



CONCEPT AND FRAMEWORK

South Pacific Extension and Development Institute (SPEDI)



College of Agriculture
Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF)

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development.
CAFF	College of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry
CBHTS	College of Business Hospitality & Tourist Studies
CEST	College of Engineering Science and Technology
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.
CHE	College of Humanities & Education
CMNHS	College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences
CSMV	Climate Smart Model Village
DABE	Department of Agribusiness and Extension
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EFL	Energy Fiji Limited
EIH	Entrepreneurial Innovation Hub
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FNU	Fiji National University
KRA	Key Result Areas
NDP	National Development Plan 2025-2029 (Fiji Government)
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NTPC	National Training and Productive Centre
PIC	Pacific Island Countries
PVET	Professional and Vocational Education and Training
RDB	Rural Development Bank
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SP	FNU Strategic Plan 2024-2026
SPC	South Pacific Community
SPEDI	The South Pacific Extension and Development Institute
UN	United Nation
UNSDG	United Nation Sustainable Development Goals
USP	University of South Pacific



FOREWORD



The establishment of the South Pacific Extension and Development Institute (SPEDI) is the culmination of a vision I have carried out for many years that a university's true measure of impact lies not only within its classrooms and laboratories, but in the lives, it transforms beyond its walls.

For too long, the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry at Fiji National University has been recognized primarily as a teaching institution, with research as a secondary function and community outreach largely unfulfilled. Yet the third mandate of any university to reach out, to serve, and to develop the communities it exists and an obligation. SPEDI was formed to meet that obligation.

This Concept Paper presents the foundational blueprint for SPEDI for its rationale, vision, structure, functions, and strategic direction for 2026 and beyond. It articulates how SPEDI will serve as the operational arm of CAFF and FNU, bridging academic knowledge with the practical development needs of rural communities across Fiji and the Pacific Island Countries. Through the Entrepreneurial Innovation Incubation Hub, the Climate Smart Model Village initiative, applied multidisciplinary research, and consultancy services, SPEDI is designed to translate research into real and lasting change at the household and community level.

SPEDI draws its approach from the Fiji Vanua Research Framework beginning where the people are, grounded in culture, land, and community. It is guided by values of excellence, relevance, inclusivity, collaboration, and measurable impact. It is aligned with Fiji's National Development Plan 2025–2029, FNU's Strategic Plan 2024–2026, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It is, at its core, a Pacific response to Pacific challenges.

I am deeply grateful to the FNU Senior Leadership Team for approving SPEDI in August 2025, to the Dean of CAFF Associate Professor Dr Kaliova Ravuiwasa for his steadfast support, and to the many partners, collaborators, and community stakeholders who have embraced this vision. I am equally thankful to God, whose guidance has sustained every step of this journey.

The official launch of SPEDI on 8 July 2026, at the Landcare International Conference, marks not an end but a beginning. The work ahead is significant, and the stakes are high food security, climate resilience, rural livelihoods, and the future of Pacific communities. But I am confident that with committed people, strong partnerships, and a clear purpose, SPEDI will fulfil its promise.

I recommend this Concept Paper to all stakeholders, partners, and supporters of SPEDI. May it serve as a living document that guides our work and inspires continued commitment to sustainable development across the South Pacific.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'William Kerua'.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A proposal to establish the South Pacific Extension and Development Institute (SPEDI) was presented to Fiji National University (FNU) Senior Leadership Team (SLT) through the Dean-College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) in 2023 and was approved by FNU SLT pending a Business Case (Resolution SLT 238/3/2023) and with careful planning the business case was later presented and in August 2025 the FNU SLT approved and endorsed for establishment. On 8th of July 2026, SPEDI was officially launched. This paper presents the concepts, functions, and rationale of the South Pacific Extension and Development Institute (SPEDI) as a blue-print document for its establishment and its operation. The purpose of establishing SPEDI as a mechanism for FNU and CAFF staff and students to reach out to the local, regional, and global communities in terms of research, training, and development to improve livelihoods and address climate change impacts of our communities as well as enhance our teaching and research in alignment with FNU 2024-2026 Strategic Plan and Fiji National Development Plan 2025-2029. The aim of SPEDI is to make CAFF and FNU a technology-fostering agent, by developing appropriate farming, fishery, and forestry innovations and technologies in consideration of sustainable climate smart practices through an incubation hub with the intent of entrepreneurship and climate smart outlook. This will be enhanced by conducting multidisciplinary need-based climate smart research in agriculture, fisheries, and forestry, through partnership with relevant Fiji Government Organizations, sister universities, NGOs, regional partners, and funding agents.

The emphasis is to reach the communities and to work along with to improve their livelihoods in the space of climate smart sustainable agriculture, fisheries, and forestry with entrepreneurial outlook. It creates an environment in which SPEDI can develop innovations in terms of devices, new ideas, special skills, improved practices, and abilities into entrepreneurship model. SPEDI will then package, trial, and display smart entrepreneurial ideas and innovation on campus as well as in model villages in selected communities. Learnings and active participation through the process and settings will create interest among students and youths to be motivated to start farming, fishery, or forestry as sustainable business when they leave the University so become self-employed and perhaps employers including youths in rural sectors. The platform will also facilitate avenues to address farmer's needs.



1.0 BACKGROUND

FNU like other universities has mandatory access to teaching, research, and extension & development (outreach). Thus, FNU is seen to be more teaching & learning oriented with some result-based research and perhaps less or fewer extension and development programs in the communities to fulfil the function of a university and to contribute to the government agenda. FNU continuously get critics of our graduates' level of knowledge and competency at workplace, and it is serious matter for all FNU colleges to review the way we do business. FNU needs to support the economic and social development of Fiji through relevant, high-quality education and training that maximises graduate employability and applied result-based research and development that has positive societal impact including climate change and gender inclusiveness.

These challenges are achievable if all the five Colleges and NTPC could come up with appropriate innovations, approaches, and with coordination mechanisms that can address sustainable improved livelihoods, food security, financial security, and climate change issues and expose our students to the real world industrial environment with more on-hands practical field experience relevant in their discipline, so they become employable graduates. That does not mean they are geared only to undertake formal employment with industries but train them to become sustainable entrepreneurs and self-employed. The University should encourage entrepreneurialism by developing appropriate technological innovations along with entrepreneurial mindset grandaunts and with operational and management culture that enables the University to continue as an able player in the competitive market. Therefore, the South Pacific Extension and Development Institute (SPEDI) to become a conduit to plan, design, develop, implement, coordinate, and manage university's research, development, and extension activities.

Given such circumstances and function, CAFF as a natural resource discipline can offer a lot and should take a leading role to develop and facilitate such changes the University is embarking on. This paper presents a model where CAFF through SPEDI in collaboration with six other FNU colleges and centres can develop appropriate innovations and facilitate sustainable development by reaching out to the vast Fijian communities through a climate smart model village (CSMV) concept. The CSMV, will in fact be a living training laboratory out in the field where, our staff, students, and farmers will identify real practical issues affecting the community and do research to find possible solutions and to apply findings to improve the livelihoods and living standard of the people. To do that the South Pacific Extension and Development Institute (SPEDI) as a catalyse to facilitate the developmental processes and link the University to the rural communities and other stakeholders within and the Pacific. SPEDI will package and display climate smart entrepreneurial ideas and innovation that will create interest among students to be motivated to start farming, fishery, forestry or other enterprises as a business when they leave the University so become self-employed.

The concept paper presents three (3) components,

- (i) the purpose and role of the SPEDI including the entrepreneurial innovation incubation hub (EIIH) and testing the innovation in-situ model farm,
- (ii) Establishment of climate smart model village' (CSMV).
- (iii) Work plan and practical application of SPEDI and budget.



2.0 THE SOUTH PACIFIC EXTENSION AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (SPEDI)

This section of the concept paper presents the 'South Pacific Extension and Development Institute's (SPEDI)' scope, rationale, vision, mission, functions, and operational strategy.

SPEDI will have the following components.

- (i) an entrepreneurial innovation incubation hub
- (ii) in situ demonstration farm,
- (iii) applied interdisciplinary research,
- (iv) provide consultancy services,
- (v) enhance teaching, and
- (vi) reach out to communities for development through climate smart model village approach.

SPEDI accelerates the movement of innovations from labs, classrooms, farm, and clinics to an entrepreneurial innovation hub (EIH) within the institution's demo farm and eventually to a marketplace by connecting entrepreneurs (students, farmers, industries etc.) to resources. These connections provide critical benefits across the entrepreneurial ecosystem. With the SPEDI's support, businesses connect with the University especially through research, researchers (academics) connect with farming communities, industries, and funding partners. Students likely to connect with opportunities for growth. Farmers connect with improving their productivity and livelihoods through the proposed climate smart village model concept (see Section 4.0).

2.1 Why SPEDI?

CAFF has been seen as merely an agriculture, fisheries, and forestry teaching college of the university, with some research but less or few real-time connections with the community and stakeholders at large, when one of the key functions of the college is to outreach and development. How can CAFF reach out to the community to impart improved innovations and training when the college does not have a mechanism in place to reach the community? The current program in place is students' industrial attachment with is a course itself for students experience and no inputs to community development. Therefore, it is high time to establish a conduit such as an extension and development arm of college to not only reach the community but develop appropriate improved innovations for both students and farmers use.

Furthermore, universities including FNU is facing the changing and increasing demands with consideration of what they are expected to achieve. Teaching and research issues are no longer enough. Thus, the third function of the University is to outreach to communities where knowledge, research findings and trainings are channelled from the university into the industrial applications to develop an entrepreneurial mindset of students and farmers. This method has been proven effective in many developed and developing countries. (P. K. Aggarwal et.al, 2018, R. Zougmore, and J. Kinyangi, 2013) . Furthermore, there has been a shift of paradigm, where the traditional universities' role has changed, and entrepreneurial universities are now needed to redirect new knowledge for economic development and connect to developments at community level, and this can be achieved by creating an entrepreneurial innovation hub and outreach activities under SPEDI.

2.2 Scope

The South Pacific Extension and Development Institute (SPEDI) will be a mechanism for FNU and CAFF staff and students to reach out to the local, regional, and global communities in terms of research, training, and development to improve livelihoods and address climate change impacts of these communities as well as enhancing our teaching, curriculum, and research aligning to FNU 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, Fiji National Development Plan 2025-2029 and MDG vision 2050.

The emphasis is to reach the communities and to work along with addressing climate change challenges and to improve their livelihoods in the space of climate-smart sustainable agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and with an entrepreneurial outlook. It creates an environment in which SPEDI can develop smart climate innovations in terms of devices, new ideas, special skills, improved practices, and abilities into entrepreneurship models. SPEDI will then package, trial, and display smart climate entrepreneurial ideas and innovations on campus as well as in model villages in selected communities. Learnings and active participation through the process and settings will create interest among students and youths to be motivated to start smart farming, fishery, or forestry as sustainable business and environmentally friendly when they leave the University, so they become self-employed and perhaps employers including youths in rural sectors. The platform will also facilitate avenues to address farmer's needs

2.3 Rationale

The University through its educational system should create a favourable environment that enables students to develop their mindset away from employee syndrome to employer attribute, whereby preparing them to improve skills and knowledge to create jobs. How can this be possible? Well, the best strategy is to establish a mechanism such as SPEDI that will facilitate the entrepreneurial innovation hub (EIH) where all researched outputs are packaged and strategized on how these innovative ideas/technologies can be translated into a potential business model. The EIH of the SPEDI will not only be used by students but it will be open to farmers, community members, schools, and industries. Through EIH the SPEDI's research outcomes will be linked with the industry and development. This relationship between these entities will provide success to the University's stakeholders, especially industries and local farmers and community members. Through the SPEDI, FNU will connect with local, provincial and national level of government and business houses, and this is one of the University's strategic goals.

The EIH will be an entity under SPEDI not only disseminating entrepreneurial ideas, but same time will generate innovations and create impacts along with other partners for the development of rural community. This will help to update the curriculum and syllabuses of CAFF, action research, and extension delivery system of the University. This aligns with FNU's strategic plan (2024-2026) which encourages climate smart communities, entrepreneurialism, externalization, and community service (apart for teaching, learning and research). The University should encourage entrepreneurialism by developing an operational and management culture that enables the University to continue as an able player in the competitive market at local, national, and global level. Thus, shifting SPEDI's operations towards entrepreneurship model may generate its own money when providing effective rural community development and services (household level) by use of the curriculum, academics, students, partner colleges and collaborators in a sustainable manner.

SPEDI will be a vehicle not only to motivate students to become employers but also to improve rural livelihood through 'climate smart village' model (see Section 4.0). Educational institutions such as FNU plays a key role to make the program sustainable, cost effective and developing entrepreneurial both at local levels and among students through pluralistic extension methods to educate people. SPEDI with its EIH approach stresses on improving the whole farming systems practiced in a holistic manner through multidisciplinary approach which will be guided by the Fiji Vanua Research Framework (Nabobo-Baba, 2006), that emphasizes the interconnectedness of culture, land, and community. This requires action research involving other sister colleges of the University in delivering development programs to communities and is the beauty of the program of SPEDI.



2.4 Vision, Mission, and Core Values,

2.4.1 Vision and Mission

VISION

To be the leading transformative hub of agricultural extension, innovation, and sustainable rural development by empowering individuals and communities in Fiji and Pacific Island Countries through knowledge, climate-smart practices, and collaborative action, where learning meets lasting change.

SPEDI envisions a Pacific where rural communities are not passive recipients of development, but active agents of change equipped with skills, innovations, and entrepreneurial confidence to build food secure, climate resilient, and economically vibrant livelihoods.

SPEDI fulfils FNU's third mandate outreach and community development by serving as CAFF and other sister college's operational arm for extension, research, and innovation. It translates academic knowledge into practical, scalable solutions that address climate change, food insecurity, and rural poverty across the Pacific.

MISSION

To advance community well-being, climate-smart sustainable agriculture, and inclusive rural development across Fiji and the Pacific Islands through applied research, capacity building, entrepreneurial innovation, and participatory outreach bridging Fiji National University with governments, industries, and rural communities to generate knowledge that transforms lives

2.4.1.1 Strategic Goals

- Promote opportunities for staff and students to engage communities through research, development, and extension programs.
- Make CAFF-FNU a technology-fostering agent by developing appropriate farming innovations with a climate-smart entrepreneurial outlook.
- Establish demonstration projects and Climate Smart Model Villages (CSMV) as living learning hubs in selected communities.
- Create an Agriculture Information System (AIS), provide consultancy services, and evaluate agricultural research and livelihoods development programs.
- Take the lead in the regional development agenda, including climate change, across Pacific Island Countries.

2.4.2 Core Values

SPEDI's work is guided by five foundational values that reflect both its academic grounding and its commitment to Pacific communities.

Excellence	Maintaining the highest standards of research rigour, innovation, professional ethics, and scholarly integrity in all programmes and activities.
Relevance	Ensuring all research, innovation, and programme activities are grounded in Pacific realities including climate change, food security, and genuine community needs.
Inclusivity	Recognising and respecting the diversity of Pacific peoples, embracing multidisciplinary approaches that integrate agriculture, fisheries, forestry, health, education, cultural traditions, gender equity (GEDSI), and livelihoods across the Pacific.
Collaboration	Fostering genuine, mutually beneficial partnerships with governments, development organisations, international bodies, research institutions, farmer associations, and rural communities.
Impact	Measuring success not only by research outputs and publications but by measurable, sustained improvements in rural livelihoods, entrepreneurial activity, and policy environments.

These values are operationalised through the Fiji Vanua Research Framework (Nabobo-Baba, 2006), which emphasises the interconnectedness of culture, land, and community guiding SPEDI to begin where the people are, through a bottom-up participatory approach.



2.5 Key Functions

SPEDI operates through the following integrated programme components, each contributing to its overarching mission of linking the university to rural communities and development stakeholders

- Build and operate the Entrepreneurial Innovation Incubation Hub (EIIH)
- Conduct applied multidisciplinary research
- Operate an in-situ demonstration farm
- Establish and manage Climate Smart Model Villages (CSMV)
- Deliver training, extension services, and capacity building
- Provide consultancy, monitoring & evaluation, and advisory services
- Foster partnerships and generating sustainable income

SPEDI operates through six integrated programme components, each contributing to its overarching mission of linking the university to rural communities and development stakeholders.

2.5.1 Entrepreneurial Innovation Incubation Hub (EIIH)

The EIIH is SPEDI's flagship on-campus facility for developing, packaging, and transferring innovations from university research into practical, commercially viable applications.

- Identify and package research outputs from CAFF and sister colleges into farm-ready innovations (devices, practices, apps, business models).
- Trial and refine innovations on the campus demonstration farm through genotype-environment (GxE) testing and farmer feedback.
- Support commercialisation pathways including patent applications and licensing.
- Operate as an open hub accessible to students, farmers, SMEs, and industries for incubation support and entrepreneurship development.

2.5.2 In-Situ Demonstration Farm

The demonstration farm serves as both a teaching and research laboratory and a small commercial enterprise, modelling best-practice climate-smart integrated farming systems.

- Trial climate-smart agricultural, fisheries, and forestry technologies under real farm conditions.
- Generate data for curriculum development, extension publications, and policy advice.
- Produce revenue through commercial enterprises to contribute to SPEDI's financial sustainability.

2.5.3 Applied Multidisciplinary Research

SPEDI conducts needs-based, community-driven research guided by the Vanua Research Framework, integrating perspectives from all FNU colleges.

- Conduct participatory baseline studies and needs analysis in target communities.
- Design and implement interdisciplinary action research projects in sustainable agriculture, fisheries, forestry, rural development, climate change, and social systems.
- Publish working papers, manuals, fact sheets, and peer-reviewed articles.
- Assess knowledge, attitude, skills, aspirational (KASA) changes and practice change among farmers and community members.
- Integrate research findings into teaching and curriculum enrichment across CAFF departments.

2.5.4 Climate Smart Model Villages (CSMV)

CSMV is SPEDI's community-level applied learning and development platform, establishing selected villages as living laboratories for climate-resilient rural transformation.

- Liaise with village chiefs, councils, and provincial offices to identify and select candidate villages.
- Conduct participatory baseline surveys and form Village Development Committees.
- Develop customised village plans covering climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy, water and sanitation, housing, health, education, digital connectivity, and entrepreneurship.
- Implement innovations developed through the EIIH in real village settings, monitoring practice change and impact.
- Scale successful models to additional villages in Fiji and across Pacific Island Countries.

2.5.5 Training, Extension, and Capacity Building

SPEDI delivers practical capacity building for farmers, students, youth, and extension officers, connecting academic knowledge to real-world development needs.

- Develop and deliver short courses, farmer field schools, and youth entrepreneurship programmes.
- Use CSMV communities and the campus farm as living laboratories for student field placements.
- Issue certificates of participation and completion.
- Provide market, credit, and agri-business management information to farmers and SMEs.
- Promote agricultural biodiversity and environmentally responsible farming practices.

2.5.6 Consultancy, Monitoring, Evaluation and Advisory Services

SPEDI positions FNU as a credible partner for government and donors in evaluating development programmes and advising policy.

- Respond to consultancy requests from government ministries, donors, and the private sector.
- Conduct project evaluations, impact assessments, and practice-change studies.
- Maintain an Agriculture Information System (AIS) for data management and knowledge storage.
- Produce annual impact reports using SPEDI's Theory of Change framework.
- Advise government on agricultural, rural development, and climate change policies.
- Evaluate the outcomes of existing and past projects including ACIAR Landcare and UNDP programmes.

2.5.7 Foster partnerships and generating sustainable income

2.5.7.1 Fostering Strategic Partnerships

- Regional and international alignment: SPEDI is strategically positioned to partner with organisations such as ACIAR, UNDP Fiji, SPC, FAO, and Pacific national governments, leveraging its dual institutional identity across FNU, Pacific Island universities, and Australian and New Zealand research networks.
- Government and donor engagement: Active engagement with the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways and other Ministries and government agents creates pathways for co-funding infrastructure and programme delivery, while positioning SPEDI as a nationally recognised extension institution.
- Academic and research collaboration: Through CAFF and other sister colleges, SPEDI can anchor joint research initiatives, supervise postgraduate candidates, and attract visiting scholars, building academic credibility that strengthens its case for competitive grants.
- Conference and network diplomacy: The Fiji International Landcare & Sustainable Agriculture Conference (8–10 July 2026) serves as a high-visibility platform to

formalise new partnerships, sign MOUs, and position SPEDI as the convening institution for Pacific extension dialogue

2.5.7.2 Generating Sustainable Income

- Grant and project funding (first five years): During the critical establishment phase, SPEDI's primary income model relies on competitive grants such as the proposed FJD 120,000 Climate-Smart Agriculture programme, donor-funded projects, and government appropriations providing the operational runway before partial self-sustainability.
- Consultancy and professional services: SPEDI can generate income through commissioned projects and consultancies for government agencies, extractive industry proponents, and development partners across the Pacific drawing directly on the team's demonstrated expertise.
- Training, workshops, and capacity development: Fee-for-service short courses, extension training programmes, and professional development workshops for agricultural practitioners, NGOs, and government extension officers represent a scalable and recurring revenue stream.
- Publication and knowledge products: Working papers, policy briefs, and applied research outputs co-branded with SPEDI can attract institutional subscriptions or be leveraged as deliverables within funded projects, adding value without significant marginal cost.



2.6 Key development Strategy of SPEDI

The functions of SPEDI mentioned above will be achieved through the following strategy.

- Establishing an appropriate innovation incubation hub (EIIH) with entrepreneurial outlook in CAFF Campus
- Develop appropriate innovations/technologies with entrepreneurial outlook for farming and livelihood improvement
- Trial innovations of climate smart & economic viable demonstration farm on campus and analyse the outputs.
- Refine the innovations and package for field tests in various geographical settings.
- Establish climate smart model villages (CSMV) to scale out and as a learning hub in selected villages along with smart integrated farming system.
- Carry out baseline studies and need analysis in the selected villages.
- Based on the output of the study, build a resource center and establish a model farm to trial out the innovations at rural settings based on community needs.
- Multidisciplinary need-based action research with development approach, training, and facilitate development at community setting to improve their farming systems and livelihoods.
- Continuous implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities and programs, including the assessment of practice change, and impact of projects.
- Create a database (Agriculture Information System - AIS), carry out applied research, provide advisory and consultancy services
- Report to FNU management and funding agents and advise government for policy matters and interventions.
- Strengthening Partnership & Collaboration
- Learnings will be inputs in improving college curriculum through teaching, research and extension.
- Scale up and out to other Pacific Island Countries

Our research and development process will be guided by the Fiji Vanua Research Framework (Nabobo-Baba, 2006), which emphasizes the interconnectedness of culture, land, and community, which requires action research through multidisciplinary approaches. We will start where the people are through a bottom-up participatory approach. Figure 1 illustrated the process of the how SPEDI will search and reposit researched based knowledge and package into useful innovation that will be disseminated to the end users and assess knowledge, attitude, skills, aspirational (KASA) and practise change of the users (farmers)



2.7 Management Structure and Governance.

The purpose of having a good management structure and governance is to help build an environment of trust, transparency, and accountability necessary for fostering long-term goals and expected outcomes in the operation of SPEDI. SPEDI is not a stand-alone entity but integral institute of FNU therefore, will not have separate Board Members except the Operational team who reports to FNU Research Office through Dean CAFF and an Advisory Committee Members from stakeholders (Local & External)

2.7.1 Advisory Board Representatives

The Advisory Board representatives will be from the Ministry of Agriculture, Waterways & Sugar; Ministry of Fisheries & Forestry; Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning & Statistics; SPC; USP; industry; farmer associations; communities; international partners.

2.7.2 SPEDI Operational Team

SPEDI operational team is the action team as follows.

- Director (full-time or faculty extra-duty allowance) – overall leadership and reporting
- Research Officer x 1
- Data Analytics Specialist
- Rural Technical Officer x 1
- CAFF-Heads of Department (Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Livestock, Agribusiness & Extension) and Farm Superintendent)
- Representative from CETVET, CMNHS, NTPC, CBHTS, CHEL, and PCMS
- Executive/Admin Officer x 1
- Support Staff

Staff needed in 2026 are the Director and a Research Officer/Coordinator in the planning phase of the institute with assistant from key operational team members. The SPEDI Director reports to FNU Research Officer (PVCR&I) through the Dean-CAFF Office.

Meeting cadence are as follows'

- SPEDI Operational Team: monthly
- Advisory Board: bi-annual

2.7.3 Management Structure

From the initial phase of the operational structure, SPEDI requires a Director, Coordinators, Administrative Officer, and Researchers from FNU colleges (need based) and after 1-2 years will require Data Analytics Specialist to work closely with the research team. As the SPEDI activities increase, additional permanent staff will be recruited in critical areas based on needs.

SPEDI, will collaborate the College of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry (CAFF), Colleges of Engineering and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CETVET), College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS), College of Business, Hospitality & Tourism Studies (CBHTS), College of Humanity, Education and Law (CHEL), National Training & Productivity Centre (NTPC), and Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS). These are other sister colleges and centers so a representative from each college will be in the operational team of SPEDI as in Figure 2 below.

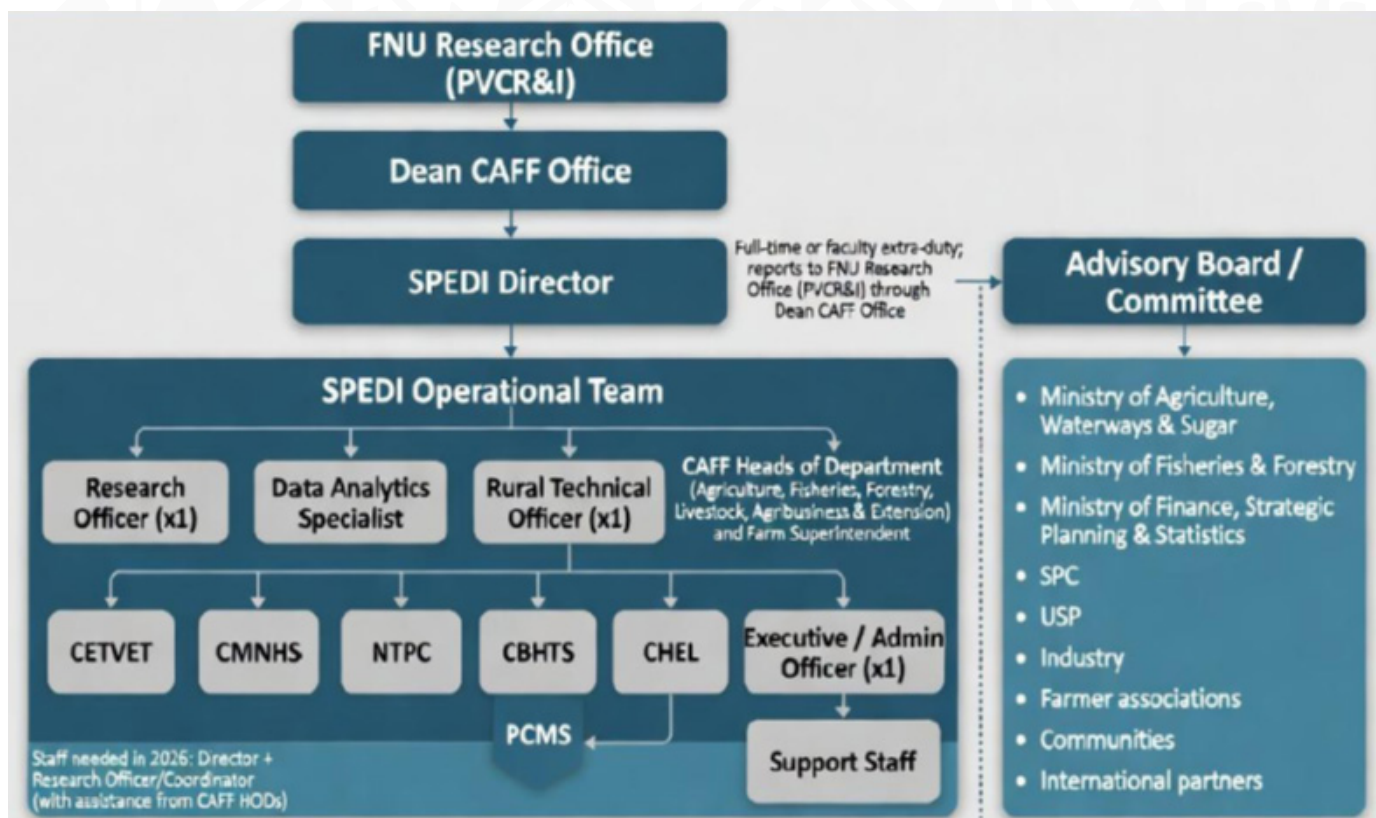


Figure 1 Management Structure of SPEDI

2.7.4 Staff Roles and Responsibilities

The following salary estimates are benchmarked against FNU professional staff salary bands and comparable university-based institute roles in Fiji and the Pacific. All figures include a 22% employment on cost (10% superannuation + 12% staff allowances/FNPF/leave loading).

Position	Start	Key Responsibilities
Director	Year 1 (2026)	Strategic leadership, stakeholder engagement, reporting to PVCR&I through Dean CAFF, governance oversight, external fundraising
Research Officer	Year 1 (2026)	Coordinate applied research projects, EIH activities, demo farm trials, curriculum links, and grant writing
Data Analysis Specialist	Year 2 (2027)	Manage AIS database, KASA data analysis, M&E reporting, impact assessments, and knowledge management
Rural Development Officer	Year 2 (2027)	Lead community engagement, CSMV implementation, participatory baselines, village-level field operations, and extension training
Admin Officer	Year 1 (2026)	Financial management, procurement, HR coordination, records management, governance secretariat, and office administration
Support Staff (x2)	Year 1 (2026)	Field support, logistics, farm maintenance, driver/messenger duties, reception, and general support functions
Rep from each college	Year 1 (2026)	Involve in innovation development, research, grant proposal writing, projects

2.8 Partnership and Collaboration Framework

The framework demonstrates that SPEDI acts as the bridge between FNU's academic expertise and external stakeholders, creating a collaborative ecosystem that transforms knowledge into practical solutions for agriculture, fisheries, forestry, climate resilience, livelihoods, community wellbeing, and sustainable development throughout Fiji and the Pacific region. Through these partnerships, SPEDI can effectively connect research, innovation, extension, capacity building, policy engagement, and community impact to achieve long-term sustainable development outcomes.



Figure 2. Framework indicating the collaboration from partners in developing SPEDI

2.8.1 FNU, Government, and Industries Partnership and Collaboration Strategy

Partnership and collaboration have the power to spark innovation in such an academic community because every discipline in various colleges would bring a unique set of knowledge, ideals, and skills to the table. Working together and embracing these differences gives birth to new ideas through the blending of unique viewpoints. Although many institutions recognize the importance of collaboration, however it is not emphasized therefore, the idea of developing innovation incubation hub will connect all FNU colleges to collaborate in developing appropriate need-based innovation to be used to improve farming, fishery, and forestry production, as well as the livelihoods of the rural communities. Therefore, Table 1, presents a matrix of FNU colleges and external partners collaborating within and with other stakeholders in developing innovation incubation hub and climate smart model village (CSMV) (see section 3).

Table 1 . Matrix of FNU colleges, Government, and industries contribution towards developing SPEDI and a climate smart model village (CSMV)

FNU College/Centre	Innovations to Develop	Climate-Smart Livelihood Benefits
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF)	I. Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased food security and crop diversity Adoption of climate-resilient crop varieties Improved income through sustainable agroforestry
	II. Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon sequestration income via REDD+ Sustainable timber and NTFPs for household income Restored watersheds supporting community water supply
	III. Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved nutrition and protein security from aquaculture Reduced coastal erosion protecting farmland Supplementary income from fingerling distribution

Engineering & Technical Vocational Education & Training (CETVET) i. Architecture & Building ii. Civil Engineering iii. Mechanical Engineering iv. Electrical Engineering v. Computer Science vi. Applied Sciences (Food Tech)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and develop appropriate, durable, and affordable housing using local available resources. The house will contain a basic kitchen, bathroom, toilet, living room, bedrooms and veranda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilient, climate-adapted affordable housing Reduced vulnerability to extreme weather events Lower construction costs using local materials
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village water supply Mini hydro (villages near rivers) Weather station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable clean water supply for households and farms Off-grid renewable energy (mini-hydro) reducing costs Weather data supporting climate-smart farm decisions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate small scale farming devices and machines Appropriate post-harvest small scale machines Appropriate food processing machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced labour burden through appropriate mechanisation Minimised post-harvest losses increasing farm income Improved food processing boosting value-added products
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricity supply and installation Communication devices and installation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable and reliable electricity for rural households Improved communication access for market information Reduced energy costs enhancing livelihood resilience
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop e-agriculture apps Create websites for market excess Developing climate change and weather pattern apps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital market access expanding income opportunities Real-time climate and weather alerts for farmers E-extension services reducing costs of farm advisory
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop food processing and preservation methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended shelf life reducing post-harvest losses Value-added products generating supplementary income Improved nutrition through diversified food preservation
Business Hospitality & Tourist Studies (CBHTS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and facilitate financial literacy programs Tourism models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial literacy strengthening household economic resilience Community-based tourism generating diversified income Reduced financial vulnerability to climate shocks

Humanities Education & Law (CHEL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education • Support village schools and teachers • Legal aid services and awareness for community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowered communities through adult literacy for climate action • Strengthened local governance and legal rights over land • Improved school retention supporting long-term livelihood
Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (CMNHS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart village clinics/Aid Posts • Provide health education and awareness including communicable diseases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced healthcare costs through preventive health education • Climate-resilient village health services • Healthier workforce sustaining agricultural productivity
National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General appropriate technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate technologies increasing farm productivity • Reduced input costs through locally adapted tools • Technology transfer supporting sustainable livelihoods
Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable fishing technologies, GPS systems, coastal monitoring • introduce low-cost fibreglass and traditional canoe building methods • Simple Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) made from local materials extend fishing range without fuel-heavy offshore vessels. • Coastal early-warning systems using basic sensors and community radio networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable marine livelihoods restore community fishing and inter-island transport capacity • These maritime technologies are among the most impactful and underleveraged contributions any Pacific institution can make. • Give communities the lead time to protect lives and assets before cyclones and storm surges

Other Organizations	Services Required	Policy and budget support, infrastructure investment, and M&E framework
Fiji Government Departments (Finance & Planning, Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Education, Community Development, Commerce & Industry, Provincial & Local Govt, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding through projects • Partnership • Infrastructure Development • Partnering in Monitoring & Evaluation 	Policy and budget support for climate adaptation programmes
Agriculture Organizations (Agriculture Industries and agencies; Fiji Sugar, Cooperatives, Fiji Dairy, Commodity Boards, etc..)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide extension services • Provide improved breeds of plants and animal seeds • Assist in marketing • Collaborative research • Sponsor/co-funding • Projects and Logistic support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint research generating evidence-based CSA practices • Innovation partnerships expanding community technology access • Capacity building strengthening Pacific climate adaptation
University of South Pacific (USP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint research on climate change • Partner in innovation development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart internet enabling digital market and climate information access • Connectivity supporting e-extension and climate advisory services
Digicel Fiji and Vodafone Fiji	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide smart internet accessibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliable on/off-grid electricity enabling productive rural livelihoods • Reduced energy costs freeing household resources for food security
Energy Fiji Limited (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply smart power (electricity) on & off grid where possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit schemes enabling investment in climate-smart farming inputs • SME development opportunities from CSA value chains • Regional collaboration scaling climate adaptation outcomes

Other Government Agencies (SPC, RDB, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint research, and Climate change adaptation • SME, Credit schemes • Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor-funded CSA projects building long-term community resilience • Technology transfer expanding climate-smart livelihood options • Consultancy and research strengthening Pacific food systems
International collaborators & Partners (ACIAR, AusAID, ACPIR, FAO, UN etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor Funding • Joint research and technology • Consultancy • Projects 	

CAFF through SPEDI can partner and collaborate with the above organizations to effectively develop appropriate innovations that are essentially needed by the vast rural communities to improve their livelihood income in a climate conscious sustainable manner. This can be facilitated through our climate smart model villages.



2.8.2 Strategic Alignment and Partnership Outlook

SPEDI will be a mechanism to coordinate not only FNU's community projects and programs, but also the Governments funded projects including monitoring and evaluation of activities and programs, practice change and impact. It is high time, where FNU through SPEDI to become one of the key partners with Fiji Government to accommodate the strategic changes. Most Government and its donor funded projects do not include post-evaluation on how research findings are communicated to end users, nor assess the adoption of research innovations (outputs) and practice change of farmers/people/ clients, or even on wider impact on agricultural systems and farmers livelihoods. Hence, partnering with Fiji Government, FNU through SPEDI can become a change agent in monitoring and evaluating the adoption of research findings of Government and donor funded projects in Fiji and the South Pacific Island countries (PIC).

The undertaking of SPEDI's goals and expected outputs aligns with the FNU strategic plan (2024-2026), CAFF Strategic & Operational Plan (2024-2026), Fiji Government National Development Plan 2025- 2029, and the UN Millennium Development Goals-Vision 2050. Through SPEDI, CAFF will be a key player in actively implementing the FNU and CAFF Strategic Plan (SP) (2024-2026) and beyond by promoting and enhancing the five (5) key priority areas (KPA).

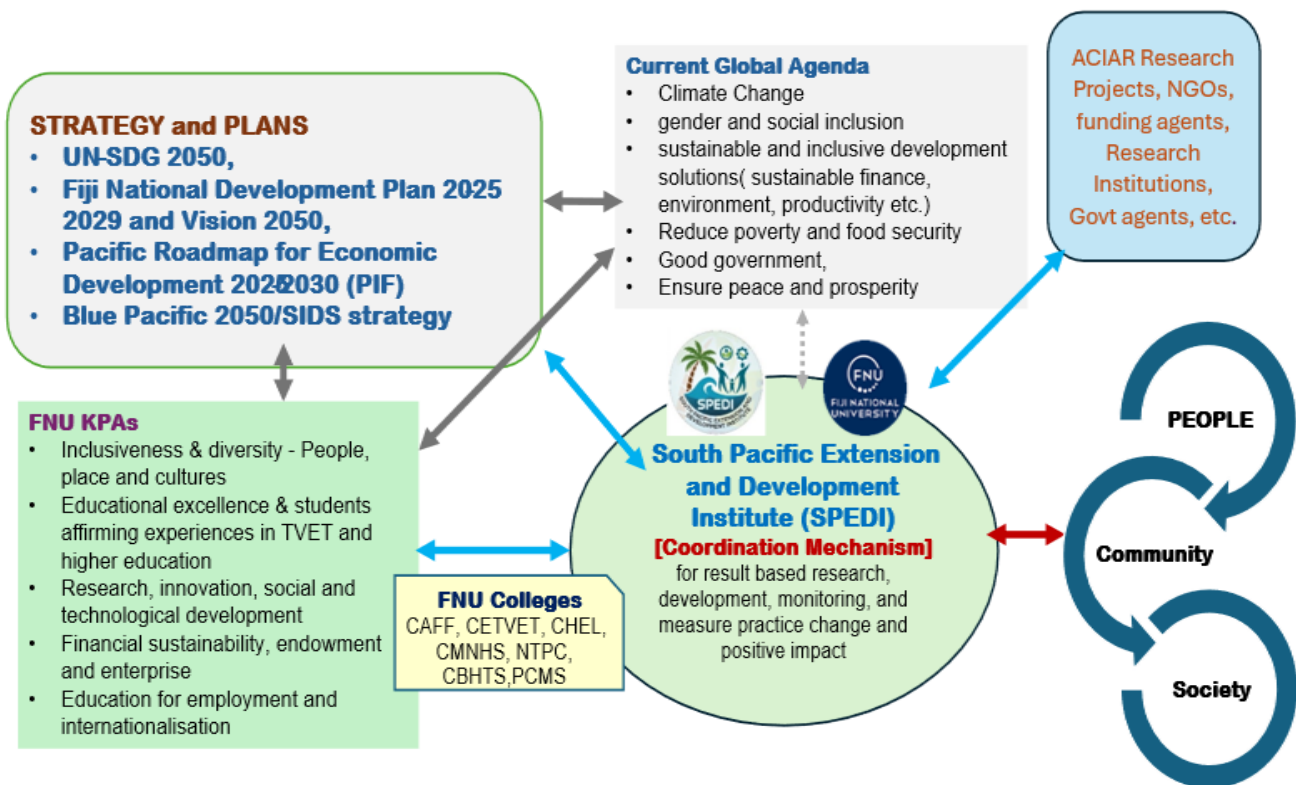


Figure 3 Aligning Fiji National Development Plan 2025-2029 and FNU Strategic Plan 2024-2026 to SPEDI's activities

2.9 Comparisons of Similar University Institutes in the Pacific

To contextualize SPEDI's application, we compared it to existing institutes focused on agricultural extension and development. These provide models for success, such as interdisciplinary collaboration and community impact. Below is a table summarizing key examples:

Table 2 Comparison table of similar University Institutes.

Institute Name	Host University/ Institution	Focus Areas	Key Applications/ Outcomes	Relevance to SPEDI
Centre for Agriculture, Research and Extension (CARE)	University of the South Pacific (USP)	Agricultural research, extension, training in sustainable practices	Community outreach programs, farmer training, biosecurity enhancements; collaborates with regional partners like SPC for climate-resilient crops.	Direct model for SPEDI's extension arm; USP's regional scope could inspire PIC scaling, but SPEDI adds entrepreneurial hub focus.
South Pacific Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SPISARD)	Papua New Guinea University of Technology (PNGUOT)	Sustainable agriculture, extension methods, technology transfer	Tailored training for rural developments promotes sustainable practices; impacts PNG communities via innovation hubs.	Similar to SPEDI's training and development but SPEDI adds entrepreneurial hub focus (EIH) and CSMV.
agInnovation Research Center (Land Grant)	University of Guam (UOG)	Agricultural systems improvement, extension, research	Community demos, aquaculture breeding, pest management; funded by USDA for Pacific resilience.	Applies land-grant model; SPEDI could adopt UOG's grant-seeking strategies for self-sustainability.

These institutes demonstrate successful application through government partnerships (e.g., IRETA with PIC ministries) and funding from donors like ACIAR/USDA/ACIAR. SPEDI could differentiate by emphasizing climate-smart entrepreneurship, potentially partnering with USP to avoid duplication.

3.0 CLIMATE SMART MODEL VILLAGE (CSMV)

SPEDI will act as a vehicle to link CAFF and FNU with rural communities, and relevant stakeholders to develop and improve sustainable farming systems using appropriate innovation developed at the innovation hub. One or two villages will be selected and advocate best farming practices including climate resilient strategies. through climate smart model village (CSMV) approach. The approach to facilitate CSMV developments is through multidisciplinary approach through participatory methods, that will be guided by the Fiji Vanua Research Framework (Nabobo-Baba, 2006), which emphasizes the interconnectedness of culture, land, and community, which requires action research. We will start where the people are through a bottom-up approach.

3.1 What is Climate Smart Model Village (CSMV)?

Smart village is relatively an emerging concept that refers to rural areas and communities which build on their existing strengths and assets as well as on developing new opportunities. Climate smart village concept was developed by Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. (CGIAR) under one of their program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) (CCAFS, 2021) across West Africa, East Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and Southeast Asia but probably a new concept in the Pacific.

Climate smart village is often located in a rural area that develop smart solutions to deal with climate change and challenges in their local context. They build on existing local strengths and opportunities to engage in a process of sustainable development of their community. They rely on a participatory approach to develop and implement their strategies to improve their economic, social, and environmental conditions, by promoting innovation including digital technologies, and climate change resilient strategies.

3.2 Purpose and expected outcomes

SPEDI scaling out to village setting aims to undertake action research as to extract evidence at rural community scales of what climate-smart agricultural options work best, and further to advocate climate change resilient projects by developing community-based climate smart agriculture. The output of the activities of CSMV can be used as evidence to draw out lessons for policy makers, agricultural development practitioners, and investors from local to global levels.

Furthermore, our approach not only stresses on climate change resilient activities but also to understand the farming communities and improve the productivity of the farming systems in a sustainable way to increase income, improve nutrition and food security as well as livelihood enhancement trainings. The participation by both staff and students of CAFF will surely enrich the Department's curriculum through teaching, research, extension and getting inputs from farming community.

3.3 Conceptual Framework for CSMV

The proposed conceptual framework embraces four (4) key pillars; (i) entrepreneurial activities through smart agriculture, (ii) accessible to basic services and enabling agents, quality health and products, (iii) quality education and capacity building, and (iv) climate smart agriculture practices and technologies with the aim to transform rural villages into prosperous, dignified communities.

The SPEDI climate smart model village (CSMV) activities and program will link directly with the local level government and further align with national level government policies in Fiji and regional bodies to advocate climate smart resilient living and improve general standard of living.

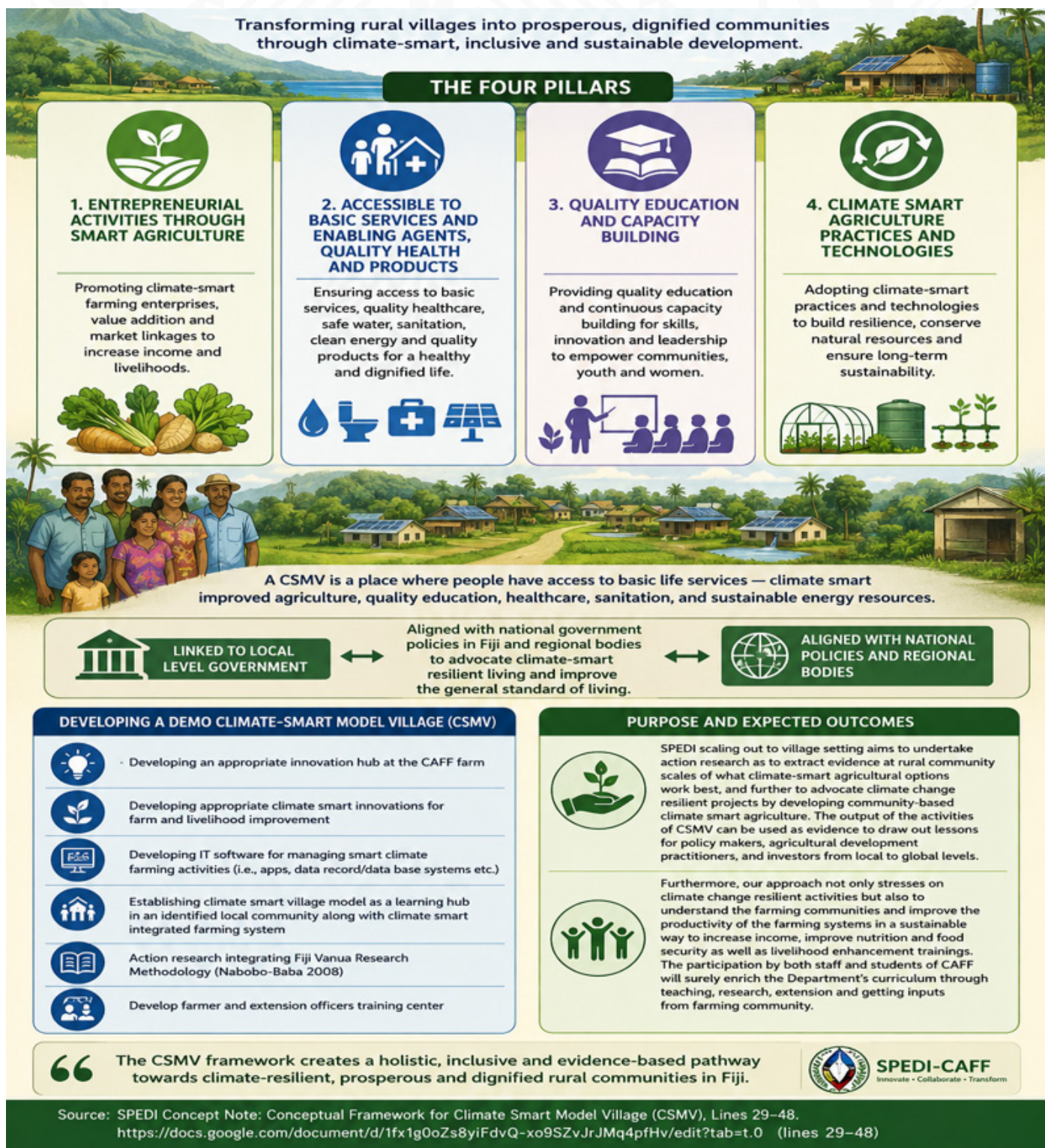


Figure 4 Enabling pillars to transform a conventional local rural village into a climate resilient smart village (Source: Author)

A CSMV is a place where people have access to basic life services — climate smart improved agriculture, quality education, healthcare, sanitation, and sustainable energy resources. Understand the effectiveness of a variety of CSMV options (practices, technologies, services, programs, and policies) not only to enhance productivity and raise incomes, but also to build climate resilience, increase adaptive capacity, and wherever possible, reduce GHG emissions.

3.4 Developing a demo climate smart model village (CSMV) at a selected village

CAFF through SPEDI will be the conduit as to liaise with local chiefs, council, government, and village leaders to identify certain villages to work with. As outlined in Table 1 above, it is envisaged that technical experts in the sister departments of CAFF and colleges of the University and collaborators will develop various appropriate innovations and devices that will improve the livelihood of the rural populace by.

- Developing an appropriate innovation hub at the CAFF farm
- Developing appropriate climate smart innovations for farm and livelihood improvement
- Developing IT software for managing smart climate farming activities (i.e., apps, data record/data base systems etc.)
- Establishing climate smart village model as a learning hub in an identified local community along with climate smart integrated farming system,
- Action research integrating Fiji Vanua Research Methodology (Nabobo-Baba 2008) and
- Develop farmer and extension officers training center

CAFF will partner and collaborate with sister colleges and relevant agriculture organization, government, and business houses to develop the entrepreneurial innovation hub of the SPEDI and climate smart village model either at the CAFF campus or a selected village.



4. PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE SPEDI MISSION

The SPEDI core application lies in transforming theoretical university functions (teaching, research) into actionable outreach for sustainable development. Here's how it will be applied in four phases, building on the SPEDI core functions and best practices:

Transforming theory into actionable sustainable development in Fiji and Pacific Island Countries



Figure 5 Four strategic phase of workplan 2026 – 2030 and beyond.

Phase 1: SPEDI Governance Structure and Facilities Setup (Immediately- Feb-July 2026)

- Recruitment: There are seed funds to recruit a Coordinator position. HR to advertise the position.
- Blueprint: Refine SPEDI concept document and standard operational procedures (SOP)
- Governance: All Committee Members and Advisory Board Members will be nominated and notified by April 2026.
- Infrastructure set up: Acquire office space for SPEDI, develop logo for SPEDI, and set up a web page,
- Launching of SPEDI: proposed to officially launch SPEDI during the Landcare International Conference on 8th July 2026.

Phase 2: Internal Setup and Pilot (Short-Term Application, 2026-2027)

- EIH and On-Campus Demos: Apply innovations developed in CAFF (e.g., climate-smart farming tech, integrated farming system.) through EIH as a testing ground. For instance, integrate student-led projects into trial apps for farm management (with sister college collaboration), aligning with SPEDI's vision and mission for knowledge-to-action pathways.
- Curriculum Integration: Embed SPEDI activities into CAFF courses, e.g., mandatory field placements in demo farms to enhance "Educational Excellence" (Priority Area 2 in FNU's SP). This applies to SPEDI's emphasis on entrepreneurial mindsets, potentially reducing graduate unemployment by 10-20% through self-employment training (based on similar Pacific programs).
- Governance Application: Operationalize the board structure with quarterly meetings to oversee pilots, ensuring inclusivity.

Phase 3: Community Outreach via CSMV (Medium-Term, 2027-2029)

- Village-Level Implementation: Select 1-3 villages using participatory baselines. Impart innovations like integrated climate smart farming systems (CAFF), mini-hydro (CETVET) or food processing (Applied Sciences) to create resilient, income-generating models. Expected outcomes: Improved livelihoods for project site households, reduced climate vulnerability (e.g., via REDD+ programs), and data for impact assessments.
- Multidisciplinary Collaboration: Leverage Table 1 partnerships, e.g., with MOA&W for extension services, to apply holistic improvements (community health via CMNHS, financial literacy via CBHTS, solar/mini hydro by CETEVT/ Agri, forestry, fishery (CAFF) etc.).
- Monitoring and Scaling: Use SPEDI proposed database (AIS) to track KASA changes and impacts, feeding back into FNU and CAFF research. This applies the SPEDI's regional ambition by expanding to other PICs.

Phase 4: Sustainability and Regional Impact (Long-Term, 2030+)

- Generate revenue through consultancies work (e.g., evaluating government projects) and patents, aiming for 50% self-funding by Year 5 (expanding SPEDI 5-year budget in Section 4.2.2).
- Align with UNSDGs (e.g., SDG 2: Zero Hunger; SDG 13: Climate Action) for global visibility, potentially attracting international students or joint programs.

4.1 Funding Opportunities for SPEDI's Application

The SPEDI identifies funders like Fiji Government, ACIAR, DFAT, EU, and FAO. Based on current (2026) opportunities, here's how to apply them to launch/scale SPEDI. Prioritize those aligning with climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and extension.

4.1.1 Domestic/Regional Funding:

- Fiji Rice Limited Planting Grants (2025/2026 Season): Up to FJD support for rice farmers; apply via forms from MOA. SPEDI could use for CSMV pilots in rice areas.
- Climate Smart Agriculture Guarantee (CFAN): \$1M for resilient ag projects; focuses on women/minorities. Submit full proposals for review; eligible for FNU-led initiatives.
- Fiji National Climate Finance Strategy (NCFS): Outlines FJD 1.25M+ annual needs for CSA; apply via MOE's CCICD pipeline for policy-aligned projects like SPEDI's REDD+.
- The Pacific Action on Climate Transitions (PACT) is a collaborative, multi-million-dollar research initiative between Fiji National University (FNU) and Monash University (Australia), launched in 2023. SPEDI can lodge a proposal in 2026 trench of payment.

4.1.2 International Grants:

- **CIF Nature, People, and Climate (NPC) Program:** \$27M endorsed for Fiji (2025); supports nature-based resilience, including Indigenous-led solutions via \$4M DGM grants. Apply through CIF channels; ideal for CSMV expansion.
- **IFAD Blue Economy and Green Community Development (First Phase):** \$24.26M (2025 approval); includes \$5.3M IFAD loan + \$8.23M GEF grant for sustainable ag and climate adaptation. Eligible for Fiji govt/universities; apply via MOA for community resilience components.
- **New Zealand Aid (MFAT):** \$338k for Climate Smart Pacific Food System (via MOA collaboration); plus \$4.3M for Fiji's CSA resilience (2025). Apply through partnerships; focuses on women-led businesses.
- **Canadian Aid (Global Affairs):** \$7.85M for Pacific Women Entrepreneurs as Island Guardians (5 years, 2026); targets nature-based businesses in Fiji/Samoa/Tuvalu. Partner with Alinea International; aligns with SPEDI's gender focus.
- **JICA:** Recent 2024-2026 funding includes a JPY 5 billion (FJD 75 million) disaster standby loan, an FJD 12.5 million waste management grant, and an FJD 4.6 million health sector boost.

- **ACIAR Programs:** PASS scholarships for ag/climate studies; ARSF for alumni research; partnership research projects; Apply via ACIAR portal; no specific deadlines listed, but ongoing for Pacific.

Application Tips: Tailor proposals to emphasize SPEDI's alignment with NDP/UNSDGs. Start with seed funding (FNU Capex and PACT) and leverage partnerships (e.g., USP for joint bids). Track via annual reports to build credibility for larger grants.



4.2 Budget

The South Pacific Extension and Development Institute (SPEDI) is a newly established university-based institute within the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) at Fiji National University (FNU). SPEDI's mandate is to bridge academia, government agencies, and rural communities through agricultural extension, climate-smart innovation, applied research, and community development. SPEDI is envisioned as a transformative hub empowering individuals and communities through innovative education, climate-smart sustainable practices, and collaborative research and development fostering economic growth, social equity, and environmental stewardship where knowledge meets action in Fiji and the Pacific Island Countries (PICs).

This proposal sets out a phased implementation framework across four strategic phases from February 2026 through 2031 and beyond, together with a comprehensive five-year budget covering staffing costs, operational expenditures, and projected revenue from 2026 to 2031.

4.2.1 Five-Year Staffing Cost Summary

The following salary estimates are benchmarked against FNU professional staff salary bands and comparable university-based institute roles in Fiji and the Pacific. All figures include 22% employment on cost (10% superannuation + 12% staff allowances/FNPF/leave loading).

Table 3 Capital and Operational Budget

Staff Position	Year 1 2026	Year 2 2027	Year 3 2028	Year 4 2029	Year 5 2030	5-Year Total
Director	103,700	103,700	103,700	103,700	103,700	518,500
Research Officer	70,760	70,760	70,760	70,760	70,760	353,800
Data Analysis Specialist	—	63,440	63,440	63,440	63,440	253,760
Rural Development Officer	—	58,560	58,560	58,560	58,560	234,240
Admin Officer	46,360	46,360	46,360	46,360	46,360	231,800
Support Staff (2 persons)	51,240	51,240	51,240	51,240	51,240	256,200
TOTAL STAFF COST (incl. oncosts)	272,060	394,060	394,060	394,060	394,060	1,848,300

Note: In 2026 (Year 1), seed funding from FNU covers the Director and an initial Research/Coordinator role. The Director and Admin Officer should be advertised and recruited as a priority by the FNU HR Office. The Data Analysis Specialist and Rural Development Officer join the team in Year 2 (2027) once pilot activities and community programs are underway.

4.2.2 Five-Year Operational Budget

Operational Item	Year 1 2026	Year 2 2027	Year 3 2028	Year 4 2029	Year 5 2030	5-Year Total
Office Rent & Utilities	18,000	18,000	18,000	20,000	20,000	94,000
Office Furniture & Equipment (setup)	22,000	5,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	33,000
IT Equipment & Software	15,000	8,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	38,000
Website & Digital Platforms	8,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	20,000
Vehicle / Field Transport	12,000	12,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	69,000
Demo Farm Operations	20,000	25,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	135,000
CSMV Village Outreach Programs		100,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	705,000
Research & Publications	8,000	10,000	15,000	20,000	30,000	83,000
Training & Capacity Building	5,000	10,000	15,000	20,000	20,000	70,000

Operational Item	Year 1 2026	Year 2 2027	Year 3 2028	Year 4 2029	Year 5 2030	5-Year Total
Community Engagement & Workshops	5,000	10,000	20,000	30,000	30,000	95,000
Monitoring & Evaluation (AIS System)	5,000	8,000	20,000	25,000	30,000	88,000
Governance (Board Meetings etc.)	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	30,000
Launching & Publicity Events	15,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	27,000
Partnership & Networking Travel	8,000	8,000	10,000	12,000	15,000	53,000
Contingency (10% of Ops)	14,700	13,900	27,200	50,600	52,400	185,800
TOTAL OPERATIONAL COST	161,700	139,700	182,600	207,900	222,200	1,746,800

4.2.3 Consolidated Five-Year Budget Summary

Budget Category	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Staff Costs (incl. oncosts)	FJD 272,060	FJD 394,060	FJD 394,060	FJD 394,060	FJD 394,060
Operational Costs (incl. contingency)	FJD 161,700	FJD 139,700	FJD 182,600	FJD 207,900	FJD 222,200
ANNUAL TOTAL (FJD)	FJD 433,760	FJD 533,760	FJD 576,660	FJD 601,960	FJD 616,260

Summary Line	5-Year Total (FJD)	2027	
Total Staff Costs (incl. 22% oncosts)	FJD 1,848,300	FJD 394,060	
Total Operational Costs (incl. 10% contingency)	FJD 914,100	FJD 139,700	
FIVE-YEAR GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURE	FJD 2,762,400	FJD 533,760	
Average Annual Cost	FJD 552,480		

4.2.4 Budget by Phase

Phase	Period	Indicative Cost (FJD)	Key Cost Drivers
Phase 1 – Governance & Setup	Year 1 (2026)	FJD 433,760	Office setup, governance launch, website, demo farm initiation, Director + Admin staff
Phase 2 – Internal Setup & Pilot	Years 1–3 (2026–2028)	FJD 1,544,180	Full team ramp-up, EIH/demo farm ops, curriculum integration, governance, IT systems
Phase 3 – Community Outreach CSMV	Years 3–5 (2028–2030)	FJD 1,794,880	Village outreach (3 CSMVs), M&E, multidisciplinary programs, community engagement
Phase 4 – Sustainability & Regional	Year 5+ (2031+)	FJD 616,260	Ongoing ops, consultancy revenue generation, regional expansion, publications & patents
TOTAL		FJD 4,389,080	

4.3 Risk Register and Mitigation Strategies

A Risk Register is an important management tool that helps the South Pacific Extension and Development Institute (SPEDI) identify, assess, monitor, and manage potential risks that may affect its programmes, projects, and operations. It provides a structured approach to recording risks, evaluating their likelihood and impact, assigning responsibilities, and implementing appropriate mitigation measures.

The Risk Register and Mitigation Strategies enable SPEDI to proactively address challenges related to funding, stakeholder engagement, project implementation, climate impacts, operational capacity, and compliance requirements. By regularly reviewing and updating risks and mitigation actions, SPEDI can strengthen institutional resilience, improve decision-making, and enhance the successful delivery of its extension, research, innovation, and community development initiatives across Fiji and the Pacific region.

Table 4 Risk Register

Risk	Description	Likelihood	Mitigation
Funding dependency	Delayed or insufficient funding from FNU or government	High	Diversify funding (donors, consultancy, grants); build multi-year donor pipeline; submit ADB/FAO proposals by Q3 2026
Community buy-in	Lack of community participation in CSMV programs	Medium	Apply Vanua-guided participatory approach; engage community leaders, iTaukei Land Trust, and provincial government from baseline stage
Staff retention	Difficulty retaining qualified staff in competitive Pacific market	Medium	Competitive FNU salary packages; professional development opportunities; clear career pathway within SPEDI and FNU
Scalability in remote PICs	Logistical and resource challenges in island-state replication	Medium	Start with Fiji-based pilots; document lessons learned rigorously; leverage SPC and existing in-country networks
Climate events	Cyclones or extreme weather disrupting field operations and farm trials	High	Build climate resilience into farm design (SOP); maintain contingency budget (10%); diversify CSMV locations
Governance delays	Slow establishment of Advisory Board; FNU bureaucratic processes	Low	Proactive engagement with FNU PVCR&I and Dean CAFF from Feb 2026; clear governance timeline in Phase 1 SOP

5. SUMMARY

The South Pacific Extension and Development Institute (SPEDI) is a newly established institute within the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) at Fiji National University (FNU). First proposed to FNU's Senior Leadership Team in 2023 and formally approved in August 2025, SPEDI was officially launched on 8 July 2026. This concept paper serves as the foundational blueprint for its establishment and operations. SPEDI was created to fulfil FNU's third core mandate community outreach and development which had been largely underserved. Its overarching purpose is to bridge academia, government, industry, and rural communities through applied research, entrepreneurial innovation, climate-smart agriculture, and extension services across Fiji and the broader Pacific.

The institute operates through six integrated programme components: an Entrepreneurial Innovation Incubation Hub (EIIH), an in-situ demonstration farm, applied multidisciplinary research, Climate Smart Model Villages (CSMV), training and capacity building, and consultancy and advisory services. The CSMV concept adapted from the CGIAR framework is SPEDI's flagship community-level initiative, transforming selected rural villages into living laboratories for climate-resilient development. SPEDI's approach is guided by the Fiji Vanua Research Framework, emphasizing a bottom-up, participatory, and culturally grounded methodology. It aligns strategically with Fiji's National Development Plan 2025–2029, FNU's Strategic Plan 2024–2026, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Implementation is planned across four phases from 2026 through 2031 and beyond, with a consolidated five-year budget of approximately FJD 2.76 million, covering staffing and operational costs. Funding will be sourced from FNU seed funds, competitive grants, government appropriations, and international donors including ACIAR, DFAT, FAO, and the EU. SPEDI represents a transformative step in positioning FNU as an active agent of rural development, entrepreneurship, and climate resilience across Fiji and the Pacific Island Countries.



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