fund global indicators.

7. Key documents produced by the JP (Upload max. 10 files if available)

Please feel free to share up to 10 key documents, including, but not limited to, policy briefs, strategy papers, guidance notes, knowledge products and training materials that the JP would like to bring to the attention of the Joint SDG Fund at the global level. File types can be Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDF, image, video and audio, but each file size must be below 1GB.

1. [Suva City Council, Fiji 2025 Voluntary Local Review \(VLR\) report](#)
2. [Suva City Council Strategic Plan \(Final Draft\)](#)
3. [SCC Strategic Planning Survey and Workshop Summaries](#)
- 4 & 5. [Lautoka City Council 2025 Voluntary Local Review](#) and [Summary](#)
- 6 & 7. [Labasa Town Council 2025 Voluntary Local Review](#) and [Summary](#)
8. [Progress Overview by Output \(Narrative\)](#)

8. Number of people directly benefited by the JP

Direct beneficiaries are individuals, groups or organizations who actively participate in JP activities and directly benefit from its interventions, such as civil servants attending workshops, small business owners receiving training, or households accessing services provided by the JP. It is important to disaggregate the primary beneficiaries by sex and age as per table below when possible.

Type of engagement	Total Number of People	Number of Women and Girls*	Number of Children (ages of 0-14) *	Number of Youth (ages 15 –24)*
Training/workshops for targeted groups	62 (output 1) 30 (Output 3)	48 (output1) 8 (Output 3)	0	16 (Output 1)
Awareness raising campaign for broad audience	111 (Output 2) (hybrid public consultation)	31 recorded* (Output 2)		
Dialogues/consultations with relevant stakeholders	14 (Output 1) 93 (Output 2)	28 (Output 2)	0	0
Coordination meetings with key partners	44 (Steering Committee Meetings)	14 (Steering Committee Meetings)	0	0
Access to expanded services				
Others (Please specify): Public consultation & online survey	66 (Output 1)	33 (Output 1)	0	0

* Note that it is allowed to have overlaps in the reporting of women/girls and children/youth columns.

9. Contributions to marginalized and vulnerable groups (250 words / 0.5 page max)

In bullet points, please provide a summary of how the JP benefited the marginalized and vulnerable groups identified in the ProDoc. Include results achieved at both institutional/policy and local/human levels. Please find the 20 standard LNOB groups in footnote 28 on page 17 of the UNSDG Output Indicator Framework's [Implementation Guide](#).

(282 words / 0.5 page max)

- **Women and girls**
 - Institutional/Policy Level: All 3 councils incorporated gender-responsive priorities into their SDG/VLR processes, including commitments to safer public spaces, improved street lighting, inclusive community facilities, and attention to caregiving and mobility needs.
 - Local/Human Level: Women accounted for roughly 70% of participants in Suva/Greater Suva consultations and nearly a third of Lautoka and Labasa consultations and survey respondents, ensuring

their perspectives on safety, market access, livelihoods, and social services shaped strategic plans and emerging project pipelines.

- **Persons with disabilities (PWDs)**
 - Institutional/Policy Level: The JP strengthened disability-inclusive planning by promoting universal design principles, barrier-free access, and the use of disaggregated data on PWDs in municipal SDG indicators and strategic frameworks.
 - Local/Human Level: Consultations conducted in accessible venues where possible, surfaced concrete priorities for ramps, accessible footpaths, inclusive crossings, and accessible civic buildings were prioritized in council-led project concepts.

- **Low-income and climate-vulnerable communities (including informal and peri-urban settlements)**
 - Institutional/Policy Level: The Suva Strategic Development Plan and the three VLRs explicitly link SDG targets to upgrading underserved neighbourhoods, enhancing basic services, and strengthening climate-resilient infrastructure for communities exposed to flooding, storms, and sea-level rise.
 - Local/Human Level: Targeted dialogues in peri-urban and lower-income areas enabled residents to prioritise improvements in drainage, solid waste management, access to safe public spaces, and livelihood opportunities, which now inform council priorities and planned investments.

- **Youth and older persons**
 - Institutional/Policy Level: Councils committed to youth engagement beyond the VLR cycle and to integrating intergenerational needs in planning frameworks.
 - Local/Human Level: Young people and older persons actively contributed through consultations and online surveys, raising concerns on employment, recreation, safety, and social inclusion that are informing programme design and strategic-plan revisions.

10. Financial resources mobilized/leveraged

Please indicate the financial resources (in USD) mobilized or leveraged through the JP. Please clarify the source of funding/financing and the source type, such as PUNOs and Government contributions, public-private partnerships, private sector investments, and financial commitments from IFIs, DFIs and other donors.

Source of Funding/Financing	Type of Source (e.g. PUNO, PPP, DFI, donor, etc.)	Expected amount planned in the ProDoc	Actual amount mobilized as initially planned in the ProDoc	Additional amount newly mobilized beyond the ProDoc expectation
PUNO 1	ESCAP	USD 70,000	USD 70,000	USD
PUNO 2	UN-Habitat	USD 35,000	USD 35,000	USD

Government	Ministry of Local Government	USD 35,000	USD 35,000	USD
Non-UN-Partner	Melbourne Centre for Cities	USD 24,000	USD 24,000	
Other sources	SCC	USD 35,000	USD 35,000	
Other sources	LCC, LTC	Staff time	Staff time	
Other sources	AVI / AVP	USD 80,000	USD 135,000	USD 55,000
Other sources	CLGF	Training materials and professional services	Training materials and professional services	

11. Cross-cutting issues and principles of leaving no one behind (LNOB)

For each question, select the relevant response. If yes, please list 1-2 examples of actions taken/results delivered, and if no, please provide a brief 1-2 sentence explanation in the table.

Question	Yes	No	Comment
The JP has adequately implemented environmental and social standards/safeguards to avoid and address adverse impacts on people and the planet.	x		The JP integrates climate resilience, environmental management, pollution control, and biodiversity protection throughout planning processes (e.g., SDG transitions include climate action, urban green spaces, pollution reduction). It prioritizes safeguards through inclusive capital investment preparation and climate-resilient planning for Suva, Lautoka, and Labasa.
The JP has developed or operationalized a strategy to address human rights issues, undertaking and drawing upon relevant human rights analysis.	x		The JP explicitly applies a human right-based approach, incorporating rights to housing, water, participation, and equality. Stakeholder engagement with marginalized groups, VLR processes, and national capacity building all integrate human rights principles. The programme also aligns with UN Human Rights Mechanisms recommendations. The program has applied a bottom-up approach and integrated community-based initiatives in partnership with Local councils and national government ministry. Performance outcomes reflected in the Councils Strategic Development annual business plans and 5-year Strategic development plans.

<p>The JP has developed or operationalized a strategy to address structural inequalities facing women and girls.</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>The JP integrates gender-responsive planning, gender-responsive municipal budgeting, and prioritizes women’s participation in VLR co-production, task teams, and development planning. It also targets improved livelihoods and access to services for women in informal settlements.</p> <p>The program focuses on gender empowerment through financial and entrepreneurship programs. Realizing existing partnerships and optimizing outcomes through better planned and innovative programs driven by Local councils. E.g., Markets for Change program between UN Women – Ministry of Local Government – Municipal Councils and various agencies.</p>
<p>The JP has demonstrated positive results / effects for youth in accordance with the principles in Youth 2030.</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>Youth are specifically included in stakeholder engagement, SDG data collection, public space and livelihood improvements, and VLR participation processes. Capacity-building modules address youth empowerment, especially through inclusive urban design and public spaces.</p> <p>. Enhancing Quality of Life: Focusing on the SCC Town Planning Scheme review and the city’s masterplans and local area plan to better capture opportunities and planning innovation and policies. E.g. 1. Including youth groups in designing and planning urban green spaces in the <i>Suva City Town Planning revision</i> exercises. 2. Community wellbeing programs through the <i>Suva City Drug free initiatives</i>. The inclusive planning includes housing options and basic services whereby the municipality, working in partnership with main providers, aims to improve the overall well-being and quality of life for residents.</p>
<p>The JP has developed or operationalized a strategy to address structural inequalities facing marginalized and vulnerable persons in any other LNOB groups.</p> <p>Please specify which groups: persons with disabilities; informal settlement residents; ethnic/religious minorities;</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>The JP outlines a comprehensive LNOB strategy, explicitly identifying 20 marginalized groups as per UN LNOB guidance. Actions include participatory VLR processes, inclusive SDG target setting, universal design principles in city planning, upgrading informal settlements, and specific task teams for marginalized populations across all three outputs.</p> <p>E.g.: Partnership collaboration:</p>

<p>older persons; human rights defenders; urban poor; informal workers</p>			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Informal settlement upgrading programs (TLTB/ SCC/ Min LG / Min Housing / Pacific Urban Partnership – RISE initiative) to provide alternative innovative solutions for solid waste reticulation. 2. SCC Town Planning Policy review: Professional & technical support through Multi and Bilateral partnership (DFAT AVI- UNESCAP – MLG) <p>* Inclusive planning policies and Town Planning provisions for persons living with disabilities in terms of design and standards.</p>
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C. Strategic Communications and Partnership Update

12. Strategic communications

Please provide the links to written articles published by the JP, or the draft outline of a written article to be finalized in the coming weeks. Examples of human-interest stories, practical guidance on storytelling, other useful tools to produce impactful written articles can be found in the Joint SDG Fund's [Communications Guideline for Seed Funding Tracks](#) on [UNSDG Knowledge Portal](#) (NB: PUNOs may need to request access first).

List of links to written articles of human-interest stories:

- Posted by UNRCO: <https://pacific.un.org/en/296798-pacific-pioneers-how-fijian-cities-and-towns-are-shaping-sustainable-future>
- Blog post and update by ESCAP: <https://unescap.org/blog/pacific-pioneers-how-fijian-cities-are-shaping-sustainable-future>
- Blogpost on Lautoka and Labasa's VLR Launches on UN-Habitat ROAP's website: <https://fukuoka.unhabitat.org/en/information/9370/>

Social media posts mentioning @JointSDGFund:

- <https://x.com/UNESCAP/status/1927326725127491981>
- <https://x.com/UNESCAP/status/1902986291836490089>
- <https://x.com/UNESCAP/status/1865256454170521924>

Video interview published by ESCAP:

- VLR story from Lautoka, Fiji: CEO Mohammed Anees Khan <https://youtu.be/0aAQSqlLhY>
- VLR story from Suva, Fiji, RC Dirk Wagener <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVA11Qwcvzo&t=7s>

Draft outline of a written article of a human-interest story (500 words / 1 page max)

1. Opening: A Moment of National Momentum

- Set the scene: last week of October 2025, all 13 municipal councils gather in one place for a national SDG Localization Training under the Accelerating Multi-Level Action for SDG Localization in Fiji project.
- Link to the regional stage: councils also take part in the Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, highlighting Fiji's leadership in the Pacific.

2. National Leadership: A Message from the Ministry of Local Government (MLG)

Quote or paraphrase PS MLG Sharma's closing speech:

- Emphasize the critical leadership role of councils in achieving the SDGs.
- Importance of embedding SDGs in everyday municipal work.
- Recognition of councils' commitment and the momentum achieved through the training and Pacific Forum.
- Position MLG as a catalyst enabling local delivery of global objectives.

3. City and Town Spotlight Stories

- Suva City Council
 - Highlight the launch of Suva's SDG-centred Strategic Plan.
 - Human-interest angle: Suva's ambition to set a national benchmark as the capital.
 - How the plan aligns city operations, budgeting, and community programmes with SDG targets.
- Labasa Town Council
 - Labasa launches its Voluntary Local Review (VLR)—a first for the town.
 - Human-interest lens:
 - What localizing SDGs means for a northern town with unique development challenges.
 - The struggle and value of data in the Pacific context—how gaps were overcome through community engagement.
 - Importance of youth voices: post-review initiative to gather young people's visions for Labasa's future, feeding into the new council plan.
 - Underscore civic pride and the sense of ownership among residents.
- Lautoka City Council
 - General narrative: Lautoka celebrates the successful delivery and launch of its VLR.
 - Emphasize:
 - Achievements already happening on the ground.
 - How data consolidation revealed shared goals between government, NGOs, business, and communities.
 - The VLR as proof that local implementation is where SDGs come alive.

4. Reflections and Lessons Learned Across All Councils

- Local governments have long been delivering SDG-related work—even without the SDG label.
- The VLR and SDG planning processes help “connect the dots,” linking local initiatives to global goals and Fiji's broader strategic hierarchy.
- Reinforces that SDG localization is practical, people-centred, and rooted in community needs.

5. Next Steps and the Road Ahead

- Shared Vision Across Councils

- Implementation is now the focus—embedding VLR data and targets into 5-year Strategic Plans.
- Building stronger partnerships:
- Leadership from Division Commissions to enhance whole-of-government collaboration.
- Increased inter-ministerial and inter-organizational cooperation on specific projects.
- Momentum is high; councils are eager to continue projects identified during the VLR process.
- Closing Note
 - End with a forward-looking, human-centered reflection:
 - Fiji’s councils are not just local authorities—they are frontline drivers of sustainable development.
 - Their work demonstrates that achieving the SDGs is ultimately about improving people’s everyday lives, town by town, city by city.

13. Strategic partnerships (Select all that apply)

What type of partnerships established during the JP made important contribution to the JP objectives?

- National Government Institutions (Please specify): Ministry Of Local Government, Ministry of Environment & Climate Change, Ministry of Finance SDG VNR unit, Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Women and Youth , Ministry of Corporative, Trade & Tourism, Ministry of Foreign Affairs ,
- Sub-national Government Institutions (Please specify): ITaukei Land Trust Board, ITaukei Trust Fund Board, Public Rental Board (PRB), Commissioners Office (Central, Western & Northern Divisions) ,
- International Financial Institutions & Development Finance Institutions (Please specify): Asian Development Bank (ADB), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), GCoM
- Private Sector Companies or Industry Associations (Please specify): Maximize
- Civil Society Organizations, Philanthropic Organizations and Foundation (Please specify): FemLink , PIANGO, Suva Market Vendors Association, Lautoka Market Vendors Association, Labasa Market Vendors Association, Suva Retailers Association, Fiji Employers Federation (FEF)
- Academic/Research Institutions (Please specify): University of the South Pacific (USP) , Fiji National University (FNU)
- Bilateral Development Partners (Please specify): DFAT (Australian Volunteer International), Asian Development Bank
- Labour Unions or Organizations (Please specify): UN Women, Pacific Urban Partnership, Fiji Planners Association, Home in Place, ICLEI, GCoM , Pro Bono Planners Australia
- Others (Please specify): _____

ANNEX: SDG Localization Marker Survey

ONLY for the JPs with SDG Localization's Marker 3 to respond.

- 1) Please report on the SDG Localization monitoring indicators below. If an indicator is not applicable to your joint programme kindly state NA and briefly justify in the "Means of Verification" column.

Kindly find the [SDG Localization Marker 3 Table](#) populated in TAB 2.

- 2) What action areas has your JP prioritized since launch to advance the SDGs at the local level? (Select all that apply)

- Empowering local authorities and communities (e.g. capacity building, leadership development, technical support)
- Facilitating multi-stakeholder engagement (e.g. participatory planning processes, community consultations)
- Strengthening multi-level governance (e.g. vertical coordination, central-local policy alignment)
- Localizing SDG financing (e.g. municipal finance mechanisms, local resource mobilization, local SDG budgeting)
- Enhancing local data systems (e.g. disaggregated data collection, community-based monitoring)
- Expanding social service access (e.g. last-mile delivery, integrated service provision)
- Others (please specify): _____

- 3) To what extent has funding from the joint programme budget be directly channelled or mobilized to local-level actors (e.g. local governments, local community organizations, local service providers) to support SDG Localization efforts in the reporting period?

- 0% i.e. no resource has been directed to local-level actors.
- 1-24% of total programme funding directed to local-level actors.
- 25-49% of total programme funding directed to local-level actors.
- 50-74% of total programme funding directed to local-level actors.
- 75-100% of total programme funding directed to local-level actors.

- 4) Please describe how the territorial or localization approach is applied in your joint programme. Include the following key aspects into your response.

- Alignment between joint programme and local development plans and integration of results in local processes, frameworks and SDG monitoring system.
- Role of subnational-level (local and regional) governments and other key local institutions/stakeholders in the implementation of the joint programme.
- Description on how capacities and innovation of local stakeholders for integrating SDG and multi-actor collaboration are identified and reinforced.

(481/500 words)

Territorial and Localization Approach in the Joint Programme on SDG Localization in Fiji

The Joint Programme applies a territorial and localization approach by embedding its interventions within Fiji's subnational governance systems and aligning all activities with existing municipal and national development frameworks. Programme design and delivery respond directly to local priorities while strengthening linkages between national policy commitments and community-level implementation. Central to this approach is the integration of SDG principles into municipal planning, monitoring, and service delivery processes.

At the local level, the Suva City Council's 10-Year Strategic Development Plan—produced through the programme—serves as a practical vehicle for SDG integration, embedding targets, indicators, and spatial priorities into the city's long-term vision. Similarly, the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) of Lautoka and Labasa are anchored in their existing urban development strategies and planning mandates. These outputs allow municipal councils to institutionalize SDG-aligned data, performance monitoring, and results reporting. At the national level, the programme complements the 2023 VNR, the forthcoming 2025 National Development Plan, and the emerging Blue Town Framework, ensuring that local evidence and priorities inform wider national SDG monitoring systems.

The programme's territorial approach is further guided by decisions of the Steering Committee, which emphasized strengthening institutional capacity at subnational levels. Councils were encouraged to recruit technical professionals and continuously upskill staff in urban planning, GIS, AI-based tools, monitoring and evaluation, and strategic financial planning. The Steering Committee additionally urged stronger engagement with traditional leaders, youth networks, and vulnerable groups, and the mainstreaming of gender equality, disability inclusion, and indigenous cultural protection in local planning processes. National agencies were also called upon to enhance collaboration with local authorities by establishing joint mechanisms for data sharing and spatial mapping, including the development of a shared national platform accessible to municipal councils and planning institutions.

Subnational governments remain central actors in programme implementation. The Ministry of Local Government provides strategic leadership and ensures coherence with national policy frameworks, while municipal councils are responsible for contextualizing activities and coordinating multi-actor participation at the local level. Traditional leaders, civil society groups, private sector actors, and community organizations actively contribute to participatory planning, data collection, validation, and monitoring.

The Joint Programme also reinforces local capacities and innovations through a comprehensive SDG Localization Training Programme. Building on Steering Committee guidance, the finalized training modules are being integrated into national and municipal training platforms to ensure long-term institutionalization. These modules include innovative financing, technology-enabled planning, piloting of digital and spatial tools, and multi-actor engagement strategies. Support from the Australian Volunteer Programme has strengthened implementation by embedding technical experts within councils and the Ministry of Local Government, enabling continuous mentoring, skills transfer, and the introduction of technology-based and cost-efficient solutions.

Overall, the Joint Programme advances a robust territorial approach by reinforcing local leadership, strengthening institutional capacities, mobilizing innovation, and ensuring that SDG localization is embedded in Fiji's long-term planning systems, thereby securing national ownership and sustainability.



- END -