GEF/Nagoya ABS Project

Timeline
2015 - 2018

Donor Agency
Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Executing Agency
Department of Environment (DoE)

Implementing Agency
United Nations Development Programme Pacific Office (Fiji)

Leading Organisations
IAS Leading & Coordinating the research aspect as the focal point. Ministry of Environment is the national focal point for ABS and is the monitoring body and leads implementation of ABS policy. Ministry of I-Taukei Affairs (MTA) leads awareness and nationalisation of the ABS policy to reach all community levels.

Partners
International – UNDP
National - The government of Fiji and its line ministries of MOE, MTA, Ministry of Fisheries Institutions - USP/IAS, Georgia Tech Research Corporation (GTRC), Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO)
Project Overview
Fiji’s terrestrial and marine ecosystems contain significant levels of biodiversity and make up a key part of the Polynesia – Micronesia Hotspot (Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund & Conservation International, 2007). This biodiversity hotspot also contains the unique and sensitive marine ecosystems being part of the Western Pacific which is recorded as having the highest marine biodiversity along with the most extensive coral reef system in the world. However, there has been little focus on the value of genetic resources that are accommodated in Fiji’s biodiverse areas, and the means by which payment for ecosystem services could be used to stimulate conservation at the local level, while providing avenues for improved livelihoods. There are gaps and work is needed for instituting relevant legislation, policy and institutional systems to assist with regulating the collection, storage, exchange, development and use of genetic resources to maximise opportunities for alternative livelihoods. There is also a need to improve technological capacity at the national level. This project will assist in addressing gaps and barriers to scientific research, particularly the lack of bio-prospecting policy and guidelines and technological and development capacity in Fiji. It also aims to address limited national capacity to implement, institutionalize and operationalize ABS Agreements and the Nagoya Protocol which was signed by Fiji in 2014.

Project Objectives
The objective for each of the lead agencies under the project are:
1. **IAS** - Discovering active compounds for pharmaceutical and agrochemical uses from organisms within the ecosystems of Fiji.
2. **MOE** - Operationalization of ABS Agreements and Benefit Sharing
3. **MTA** - Increased national capacity to operationalize Nagoya Protocol Obligations and raising awareness among Fijian communities of the benefits of biodiversity and genetic resources

Project Outputs
**Summary of Biodiversity Survey Findings**
Two Free Prior Informed Consent Consultation visits to Nacula Island, Yasawa Islands and Beqa Island in 2017
- Collections of samples at Suva seashore (74 micro and 3 macro samples), Nacula Island (114 micro & 31 macro samples) in 2017
- 835 Marine microbial isolates, 472 marine microbial extracts
- Overarching MOU between USP and Fiji government ministries on bioprospecting is in progress.
- MOU between GIFU University and USP signed.
- Purchase of major equipment, apparatuses and solvents is in progress.