REVITALIZING FIJI’S SMALL ISLAND BIOFUEL MILLS
WHY GREEN GROWTH?

In the pursuit of sustainable development, no one should be left behind. GGGI’s approach to green growth offers a way of reshaping the economy to build resilient communities while making better choices in how to manage and support the environment, meeting both the needs of those who may be harder to reach, and society at large.

A SHARED VISION FOR FIJI

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Fiji faces a number of development challenges including; vulnerability to external shocks, such as climate change, a high dependence on imported fossil fuels, declining land and marine biodiversity, coral reef degradation, and costly infrastructure and services in urban and rural communities.

The Government of Fiji has recognized the pivotal role that green growth plays in building a sustainable, inclusive and vibrant economy for everyone. In developing the 2014 Green Growth Framework (GGF), Fiji is aiming to lead by example, including taking a world-leading position on climate change as the first country to ratify the UN Paris Climate Agreement, and the first SIDS to undertake the role of Presidency of the UNFCCC negotiations at COP23.

GGGI has assisted Fiji in mainstreaming the GGF into the new National Development Plan, working in close partnership with the Department of Strategic Planning in the Ministry of Economy. In line with the GGF, the government is exploring opportunities to revitalize their biofuel program. By undertaking a review of the program, and, in particular, the role of small-scale biofuel mills established in nine remote islands, GGGI is helping to identify the challenges and opportunities in implementation to date, and examine ways to reinvigorate the industry. In addition to exploring the technical, economic, and social issues affecting the operations of the biofuel mills, GGGI is also investigating how new business approaches could support renewed productivity of the mills.

Recognizing the challenges of both the high cost of importing fuel and the need for energy security to support the economy, in 2005, the Government of Fiji introduced a biofuel program. As part of the national program, production of coconut-based biofuel on Fiji’s smaller islands was undertaken, through the establishment of nine biofuel mills. Despite significant investment from the government, the declining international price of diesel, and the resulting lack of market demand for biofuel, caused significant issues in the commercialization and sustainability of the mills. The local biofuel industry also suffered from inadequate logistical set up and market engagement, creating difficulties in producing and selling coconut-based biofuel. Cyclone Winston, which hit Fiji in 2016, also caused major damage to a number of mills and wiped out coconut resources on one of the islands. As a result, by 2016, the mills’ biofuel program was faltering.

To address these challenges, GGGI has undertaken an extensive review of the biofuel program, and, in particular, the nine island biofuel mills, in partnership with the Government of Fiji. Rather than simply identifying what has not worked in the past, GGGI is working to reactivate the existing projects, and explore complementary economic opportunities present within the mills.

By taking a green growth approach, GGGI is providing a pathway for new business practices and partnerships that support both the productivity of the mills and create economic opportunities to build thriving communities. While the mills were set up primarily for biofuel production, initial findings of the review suggest a clear opportunity to turn the mills from making biofuel alone, to producing and selling food: coconut oil and copra meal. This would allow the local community to engage in commercial activities including growing, harvesting and transporting coconuts, and using the copra meal to feed farm animals, thereby expanding the number of local farms. Communities may also benefit from stronger opportunities in the growing domestic and international coconut oil market. To realize these opportunities, GGGI is exploring how communities could partner with the Government of Fiji, and local copra oil producers and exporters, to run the mills, thus bringing together the right skills sets, business approach and local ownership needed for success. The aim is to create a diversified economic base to enhance both employment opportunities and economic stability.
HOW WE WORK

As a trusted advisor, GGGI develops strong partnerships with Member countries encouraging long-term vision supported by practical implementation to foster green-growth in the present. GGGI supports stakeholders through two complementary and integrated work streams – Green Growth Planning & Implementation and Investment Policy Solutions – designed to assist in developing, financing and mainstreaming green growth in national economic development plans. GGGI’s interventions emphasize change in four priority areas considered to be essential to transforming countries’ economies including energy, water, land-use and green cities.

GGGI came at the right time. After 10 years of implementation and a reduction in the fossil fuel price, we were challenged in making these mills viable. GGGI came in and rescued this program, and now, the mills have a future in Fiji.

Mr. Jeke Pai Vakaloloma, Biofuel Engineer with the Department of Energy for the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport

OUR APPROACH

- Partnering with developing and emerging countries to design and deliver programs and services that demonstrate new pathways to pro-poor economic growth.
- Providing Member countries with the tools to help build institutional capacity and develop green growth policy, strengthen peer learning and knowledge sharing, and engage private investors and public donors.
- Leveraging a comprehensive network and governance structure to facilitate a multi-directional and multi-sectoral sharing of knowledge between South-South countries, while gathering global actors with the potential to set and drive the international agenda on green growth.

GGGI’s interventions emphasize change in four priority areas considered to be essential to transforming countries’ economies including:

- energy
- water
- land-use
- green cities

To learn more about our work, please contact us.

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