Fiji

Abbreviations

BDM	Births, Deaths and Marriages
BOS	Bureau of Statistics
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
DIA	Department of Indigenous Affairs
DoW	Department of Women
EXMS	Exams Registration and Results Publishing
FAIDP	Framework for Action on ICT for Development in the Pacific
GCT	Government Community Telecentre
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GII	Government Information Infrastructure
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNI	Gross National Income
GOVNET	Government Network
HDI	Human Development Index
IATS	Investment Approval Tracking System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IHRDP	Integrated Human Resource Development Programme
IT	Information Technology
ITCS	Information Technology and Computing Services

ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MEA	Multi-Ethnic Affairs
MOE	Ministry of Education
PCC	Public Contact Centre
PRISAP	Pacific Regional ICT Strategic Action Plan
PSC	Public Service Commission
RCBS	Registrar of Companies and Business Systems
SCHS	Online Scholarships
SIM	Subscriber Identity Module
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMS	Short Message Service
TAF	Telecommunications Authority of Fiji
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNPOG	United Nations Project Office on Governance
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

1 E-government and ICT in the Pacific region

"The Pacific Islands are experiencing a digital transformation that could have major implications, particularly for democratic governance and potentially for the region's development. Some of the fastest-growing rates of mobile phone uptake in the world are changing the way Pacific Islanders communicate, learn, engage in political debate, co-ordinate activities and access services." [1]

The rapid uptake of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and digital technologies in particular, has revolutionized social, political and economic landscapes in the Pacific. Although Pacific countries have experienced rapid ICT progress and change, the region as a whole continues to face significant ICT challenges:

- Geographical divide: population spread over widely dispersed islands

- Small population relative to geographical spread

- Poor Infrastructure: Transport, ICT, and energy

  - Tele-density around 10%

  - Mobile density in opened markets >50%

  - Broadband Internet penetration of 1–4%

- Lack of human capacity

- Lack of appropriate legislation

- Outdated policy and legislative frameworks [2]

The Communication Action Plan (CAP, 1999), Pacific Islands ICT Policy and Plan (PIIPP, 2002) and the Pacific Plan Digital Strategy (PPDS, 2005) have provided direction for ICT development in the region and were key precursors to the regional Framework for Action on ICT for Development in the Pacific (FAIDP, 2010). [3] The FAIDP outlines a regional framework to develop and improve ICTs to support development, and in particular, to strengthen governance and sustainable livelihoods. The FAIDP identifies inequality of access by disadvantaged groups, including women, as an issue that needs to be addressed, stating:

"ICT interventions must address the need to reduce inequities, promote access by youth and the disabled, promote gender sensitivity and culture, improve efforts to reduce poverty across and within countries and territories, and facilitate equitable access to adequate, reliable and affordable ICT and services to improve Pacific communities' livelihoods". [4]

Although the FAIDP identifies connecting disadvantaged groups (including women) as a priority, the Framework does not include a gendered strategy to address gender inequality in ICT access. [5] The absence of a 'gender vision' is likely driven by a lack of information on women's ICT needs, access and use, but is also symptomatic of underlying gender inequalities.

1   Cave, Danielle (2012), "Digital Islands: How the Pacific's ICT Revolution is Transforming the Region', Lowry Institute for International Policy, http://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/digital-islands-how-pacifics-ict-revolution-transforming-region, Retrieved 8 November 2015, pp 3.

2   Secretariat of the Pacific Community (2010), New Roadmap for Pacific: The Framework for Action on ICT for Development in the Pacific, ICT Outreach Programme (PICTO), Economic Development Division, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/7-Mr-Siaosi-Sovaleni-SPC.pdf, Retrieved 8 November 2015.

3   Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (2010), Framework for Action on ICT for Development in the Pacific (FAIDP): Information and communication technology (ICT) for development, governance and sustainable livelihoods, June 2010. The FAIDP was formulated in response to the call by Pacific Leaders at the 40th Pacific Islands Forum in Cairns (August 2009) for the Pacific Plan Digital Strategy (PPDS) to be reviewed and updated.

4   Guiding principle 5 'Sustainable livelihoods, culture, equity and gender' Ibid, pp 5.

5   STRATEGY 2.2.5: Promote and encourage access to and use of ICT by disadvantaged groups such as women, the disabled and youth (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat et al., (2010), pp 9

"Data on the gender divide in the use of ICTs does not exist for most of the Asia-Pacific region. But what is known is that most of the barriers women face in accessing ICTs are the same ones they face when accessing education or economic opportunity of any kind, illiteracy, lack of awareness, poverty, lack of time, low confidence and self-esteem, and socio-cultural norms that restrict mobility. Other barriers to women's access to ICTs can be summed up in three major categories: content relevance, availability and usage." [6]

In 2011, the Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting in Noumea endorsed in principle, a Pacific Regional ICT Strategic Action Plan (PRISAP). The PRISAP would provide an implementation plan for the FAIDP and identify stakeholders to take ownership of specifically defined action items. There is a draft PRISAP[7], but as of 2015, the PRISAP has not been finalised.[8] A review of the FAIDP[9] in 2014 found that challenges identified in the FAIDP remain and the lack of a cohesive development pathway for ICT development in the Pacific can be attributed to the absence of PRISAP.[10]

2 Gender analysis of the e-government ecosystem in Fiji

Based on results of an initial scoping exercise, [11] Fiji was selected as the national case study for the Pacific region. Key rationale for selection included: Fiji's early adoption of an E-government Programme (2006) which was a first in the Pacific region, and Fiji's high Internet penetration, relative to the rest of the region. The trajectory of the E-government Programme to date indicates that Fiji is at an early stage case study of e-government development.

Fiji is located in the south western Pacific Ocean and comprises 332 islands, one third of which are inhabited. According to the most recent census data (2007), just under half (49%) of the population (837,271) lives in rural areas. Fiji has a relatively young population, with 48% under the age of 25 and only 7.5% above the age of 60.[12] In 2013, Fiji's population was estimated at 881,100.[13]

Fiji is classified as a small island developing state[14] with an upper middle income level[15] and the country has one of the most developed economies of the Pacific Island Countries. Fiji's 2014 Human Development Index (HDI) was 88 out of 187 countries (UNDP 2014). Fiji's HDI value for 2013 is 0.724 which is in the high human development category. Between 1980 and 2013, Fiji's HDI

6   Reddi, U. (2011), 'Linkages between ICT applications and meaningful development', The Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders Module Series Module 1, United Nations Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (UN-APCICT/ESCAP), pp 59.

7   Pacific Regional ICT Strategic Action Plan (PRISAP) 2015–2020 Draft v.2 CROP ICT Working Group University of the South Pacific, Suva, 2014

8   Concept Note Pacific ICT Ministerial & Officials Meetings 2015 17⬜19 June 2015, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

9   A Review of the 2010 FAIDP v.7 (2014) Secretariat Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific ICT Working Group

10 Concept Note Pacific ICT Ministerial & Officials Meetings 2015 17⬜19 June 2015, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

11 This comprised desk research, online call for information and key informant interviews. Desk research on e-government policy and programming in the Pacific Island Countries was conducted. The search focused on Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Samoa. An online call for information was posted on list serves and key informant interviews were held (one academic and one regional agency stakeholder). See Appendix C.

12 Fiji Bureau of Statistics, http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/index.php/2007-census-of-population , Retrieved 28 April 2015

13 Ibid.

14 http://unohrlls.org/meetings-conferences-and-special-events/fiji/ , Retrieved 26 April 2015

15 http://data.worldbank.org/country/fiji , Retrieved 26 April 2015

value increased by 23.4%: life expectancy at birth increased by 6.8 years; mean years of schooling increased by 4.0 years; and expected years of schooling increased by 4.9 years. Fiji's Gross National Income per capita increased by about 23.7% between 1980 and 2013 (UNDP 2014). Fiji's Inequality-adjusted HDI is 0.613, a reduction of 15.3% due to inequality in the distribution of the dimension indices (inequality in life expectancy, education and income).

After nearly a century as a British colony, Fiji became an independent parliamentary democracy in 1970. Since 1970, Fiji has experienced four coups (two in 1987; 2000; and 2006) and promulgated four constitutions (in 1970, 1990, 1997 and 2013). The first general election since the 2006 coup was held on September 17, 2014.

2.1 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF FIJI

FIGURE 1
MAP OF FIJI
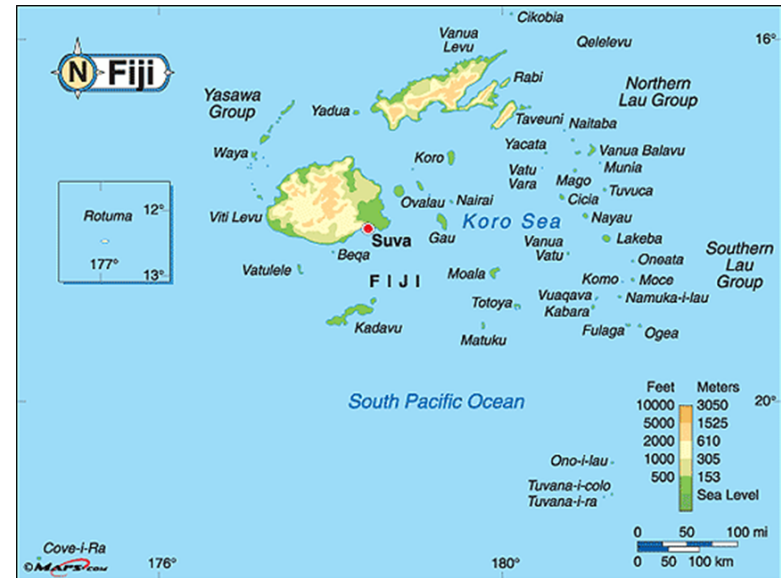
3 Evolution of the institutional ecosystem for e-government in Fiji

3.1 BACKGROUND

Fiji's current e-government development dates back to a 2001 Strategic Plan and subsequent fact finding mission in 2003 on the feasibility of e-government. In 2006, the Government of Fiji formally instituted an e-government programme with the support of a loan from the Government of the People's Republic of China[16]. The e-government programme encompassed delivery of government services via an e-government portal and development of the Government Information Infrastructure (GOVNET). GOVNET connects government offices and eCommunity Centres ('Telecentres') located in schools.[17] An early success is demonstrated in the placement of Fiji's Government Online Portal as a finalist in the World Summit Awards in 2007.[18]

The Government of Fiji currently identifies four strategic purposes for its E-government Programme:

- To implement financially sustainable service delivery models

- To reinvent services delivery model to provide citizen-centric outcomes

- To enhance operational efficiencies within and across government agencies

- To enhance ICT skills competency of government employees at all levels.[19]

3.2 HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY

By 2000, most government ministries and departments in the capital, Suva, were connected to the Internet services provided through the Department of Information Technology and Computing Services (ITCS). [20]

The first E-government Strategic Plan (2001) was a 10 year plan covering four key areas: e-development (Fiji's IT development); e-government (public sector development); e-business and e-personal. [21] Commentators have pointed out a shortage of experienced ICT professionals which had a detrimental impact on the development of e-government at this time. [22] The ICT and e-government picture in Fiji as of 2006, can be summed up thus:

"The government has adopted ICT applications such as standard financial packages and some government ministries have websites. In the business sector the ICT development is pretty advanced. Governance is the sphere in which Fiji lags behind. For instance, the accessibility of government ministries to existing ICT for effective, efficient and transparent service delivery and to enhance public

16   http://www.itc.gov.fj/index.php/egovernment and http://www.i-policy.org/2008/08/fiji-e-government-plan.html, Retrieved 10 March 2015 and Goundar, Sam (2009). An Evaluation of Fiji's E-Government Status: Assessed According to UN Report on Benchmarking E-Government Progress, http://www.academia.edu/999429/An_Evaluation_of_Fijis_E-Government_Status_Assessed_According_to_UN_Report_on_Benchmarking_E-Government_Progress , Retrieved 10 March 2015.

17   http://www.itc.gov.fj/index.php/egovernment , Retrieved 14 April 2015

18   http://www.wsa-awards.org.nz/showcase/2007-pacific/fiji-government.html , Retrieved 15 March 2015

19   https://www.egov.gov.fj/default.aspx , Retrieved 30 March 2015

20   Hassall, G. (2006), ITC Policy and Practice in the Fiji Islands, http://www.irma-international.org/viewtitle/11425/ , Retrieved 8 November 2015, pp 471.

21   Data'3, e-Government Strategic Plan cited in Hassall , G. (2006), op.cit.

22   Pathak, R. D., Singh, G., Belwal, R., Naz, R. & Smith, R. F. I. (2008), E-governance, corruption and public service delivery: A comparative study of Fiji and Ethiopia, JOAAG, Vol. 3. No. 1.

knowledge of government services is challenged with the high cost of telecommunication and equipment".[23]

Pathak et al. contend that the "use of ICT within government in Fiji developed gradually and without an overall guiding strategy"[24]. This contention is supported by the findings of a survey assessing Fiji's state of e-government readiness in 2006. The survey revealed almost 50% of ministries had no ICT budget plans in place.[25]

At this time, 12 out of 25 ministries had their own websites[26] and e-government services were restricted to the provision of information and forms (e.g. passport application forms) that could be downloaded and printed. No transactions (e.g. payment for services) were possible.

By 2009, almost all ministries and departments had a website and online presence.[27] Goundar analyses the progress of the Fiji E-government Programme against the United Nations E-government benchmarking ratings.[28]

According to this analysis, Fiji had made 100% progress against Stages 1 (Emerging), 3 (Interactive), and 4 (Enhanced) but only 2% progress against Stages 2 (Transactional) and 5 (Seamless). Goundar identifies citizens' lack of credit/debit cards required to complete online transactions as a factor, as well as a general distrust:

"As for the transactional services, there seems to be some reluctance both on the government side and on the citizens' side to fully embrace the idea of e-commerce transactions and online exchange of money with each other." [29]

In 2011, the National Broadband Policy notes the Department of ITCS had 14 applications online across government ministries and agencies. [30] As of 2015, there were 18 applications available on the e-government online portal (see Appendix A). However, the e-government online portal requires updating.[31]

The main e-government policy instrument is the E-government Master Plan.[32] The plan articulates a 'holistic' e-government framework, which encompasses both technological and non-technological aspects. The vision is primarily economic, namely, to increase Fiji's Gross Domestic Product and reduce the cost of doing business. [33]

"Making government services more accessible, convenient and hassle free has been the strategy adopted by many governments in helping businesses become more competitive as well as in attracting new foreign investments into the country." [34]

The current Government of Fiji E-government Programme was initially set up in 2006, with three main components which continue to date: [35]

23 Rahman, Mohammad Habibur & Naz, Rafia (2006), 'Digital Divide Within Society: An Account Of Poverty, Community And E-Governance In Fiji', E–Learning, Volume 3, Number 3, 2006, pp 333.

24 Pathak, R. D., Singh, G., Belwal, R., Naz, R. & Smith, R. F. I. (2008),op.cit, pp 69.

25 Government of Fiji (2008), Governance of E-government Final Report , http://www.i-policy.org/2008/08/fiji-e-government-plan.html , Retrieved 10 March 2015.

26 Chand, Anand (2006), E-Government In The South Pacific Region: Case Studies From Fiji And Solomon Islands, A Paper Presented At E-Government Conference, Organized By Undp And Uncrd, Bangkok, Thailand, 24-27 April 2006

27 Goundar, Sam (2009), op.cit.

28 Stage 1. Emerging: an official government online presence is established; Stage 2. Transactional: users can actually pay for services and other transactions online; Stage 3. Interactive: users can download forms, e-mail government officials, and interact via the web; Stage 4. Enhanced: government sites increase, information becomes more dynamic; Stage 5. Seamless: full integration of e-services across administrative boundaries.

29 Goundar, Sam (2009), op.cit, pp 9.

30 Government of Fiji (2011), National Broadband Policy, pp 13.

31 Key informant interviews. See Appendix B for details.

32 Government of Fiji (2007), Fiji E-government Master Plan Final Report.

33 Ibid, pp 18-22.

34 Ibid, pp 20.

35 http://www.itc.gov.fj/index.php/egovernment/our-e-gov-program Accessed 20 April 2015

- Public Contact Centre (PCC) - the Government Call Centre for citizens to get clarifications or complain about any government service

- Government Information Infrastructure (GII) - The GII stream is responsible for the upgrading and maintenance of the Government Information infrastructure, which involves:

  - Implementation of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) across various ministries and departments

  - Connection of government offices to the government network (GOVNET)

  - Overseeing the construction of the Government Data Centre

- E-Applications: This stream is responsible for managing and developing the various Government Online Applications and websites, and deploying it on the e-Government SharePoint Framework.

The National Broadband Policy (2011) expands on the third component, stating: "Government shall develop a range of lead applications for delivery of new, enhanced or extended services online using broadband in Health, Education, Tourism and primary production". [36]

The E-government Programme is implemented by the 'Information Technology & Computing Services Unit' (ITCS) based under the Ministry of Finance (previously the Department of Information Technology & Computing Services). ITCS is the ICT arm of the government and is responsible for policy formulation and expert advice, systems development, information technology infrastructure building and management, training and customer support.[37] ITCS has a head office in Suva, and regional offices in Labasa and Lautoka. [38] In 2013, oversight of the e-Government Programme ('e-services') was subcontracted to a private sector company, Pacific Digital Technologies, which has conducted a review of e-government in Fiji to date, and developed a roadmap for future development.[39]

At a policy level, the strategic vision for e-government is aligned with national strategic frameworks.The e-Government Programme is aligned with key policy instruments:

- National development objectives set out in the Strategic Development Plan (SDP 2003-20): GDP growth; employment and income opportunities; build competency; alleviate poverty; maintain law and order;[40]

- National goal of 'universal access to internationally competitive ICTs'.[41]

The government's public statements on e-government have a vision of connectivity between government, business and citizens. In 2014, the Prime Minister expressed a vision for ICT to enable direct delivery to Fijian citizens:

"In reforming and developing its information and communication technology infrastructure, Fiji has adopted a comprehensive approach by combining a national framework for ICT development

36   Government of Fiji (2011), op.cit,pp 10.

37   www.itc.gov.fj, Retrieved4 May 2015

38   Information, Technology and Computing Services (2009). Fiji e-government – Infrastructure Dependant Fiji e-Government – Infrastructure Dependant Presentation by Network & Communications ITC Services, PACNOG Workshop, November 2009

39   Cabinet paper, not publicly available.

40   Government of Fiji (2007), op.cit, pg. 23

41   Government of Fiji (2002), Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2003-20, pp 90.

with effective and pragmatic policies and initiatives to deliver results directly to the Fijian people". [42]

Although there is an alignment between e-government vision, and national development and ICT frameworks, there is no focus on gender equality and women's empowerment within this alignment.

3.3 E-GOVERNMENT AND CONNECTIVITY ARCHITECTURE

"Meaningful access to ICT has gone beyond connectivity issues to embrace human, economic and social resources, institutional structures and governance networks, which are central to developmental outcomes." [43]

Fiji gained Internet access in 1995. The connection to the Southern Cross cable was implemented in 2000, strengthening the island nation's connectivity to the rest of the world. [44] This new connectivity was not available across the country (concentrated in urban centres) and was expensive. Limited ICT infrastructure and access was identified as leading to a sharp division between rural and urban areas in Fiji. [45] Chand[46] identifies a number of barriers to rapid development of e-government in Fiji (and other Pacific Island Countries):

- lack of development of infrastructure in rural areas, particularly access to electricity and telephones;

- remoteness of small islands;

- lack of funds to develop e-government;

- lack of senior computer skilled people; and

- lack of prioritisation of e-government.

The Settlement Agreement (2007) and Telecommunications Promulgation (2008) deregulated and reformed Fiji's telecommunications sector, resulting in large price decreases and increased access. [47]

As with many Pacific countries (and developing countries globally), Fiji's connectivity architecture has leapfrogged over telephone and fixed broadband to mobile Internet connectivity.[48] Indeed, Fiji's predominantly mobile connectivity reflects the global trend, with mobile phones becoming "increasingly powerful portals granting access to the online world". [49]

The number of mobile phone subscriptions in Fiji grew rapidly from 35 per 100 inhabitants in 2006 to 101.1 per 100 inhabitants in 2013. [50] There are no official data available on women's uptake of mobile phones.

In the first comparative analysis of e-government and gender inclusion in 11 selected Asia Pacific countries, women's access to

42   United Nations (2014), H.E. Mr. Commodore Josaia V. Bainimarama, Prime Minister, Fiji, Selected messages on ICT and public service delivery, General Debate, 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly – September 2013.

43   Reddi, U. (2011), op.cit., pp139-140.

44   Hassall, G., (2006), op.cit.

45   Toland and Purcell, 2002 cited in Pathak, R. D., Singh, G., Belwal, R., Naz, R. & Smith, R. F. I.(2008),op.cit.

46   Chand, Anand (2006),op.cit., pp 4.

47   World Bank (2010), 'Telecommunications/ICT development in the Pacific Region: World Bank involvement' ,Paper presented at Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting, Tonga, June 2010.

48   Cave, Danielle (2012), op.cit., ITU (2014), Measuring the Information Society, https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/mis2014/MIS2014_without_Annex_4.pdf, pp 110.

49   Broadband Commission for Digital Development (2014), The State of Broadband 2014: Broadband for all, http://www.broadbandcommission.org/documents/reports/bb-annualreport2014.pdf, pp 45.

50   https://www.itu.int/net4/itu-d/icteye/CountryProfile.aspx#AsiaPacific , Retrieved 26 April 2015

ICT is highlighted as a critical prerequisite for e-government to support gender equality. [51] The Review was unable to access any data on Fijian women's access to ICT infrastructure (affordability; number/location of facilities; digital literacy in relation to men).

ITU STATISTICS FIJI 2013 DATA[52]

Fixed-telephone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	8.5
Mobile-cellular	101.1
Fixed (wired)-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	1.2
Mobile-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	53.5
Households with a computer (%)	34.2
Households with Internet access at home (%)	26.7
Individuals using the Internet (%)	37.1

UNITED NATIONS E-GOVERNMENT SURVEY 2014[53]

Fiji Telecommunication Infrastructure Index	0.2872
Percentage of Individuals using the Internet	33.74
Fixed- telephone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	10.11
Mobile-cellular telephone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	98.18
Fixed (wired) - broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	1.55
Wireless broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	23.39

Fiji's mobile price plans are among the lowest cost-to-user in the Pacific region: out of twenty regional mobile phone plans, Fiji has the third cheapest plan for mobile phones (low level use and typical pre-paid use) and sixth cheapest for short message service (SMS) based use. [54] Over 2012-13, prices dropped across all plans in Fiji. [55] As a percentage of income, low level mobile data usage costs around 7.5% of average monthly income. [56] As of 2013, bundles (calls, SMS and data) were not available in Fiji. Personal affordability has dramatically changed following competition in the market and many people have both Digicel and Vodafone SIM cards to take advantage of this competition (e.g. special offers, lower prices to call same provider phone numbers). [57] Customers are further incentivized to have two phone providers because connectivity can vary between Digicel and Vodafone in different locales.

Broadband

Broadband connectivity is recognized as a key component of the institutional e-government ecosystem. In 2011, Fiji launched its first National Broadband policy, setting out the government's vision for Fiji to become a knowledge based society with reliable and affordable ICT services.[58] The National Broadband Policy identifies improved broadband as a key driver for: "improved public administration and service delivery through the development of e-government online transactions to improve quality, save cost and increase convenience". [59] The policy explicitly references universal access and defines access as a "function of availability,

51   UNPOG (2013), op.cit., pp 5.

52   Ibid.

53   United Nations E-Government Survey (2014), E-government for the future we want, http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2014-Survey/E-Gov_Complete_Survey-2014.pdf, pp 224.

54   Hansen,S. (2013), 'Mobile connectivity and affordability in the Pacific: the 2013 update' ,Presentation for APT / PITA April 2013: Network Strategies, https://www.itu.int/ITU-D/asp/.../ITU-APT-S1_Suella_Hansen.pdf , Retrieved 28 April 2015

55   Hansen, S.(2013), op.cit, pp 8-10.

56   Hansen, S. (2013), op.cit. Pp 13-15. This compares, for example, with 26% of average monthly income in Solomon Islands.

57   Key informant interviews, See Appendix B.

58   http://www.i-policy.org/2011/10/the-fiji-government-launches-national-broadband-policy.html, Retrieved 13 March 2015

59   Government of Fiji (2011),op.cit, pp 4.

affordability and capacity to use". [60] As such, broadband access shall be addressed in programmes for communities "bypassed by market forces". [61] This includes a specific policy objective to "achieve broadband service availability to 95% to all urban, suburban and rural communities (and 100% of all primary and secondary schools) by 2016". [62]

Although social inclusion is a stated benefit of increased broadband availability,[63] the policy does not include strategic objectives to promote digital inclusion for women or other marginalized groups. The policy does not include a gender budget.

3.4 CITIZEN UPTAKE OF E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES

The stated intention of the e-Government Programme is to facilitate services on three levels:

• Government to Government

• Government to Business

• Government to Citizen

The Review was not able to access data on uptake of e-government services at any service level. There are some data available on e-participation at a national level. In 2014, Fiji's global e-participation index[64] ranking was 84, just under the world average, and a rise

from 109 in 2012.[65] Fiji's e-participation was 0.3922, highest in the sub-region (Pacific) (and up from 0.0789 in 2012).

Naz's research on the role e-governance can play in public service delivery in Fiji found wide variance in citizens' perception and expectations of service delivery and quality of services. [66] Research participants (n=198) were asked whether e-governance was having a positive or negative effect on improving services and the way they accessed services. 54.6% felt e-governance was having a very positive/ somewhat positive effect, 23.7% were neutral, and 20.7% felt a very negative/ somewhat negative effect.

A 2006 survey assessing Fiji's state of e-government readiness revealed more than 50% of government services required customers to make at least two trips, and 60% of the services need more than two levels of approvals. [67] This is in line with commentators' views at the time: "public sector red tape is the biggest hurdle in the way of improved government-citizen relationships." [68] To date, access to e-government services has not yet broadened to include mobile platform based applications. [69]

Of the four strategic purposes outlined in the e-Government Programme (refer Section 3.1), one is solely focused on stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of government: Reinvent services delivery model to provide citizen-centric outcomes. [70]

The E-government Master Plan states:

60   Government of Fiji, (2011), op.cit, pp 8.
61   Ibid.
62   Government of Fiji, (2011), op.cit, pp 9-10.
63   Government of Fiji, (2011), op.cit, pp 3-4.
64   The e-participation index is derived as a supplementary index to the UN E-Government Survey. It extends the dimension of the Survey by focusing on the use of online services to facilitate provision of information by governments to citizens ("e-information sharing"), interaction with stakeholders ("e-consultation"), and engagement in decision-making processes ("e-decision making"). http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/en-us/About/Overview/E-Participation , Retrieved 4 May 2015

65   http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Data/Country-Information/id/59-Fiji , Retrieved 20 April 2015
66   Naz, Rafia (2009), 'E-Governance for Improved Public Service Delivery in Fiji', Journal Service Science & Management, 2009, 3: 190-203, www.SciRP.org/journal/jssm, Retrieved 20 April 2015.
67   Government of Fiji (2008), op.cit.
68   Pathak, R. D., Singh, G., Belwal, R., Naz, R. & Smith, R. F. I. (2008), op.cit, pp 75.
69   Key informant interviews, See Appendix B.
70   https://www.egov.gov.fj/default.aspx, Retrieved 30 March 2015

"for E-government to succeed, government departments and agencies must move away from the current practices and reinvent service delivery models that primarily focus on the needs of their major stakeholders i.e. citizens, businesses and government employees...this cannot be solved by technology alone...but requires...sound IT governance and leadership, business process redesign and integration, cooperation amongst government agencies, private-public sector collaboration and adoption of a customer centric mind-set on the part of both government leaders and employees". [71]

The extent to which such a shift in the government-citizen relationship has happened, however, has been questioned. Rahman and Naz point out the risk of 'top down' e-government:

"E-governance will definitely fail if the participatory process that it required of a citizen-centric system is not embedded in the initiatives. Our underlying assumption is that if citizens are not included in the e-governance model of development, then the potential of e-governance as a tool for poverty alleviation cannot be harnessed and the digital divide will certainly widen not only between elites in the South and those in the North but also between the rich and the poor within urban and rural areas and between the State and the citizens in a society such as Fiji." [72]

Commentators point out the lack of 'bottom up' input and demand informing and creating new dynamics in e-government strategy:

"Due to the absence of such an involvement from the very grassroots level, a divide exists between ministries, departments, agencies of government and the ordinary communities, particularly those living in outer islands and remote locations." [73]

"Government agencies in...Fiji do not seem to be much motivated to build sound government-citizen partnerships. Citizens can see little of the internal workings of government." [74]

"Governments need to develop citizen-centric models that involve increased participation of key stakeholders outside government." [75]

The government's vision for e-government has been criticized for lacking focus on the potential of ICT and e-government to address human development. [76]

A 2004 policy submission on the draft IT Policy[77] by the University of the South Pacific (USP) calls for increased emphasis on the application of ICT to human and social development. [78] In particular, a lack of vision to harness ICT for poverty reduction has been pointed out. Poverty is a significant issue in Fiji and some academic commentators think e-government initiatives have not been sufficiently integrated into policy attempts to tackle a complex and multidimensional problem. [79] Further,

"Poverty in Fiji is more about communication and access than lack of physiological needs. It is about being deprived of the information needed to participate in the wider society...at the grassroots level people are still unconnected. They are not empowered to

71   Government of Fiji, (2007), op.cit., pp 25.
72   Rahman, Mohammad Habibur & Naz, Rafia, (2006),op.cit, pp 334.

73   Rahman, Mohammad Habibur & Naz, Rafia, (2006),op.cit, pp 328.
74   Singh, G., R.D. Pathak, R.Naz, R.Belwal, (2010)."E⬚governance for improved public sector service delivery in India, Ethiopia and Fiji", International Journal of Public Sector Management, Vol. 23: 3, pp.254 - 275
75   Pathak, R. D., Singh, G., Belwal, R., Naz, R. & Smith, R. F. I. (2008),op.cit, pp 75.
76   See Chand, Anand (2006), op.cit., and Pathak, R. D., Singh, G., Belwal, R., Naz, R. & Smith, R. F. I. (2008),op.cit.
77   Government of Fiji (2004). Fiji Information Technology Development Policy e0FIJI The Future Online.
78   Hassall, G.(2006), op.cit.
79   Rahman, Mohammad Habibur & Naz, Rafia, (2006),op.cit, and Chand, Anand (2006), op.cit.

participate in the planning and implementation of policies that affect them."[80]

Research on e-government, public governance and corruption by Pathak et.al. highlights critical gaps between the people and government with regards to ICT development: "(D)espite repeated government instability, corruption that seems to grow progressively and poverty ..., Fiji has made significant investments in ICT". [81] Chand criticizes e-government's progress to date, stating that it is predominantly aimed at promoting and servicing the business sector and benefitting middle/upper class citizens who can access Internet services. Under these conditions, poor urban and rural citizens become even further marginalized. [82]

There is a dearth of recent (post-2010) academic critique of access to e-government and ICT in Fiji, and the most up-to-date data on e-participation indicates greater inclusion (see following section). The deregulation of the Fijian telecommunications sector (2007-08) which resulted in significant price drops for mobile phones, the rise of Internet enabled smart phones and the adoption of 3G and 4G broadband may help explain greater inclusion. However, the extent to which increased Internet access to e-government includes the most marginalized citizens (poor, women, rural) is not clear.

3.5 CURRENT STATUS OF E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Fiji's E-government Development Index ranking

In 2014, Fiji ranked as a 'High' E-government Development Index country, coming third highest in Oceania after Australia and New Zealand. [83] Fiji's ranking climbed twenty places from 2012 to 2014 (from 105 to 85). Within the Pacific sub-region, Fiji leads across all E-government Development indices (online service delivery; telecommunication infrastructure; human capital).[84] This picture of e-government represents a shift from the barriers to e-government identified by Chand[85](see Section 3.3). This change can be accounted for by the development of the Government of Fiji e-Government Programme.

Currently, e-government in Fiji primarily consists of online information and applications for a limited number of services. The government has an official website through which it provides information on various government ministries and current news. [86] The government site includes official press releases and links to government agencies with their own websites. The e-government webpages indicate around 55 government ministries and agencies and statutory, regulatory entities have their own websites,[87] including the Fiji Parliament. [88]

80   Rahman, Mohammad Habibur & Naz, Rafia, (2006),op.cit, pp 326

81   Pathak, R. D., Singh, G., Belwal, R., Naz, R. & Smith, R. F. I. (2008),op.cit, pp 68.

82   Chand, Anand (2006), op.cit, pp 7.

83   United Nations E-Government Survey (2014), E-government for the future we want, http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2014-Survey/E-Gov_Complete_Survey-2014.pdf, Retrieved 8 November 2015.

84   The biennial United Nations E-Government Survey report ranks countries in the E-Government Development Index (EGDI) by measuring their use of information and communications technologies to deliver public services. EGDI is composed of three critical dimensions of e-government, namely: scope and quality of online services (Online Service Index, OSI); development status of telecommunication infrastructure (Telecommunication Infrastructure Index, TII); and inherent human capital (Human Capital Index, HCI). http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Data/Country-Information/id/59-Fiji Accessed 20 April 2015

85   Chand, Anand, (2006), op.cit.

86   www.fiji.gov.fj , Retrieved 20 April 2015

87   http://www.itc.gov.fj/index.php/egovernment/15-about-us/192-other-fijian-government-sites Retrieved 3 May 2015

88   http://www.parliament.gov.fj/ , Retrieved 3 May 2015

A number of online government services are available to individuals and businesses via the e-government portal. These include, for example, registration of company names; foreign investors' business applications; application for government scholarships; registration for exams and results publishing; application for forestry licenses; online services for marriage registration (special license) and requests for birth, death and marriage certificates (see Appendix A for a full list of services).[89]

The website of the Ministry for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation offers information but no online services. There are no links to the e-government online portal or other online services.[90]

Other key elements of the E-government Programme are government-to-government applications. Government stakeholders[91] gave the following examples:

• digitisation of land records (titles and deeds), allowing online availability of all land records to public servants in the relevant Ministry;

• digitisation of medical records accessible by health personnel (each Fijian has a National Health number);

• online tax system accessible by tax professionals. The intention is for tax payers to be able to access tax and superannuation services (Fiji National Provident Fund) online in the future (each Fijian has a Tax Identification Number)

• online applications for specific Ministry programmes used in-house by Ministry staff (rather than for public applications online). An

example given is the Ministry for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation application for single parent assistance.

The aim is to move most counter services to online services in the next 3-5 years.[92] An example of two flagship e-government initiatives are outlined in the text boxes below.

BOX 1
ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

The Information Technology & Computing Services Department implemented a computerization of the 2001 elections, facilitating registration and verification of voters. A website allowed voters to check their electoral details were correct. While this proved useful during the pre-election period, the website apparently generated a number of privacy issues and as a result was brought offline and the May 2006 election was not put online.[93] Privacy issues were resolved for the September 2014 election and the system was again online.[94] During the 2014 election, voters were able to check online and via mobile phone whether they were registered to vote and their polling station. Each Fijian citizen of voting age has an Electronic Voter Registration Number. Key informant interviews report the system worked very well.

89   List of available services at https://www.egov.gov.fj/default.aspx is the most up to date information available to the Review, Retrieved 3 May 2015

90   http://www.welfare-women.gov.fj/ Accessed 4 May 2015

91   Key informant interviews, see Appendix B.

92   Key informant interviews, see Appendix B.

93   Chand, Anand, (2006), op.cit., pp 5.

94   Key informant interviews, see Appendix B.

BOX 2
GOVERNMENT TELECENTRES

The Fijian Government Community Telecentre (GCT) Initiative ('Telecentres') is a flagship Government of Fiji initiative aimed at increasing IT and Internet access for rural, urban and peri-urban communities. The programme began in 2011 under the Ministry of Communications. Most Telecentres (referred to as e-community centres on the Government of Fiji e-government website) are located in schools. Telecentres are open during school hours and after school between 4.00pm - 9.00pm. Access is free and there are Telecentre assistants ('Lab assistants') to provide technical support. There are currently 26 Telecentres nationally. By April 2015, over 125,000 users had accessed Telecentres. The Telecentre programme made it to the nomination round of the 2015 Project Prize (Capacity Building category) by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the only Pacific Island Country to obtain this distinction.

4 Gender equality and women's empowerment priorities in Fiji

4.1 NATIONAL GENDER POLICY

The 2014 National Gender Policy articulates the commitment of the Government of Fiji to gender equality, equity and social justice. The Policy recognizes "ethnicity, disability, religion and gender often intersect and create a multiplicity of sources of discrimination against women in Fiji."[95] Access to money, a key factor impacting on women's access to technology and ICTs is addressed separately, under poverty alleviation rather than digital access.

Elderly women, widows, and single mothers are identified as especially vulnerable to social economic pressures, disasters and poverty related diseases.[96] Within this formulation, women's hindered ICT/e-government access is a function of poverty rather than the lack of effective service delivery by the government.

4.2 STATUS OF WOMEN IN FIJI

Fiji ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1995.

2014 Human Development Report introduced a new measure, the Gender Development Index (GDI) based on the sex-disaggregated Human Development Index, defined as a ratio of the female to the

95 Government of Fiji (2014). Fiji National Gender Policy Ministry for Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation, http://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/db294b55-f2ca-4d44-bc81-f832e73cab6c/NATIONAL-GENDER-POLICY-AWARENESS.aspx, Retrieved 5 March 2014, pp 2.

96 Ibid, pp 22.

male HDI. The 2013 female HDI value for Fiji is 0.679 in contrast with 0.725 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.937. In comparison, the GDI value for Samoa is 0.948.[97]

The Global Gender Gap Index also measures gender disparity across three key measures: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; and health[98]. In the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report, Fiji is ranked 122 out of 142 countries, with a score of 0.629 (0.00 = inequality, 1.00=equality).Due to a lack of relevant data, the Gender Inequality Index and the Multidimensional Poverty Index were not calculated for Fiji's 2014 Human Development Report.[99]

Violence against women and poverty were prioritized as critical gender equality issues by government officials contacted for this research[100]. Official statistics and informant interviews strongly concur violence against women is widespread in Fiji: 66% of women have experienced physical abuse; 26% have been beaten while pregnant; 48% of married women have been forced into sex by their husbands; and 13% of women have been otherwise raped. About 74% of domestic violence victims do not go to the police, with some preferring to defer to community or religious leaders while others are reluctant to report abuse at all.[101]

According to UN Women, Fiji is on track to achieve Millennium Development Goal 5 (improvement of maternal health). Deaths in childbirth are down from 60 per 100,000 live births in 1995 to 28 per 100,000 live births. Additionally, 99% of all births are attended by skilled birth staff. Unmet need for contraceptives has declined to

30% (from 46%) and the adolescent birth rate has almost halved since 1990.

Research into perceptions of gender equality by the Fiji Women's Forum found 61% of respondents[102] feel that men and women currently have equal rights in Fiji, while 36% disagreed. More women than men agreed with the statement (66% of women, 56% of men). Most respondents viewed societal impediments as the major reason women don't stand for election as often as men. The number of parliamentary seats held by women has ranged from zero in 1987 to eight (11% of the 71-seat house) in the 1999 and 2006 elections.[103]

Chattier and Morgan's research on poverty and gender in Fiji examined the complexity and multidimensionality of poverty and, in particular, the gender disparities within conventional measures of poverty.[104] The research covering 162 Fijian and Indo-Fijian men and women from three communities (rural, semi-urban and urban) found that:

"The resources women may draw upon are often circumscribed by rules, norms and practices which limit their access to and control over resources....women's dependency or lack of autonomy in the household, though not synonymous with income poverty, affects their economic self-sufficiency and decision making capacity." [105]

97   UNDP (2014), Fiji Country Report, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/FJI.pdf , Retrieved 8 November 2015

98   World Economic Forum (2014), World Economic Forum (2014). Fiji Gender Gap Index 2014 Country Profiles, http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/economies/#economy=FJI , Retrieved 3 May 2015.

99   UNDP (2014), op.cit.

100   Key informant interviews, see Appendix B.

101   http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/fiji/co/fiji , Retrieved 3 May 2015

102   Survey respondents (642 women and 569) men in rural and urban locations in Fiji. Fiji Women's Forum (2014), Public Perceptions of Women in Leadership A research project of the Fiji Women's Forum in partnership with International Women's Development Agency (IWDA).

103   Fiji Women's Forum (2014), op.cit., pp 3.

104   Chattier, Priva and Morgan, Emele (2012), Poverty and Gender in Fiji Australian Council Research Linkage Grant, Australian National University.

105   Chattier, Priva and Morgan, Emele (2012), op.cit, pp 7.

The gendered division of labour and the limitations it imposes were found to be a key factor across all communities in the research (iTaukei[106], Indo-Fijian, rural and urban).

4.3   E-GOVERNMENT FOR WOMEN?

Globally, the use of mobile phones to achieve e-government objectives, especially for women's empowerment and gender equality is well recognized:

"There is growing evidence that women's use of Internet and mobile phones has a powerful impact on sustainable development, from connecting to healthcare, to tele-working and securing income for family with e-banking. Those countries that have adopted a multi-channel approach to service delivery will open options for greater gender equity and closing the gender divide. This is one area that has seen the largest gaps and also the highest potential of achieving development objectives through e-government initiatives." [107]

Fiji e-government initiatives specifically targeted at women are very rare. The review of e-government services in Fiji did not find any online services designed with women's empowerment in mind, namely e-government aimed at advancing the political, social and economic autonomy of women through improved ICT access, resources and networks. There have been examples of mobile application initiatives. This includes an SMS service initiative called mWomen which offers free advice on women's legal rights in relation to gender based violence. mWomen began

as a collaboration between Vodafone and the Ministry for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (see Case studies report).

In 2012, provision of online services for women in Fiji stood at 0.109 (UNPOG 2013: 42).[108] A 2013 UNPOG study of e-government and gender in Asia Pacific found Fiji to be at an 'emerging' stage (first of four stages) [109] of E-government Readiness for gender equality.[110] The UNPOG study recommended that Fiji address gender in e-government by undertaking:

"Key actions...focusing on improving women's access to telecommunication infrastructure and ICT capacity at the grassroots level, as well as raising awareness of the senior officials in the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation to consider the potential of greater ICT application in its gender administration." [111]

mWomen is one of the few gender specific ICT initiatives in Fiji and is a government-private sector initiative. mWomen is designed to provide Fijian women access to help and advice on women's rights and gender based violence issues (see Box 3).

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106   From 2010, iTaukei officially replaced 'indigenous Fijian', http://www.fijianaffairs.gov.fj/iTaukei.html , Retrieved 3 May 2015

107   United Nations E-Government Survey (2014), E-government for the future we want, http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2014-Survey/E-Gov_Complete_Survey-2014.pdf, Retrieved 8 November 2015, pp 103.

108   UNPOG (2013), op.cit., pp 42.

109   Four-Stage Model of e-Government – explained in Footnote 23.

110   A composite indicator comprised of: Telecommunications Infrastructure (ICT access 50%; ICT use 50%; Online Services for Women (Website analysis of national gender machinery 100%); Capacity Development (Women's: economic participation (33%), educational attainment 33%, political empowerment 33%); and Capacity Development). The indicator adapts the methodology of the United Nation e-Government Development Index (EGDI)

111   UNPOG, (2013), pp 42.

BOX 3
MWOMEN E-SERVICE

The mWomen e-service has been running since March 2013. Initially begun as a partnership between the Department of Women (DoW) and Vodafone, the mWomen e-service is a subscription based SMS service offering daily free advice on women's and children's legal rights, family law and gender based violence. There is also a free short code number that members of the public can call to seek legal advice and counselling (SMS Counsellor). According to DoW, there are currently 25,613 subscribers to the mWomen e-service.

There is a chronic lack of information on women's e-government/ICT usage and more importantly, women's e-government service needs. Women's usage of services and user satisfaction are not assessed or included in current e-government strategy in Fiji. Gender disaggregated data on website visits, downloads, enquiries and use of e-services are not collected. UNPOG's survey of e-government and gender in Asia Pacific identified collection of gender-disaggregated national statistics as a priority (58%), followed by the need to identify women's ICT and e-government service needs (50%)[112] (UNPOG 2013: 43).

While online e-government outreach in Fiji is perceived by government officials to be gender-neutral, such outreach does not pay attention to the gendered underpinnings of the digital divide. The situation for rural women (and especially women in remote islands) is further exacerbated. These women face a greater lack of appropriate access channels and their service requirements include

broader considerations, including public access points, assisted access, and digital literacy focusing on public service uptake.

Delivery of online information and services on the Fiji e-government portal[113] is thus effectively gender neutral without any specific attention to different needs, interests and access women and men have. Interviews with government stakeholders indicate e-government is viewed as gender neutral since "technology does not discriminate". Thus, when asked about e-government priorities for women, stakeholders' primary responses were about 'access to information and services' (i.e. on an equal footing with all other citizens). Responses indicate a techno-centric rather than socio-cultural understanding of equality of access.

It is well known that the digital divide is gendered in developing countries: in these countries, women are 23% less likely to be online than men.[114] As noted previously, there are no data available on women and men's digital uptake in Fiji, or relative access to broadband (fixed and mobile) by women compared with men. The 2014 Broadband Commission report notes sex-disaggregated data are not yet widely available for broadband connectivity globally. Taking Internet usage data as a proxy, ITU estimates a gender gap that is more pronounced in the developing world, with 16% fewer women than men using the Internet, compared with only 2% fewer women than men in the developed world.[115]

The small body of research literature on e-government in Fiji does not include discussion of gender issues, although the digital divide is noted by several scholars.[116] Devi's research on small-medium

113   https://www.egov.gov.fj, Retrieved 4 February 2015

114   Women and Poverty, A Global Overview http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/infographic/poverty , Retrieved 26 January 2015

115   ITU (2013), cited in Broadband Commission (2014), op.cit., pp 42.

116   Rahman, Mohammad Habibur & Naz, Rafia, (2006),op.cit, and Devi, Pramila (n.d.) E-Governance for Small and Medium Enterprises in a Developing Country like Fiji: Potentials and Problems

enterprises (SMEs) uptake of ICTs found the government's ICT and e-governance developments do not sufficiently integrate ICT for business growth.[117] Although Devi notes: "It ICT has potential to bridge the gap between rich and poor, urban and rural, North and South, and male and female" and the research sample (n=180) was 38% female, Devi's research does not consider gender as a dimension of ICT and SMEs in Fiji. Rahman and Naz's research among marginalized groups in Fiji (urban poor, women, beggars, elderly and villagers) found a lack of awareness about e-governance and ICTs and a corresponding need for education and capacity building, as well as utilizing more traditional media outlets for information dissemination.

4.4 EXTENT TO WHICH THE E-GOVERNMENT VISION ADDRESSES GENDER EQUALITY PRIORITIES

Although the National Gender Policy aims to "integrate a gender perspective in all development planning and decision making processes" and to "establish a system of gender mainstreaming which binds all sectors of government",[118] analysis of e-government policy and interview data reveals this has not yet happened with regard to e-government. The main policy instruments (National Information Technology Development Policy (2004); e-Government Master Plan (2007); and National Broadband Policy (2011) do not specifically mention women and do not contain specific gender equality objectives. The e-Government Master Plan (2007) identifies a number of groups for whom programmes to bridge the digital divide are necessary: senior citizens, workers, homemakers and disabled.[119] The National Broadband Policy considers social

inclusion to be a general benefit of broadband access (Government of Fiji 2011: 3).[120]

The National Gender Policy (2014) sets out a number of policy intentions vis-à-vis technology, namely, to: Increase the participation and access of women to the expression of their opinions and to decision making in and through the media including their involvement in new technologies of communication; Provide increased innovative opportunities for women and men engaged in unwaged housework to access information communications technology, lifelong learning, and opportunities for part-time, short and long-term income earning possibilities; Strengthen equitable access by men and women to the factors of agricultural production, paying particular attention to the gender differences in access to and repayment of credit, beneficiaries of land purchase, land titling, amenities, extension services and technology, taking into consideration the disadvantaged position of the most vulnerable women in rural areasConsult with Information Communications Technology specialists from women's media organisations when any reform is contemplated in relation to the regulation of Information Communications Technology". [121] The Policy is very recently endorsed and outcomes are yet to be seen.

117 Devi, Pramila (n.d.), op.cit.
118 Government of Fiji (2014), op.cit.,pp 2-3.
119 Government of Fiji, (2007), op.cit., pp 127.
120 Government of Fiji, (2011), op.cit, pp 3.
121 Government of Fiji (2014), op.cit., pp 4, 17, 24 and 19

5 Legislative and policy frameworks

Fiji has an E-government Master Plan,[122] which has an accompanying governance framework (Government of Fiji 2008).[123] According to government officials, [124] the National Broadband Policy (2011) is the main national strategy guiding ICT and e-government. It is important to note, however, that although the Policy was endorsed, it has not been formally implemented. The Department of Communications states the Policy will be reviewed in 2015.

5.1 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS GOVERNING ICT ARCHITECTURE AND REGULATING E-GOVERNMENT DELIVERY

A national cybercrimes policy is currently in draft form, led by a Cybersecurity Taskforce (Ministry of Home Affairs). Complementing the Crimes Decree (2009), the cybercrimes policy will specifically address online bullying, harassment, threats and hate speech.

There is a regulatory body, the Telecommunications Authority (TAF), established under the Telecommunications Promulgation of 2008 to provide for the regulatory aspect of reform aimed at strengthening the telecom sector, from a monopoly to an open environment. The TAF is responsible for implementing Fiji's telecommunications policy and overseeing spectrum, broadcasting, equipment, frequency links to spectrum and compliance, as well as mediating the resolution of disputes between licensees or between licensees and consumers.[125]

Fiji does not have a Freedom of Information Bill or a Data Protection Act. Protection of citizen's rights to information and privacy are only covered by existing provisions for rights to privacy and access to information in the Bill of Rights. [126]

The e-Government Master Plan (2007) states developing a "good governance framework" via the establishment of "an ICT authority solely dedicated and empowered to regulate, plan, control, execute and coordinate e-government initiatives is….. critical." [127] The Governance of e-government Report 2008 is the extant policy framework regulating delivering of e-government services. This governance framework does not include gender considerations beyond identifying women as a target sector (along with "rural, youth, elderly, disadvantaged, industry, schools, health professionals, media, ministerial advisers") in the communications and marketing strategy. [128] The Governance Framework sets out in detail technical specifications for IT security: "Security defines the methods of protecting information and information systems from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction in order to provide integrity, confidentially and

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122   Government of Fiji (2007), op.cit.

123   Government of Fiji (2008), op,cit.

124   Key informant interviews, see Appendix B.

125   http://www.taf.org.fj/ , Retrieved 3 May 2015

126   24.Right to privacy—(1) Every person has the right to personal privacy, which includes the right to— (a) confidentiality of their personal information (b) confidentiality of their communications and (c) respect for their private and family life. (2) To the extent that it is necessary, a law may limit, or may authorize the limitation of, the rights set out in subsection (1). 25. Access to information.—(1) Every person has the right of access to— (a) information held by any public office and (b) information held by another person and required for the exercise or protection of any legal right. (2) Every person has the right to the correction or deletion of false or misleading information that affects that person. (3) To the extent that it is necessary, a law may limit, or may authorize the limitation of, the rights set out in subsection (1), and may regulate the procedure under which information held by a public office may be made available. Constitution of Fiji (2012). Came into force 7 September 2013, pp 18-19.

127   Government of Fiji (2007), op.cit., pp 67

128   Government of Fiji (2008), op.cit., pp 40.

availability". [129] The implementing agency, ITCS is charged with ensuring data are confidential and protected. [130]

This review was not able to find any information regarding service level and data protection agreements in Public Private Partnership delivery models. It is important to note in this context that delivery and management of the e-Government programme has been contracted to a private sector provider (Pacific Digital Technologies). The precise terms of this (contract and service level agreement) is not known, nor oversight arrangements by the government.

The People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress (2008) identifies the introduction of e-governance as a key measure to enhance public sector efficiency but does not set out principles for responsive and accountable e-government services. The Charter notes a need for Freedom of Information legislation to "ensure good and just governance, including greater transparency and accountability, and to combat corruption". [131] Following the 2014 national election, the Fiji government reaffirmed its intention to pass legislation on 'freedom of information'. [132]

With regard to accountable and gender governance arrangements, the People's Charter pledges to reduce crime rates against women and children, [133] and to support women as public leaders and decision makers at all levels. [134] Further, the Charter pledges:

"To support all actions to alleviate poverty and strengthen social justice programmes based on need for the disadvantaged in our community, including the enhancement of participation and promotion of the interest of the youth and women." [135]

The Constitution's provision for the Right to Equality and Freedom form Discrimination includes: "race, culture, ethnic or social origin, colour, place of origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, birth, primary language, economic or social or health status, disability, age, religion, conscience, marital status or pregnancy". [136]

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129 Ibid, pp 103.
130 Ibid, pp 49.
131 National Council For Building A Better Fiji (2008). Fiji Peoples' Charter For Change, Peace And Progress 15 December 2008, Pp 13.
132 Key informant interviews, see Appendix B for details.
133 Ibid, pp 16.
134 Ibid, pp 21.
135 Ibid, pp 42.
136 Constitution of Fiji (2012), pp 19.

6   Conclusion

The following section presents conclusions about the intersections between the e-government ecosystem in Fiji and gender equality in e-government and accountable governance.

The years without a democratically elected government (2006-14), and the preceding upheavals of four coups, have had a profound impact on governance and public life in Fiji.

During the 1990's and 2000's, political and academic commentators critiqued the Government of Fiji's approach to information rights, stating that there was a general lack of public information and participation in government planning and service delivery. [137] This was exacerbated for more marginalized citizens (poor and rural).[138] The lack of public information was linked to a lack of citizens' ability to demand transparent and accountable governance. This context has influenced the introduction of e-government. While there are governance structures in place regulating the ICT and e-government ecosystem, the governance body (identified as critical in the E-government Master Plan) has not yet been established. Developments following the election of September 2014 will be crucial for e-governance.

In the early days of ICT and e-government policy development, emphasis was placed on technological rather than human requirements and benefits and thus a missed opportunity for advancing gender equality

The stated strategic purposes of the E-government Programme in Fiji identify enhanced operational efficiency alongside citizen centric outcomes. While there has been a continued focus on e-government implementation making existing government operations more efficient, there has not been a concomitant focus on changing the way the government does business. This lack of focus may be further emphasized by operational oversight since 2013 by private sector technical specialists (market forces driven) rather than public sector administrators (public good driven). Despite e-government policy seeking to address Fiji's national economic and social development objectives, the e-Government programme has not been followed through by integrating ICT into poverty alleviation and addressing human development as well as economic growth. ICT access and therefore e-government inclusiveness is not a neutral status quo but requires dedicated government oversight (e.g. dedicated e-government authority) to ensure gender justice. Because the gendered underpinnings of the digital divide are not accounted for in e-government design and implementation, policies and programmes have tended to cast e-government in a gender-neutral manner.

There are no clear connections between gender policies and national ICT / e-government strategy.

This separation has both derived from, and reinforced, the divide between efforts to address gender equality and women's development and e-government implementation. The review findings echo those of an earlier study, that of a "significant gap between the two realms core to the process of gender mainstreaming in e-government – women's capacity development and e-government development". [139]

There have been some shifts in ICT and e-government developments to date for gender equality: anecdotal evidence suggests women's

137   Chand, Anand (2006); Naz, Rafia (2009); and Devi, n.d. op,cit.
138   Chand, Anand (2006), op.cit.
139   UNPOG (2013), op.cit, pg xv.

access to ICT has opened up with cheaper mobile phones and mobile Internet access. Government telecentres have expanded the number of Internet access facilities. However, there are no policies aimed at developing women's ICT access, skills and use, or capacity development programmes explicitly aimed at increasing women's digital literacy. E-government services are not currently designed with a 'gender lens' to identify and deliver women's differing information, service and access needs. This gap is exacerbated by a paucity of data on women's e-government and ICT use. Although national policy instruments: National Gender Policy (2014); Fiji Information Technology Development Policy (2004); Fiji E-government Master Plan (2007); Governance of E-government (2008) seek to address digital inclusion, they do not mandate gendered data collection or consultation to inform policy implementation, nor do they specifically address a gendered citizen focused approach to e-government. Explicitly connecting gender and e-government policy objectives will result in improved gender equality and women's empowerment outcomes.

There is little information available on uptake of e-government services and the effect e-government is having on the relationship between government and citizen.

To date, e-government in Fiji has been focused on technical efficiency gains in service delivery, with interactive access to the government and empowering citizens receiving less emphasis. There is no clear evidence of a changing relationship between government and citizen or the emergence of "new spaces for citizens to participate in their overall development" that e-government initiatives can create.[140] The extent to which operational efficiencies (for example, improved intra and inter-department working and increased IT capacity) have been achieved is difficult to determine. Similarly,

legislative and governance frameworks covering data protection, e-government governance, as well as digital rights and safety (e.g. draft national cybercrimes policy) are an evolving space. There have been no test cases to date.

Overall, global barriers to Internet access[141] serve as a checklist to consider the current situation in Fiji:

1   **Infrastructure gaps**

Although Fiji has a high mobile phone coverage rate, this cannot serve as a proxy for Internet access. The slow roll-out of broadband access in particular, reinforces digital divides within society.

Fijians are adversely affected by a lack of adjacent infrastructure (e.g. electricity grid)

2   **User Capability**

Fiji has high rates of literacy but digital literacy levels cannot be assumed, particularly for marginalized groups

3   **Low incomes and affordability**

Fijians enjoy more affordable mobile access (as a percentage of average monthly income) than most Pacific Islanders, but cost remains a significant factor in Internet access (cost of mobile device, data plan and/or Internet cafes)

140   Gasco, 2003 cited in Pathak, R. D., Singh, G., Belwal, R., Naz, R. & Smith, R. F. I. (2008),op.cit, pp 67.

141   1. Infrastructure (Lack of mobile Internet coverage or network access; Lack of adjacent infrastructure (e.g. grid electricity). 2. User Capability (Lack of digital literacy; Lack of language literacy; 3. Low incomes and affordability (Low income or consumer purchasing power; Total cost of ownership for device; Cost of data plan; Consumer taxes and fees; and 4. Incentives (Lack of awareness of Internet or relevant use cases; Lack of relevant content and services (e.g., local, localized); Lack of cultural or social acceptance. Identified in a 2014 report (McKinsey and Company, 2014 cited in GMSA 2014, op.cit., pp 5)

4   **Incentives**

Evidence suggests high levels of awareness, interest and use of Internet particularly in urban and peri-urban areas

5   Specific local Internet content (as a proportion of global content) is not known.

APPENDIX A
LIST OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES AVAILABLE ONLINE[142]

E-Services online provides government services over the Internet. There are 3 Clusters in which the government will provide services. These are:

1   Government to Government Cluster: This cluster focuses on the exchanging of data between government ministries and departments where necessary. These services are only available to government officers.

- Case management for all the Business cluster services

- Case management for all the Citizen cluster services

- Resource and transport bookings for IHRDP Section of National Planning

- Case management for back office scholarship processing

- Executive outcome monitoring system for government agencies Annual Corporate Plan Monitoring

- Social Welfare Management System, electronic registration and assessment of cases and voucher printing

- People Hub. Data bank for persons information to be shared within various government agencies

2   Government to Businesses Cluster: This cluster focuses on providing online services to investors and businesses that need approval from the concerned government authorities. These services require free business user registrations and logins.

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142   https://www.egov.gov.fj/default.aspx Accessed 3 May 2015

- Foreign Investment Approval and Tracking IATS Facilitates foreign investors to apply online to start up a business in Fiji

- Company and Business Registration RCBS Facilitates business registrations for local and foreigners

- Person Search eBDM A prepay search for persons data as per the births, deaths and marriage registry records. This service is available to selected agencies only

- Forestry Licences eForestry Allows agents to apply for Forestry Licence

3   Government to Citizen Cluster: This cluster focuses on providing government services online to Fiji citizens, whereby citizens will be able to access and extract the required information from the government departments. Also citizens will be able to submit applications online to relevant authorities should the services be available online. These services require free citizen user registrations and logins.

- Exam Registration & Results Publishing EXMS Allows the schools or students to register for external examinations administered by Ministry of Education (MOE) as well and view their results

- Online Scholarships SCHS Online scholarships application and administration by Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA), Multi-Ethnic Affair (MEA), and the Public Service Commission (PSC)

- Electronic Geographical Information eGIS An online map shop for the Department of Land and Survey

- Births, Deaths & Marriages eBDM Online services for marriage registration (special license) and request for births, deaths and marriage certificates

- Statistics Online eBOS Citizens' access to sale of Statistical Information reports and releases from the Fiji Islands Bureau Of Statistics

- Forestry Licences eForestry Allows public to apply for Forestry Licence

- Property Development eProperty Allows public to apply for Property development licence

APPENDIX B
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS SAMPLE FRAME

Stakeholder group	Number
Academic	1
Government	3
Regional Agency	1
Total	5

APPENDIX C
METHODOLOGY

Desk research

The following websites were searched:

DFAT www.dfat.govt.au

3iE www.3ieimpact.org

SciDevNet www.scidev.net

Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) https://www.itu.int

Digital Review of Asia Pacific http://www.digital-review.org/

GMSA http://www.gsma.com/connectedwomen/

Pacific Telecommunications Council www.ptc.org

Pacific Island Chapter of the Internet Society http://www.picisoc.org

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Initiative (Australian Government) http://www.pacificwomen.org/

Association for Progressive Communications http://www.apc.org/

Asia and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development http://www.unapcict.org/

Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls http://www.endvawnow.org

ICT update from the Technical Centre for Rural and Agricultural Cooperation http://ictupdate.cta.int/

Emails soliciting information were sent to:

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Pasifika Nexus

Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association

World Bank

Vanuatu National Council of Women

Fiji Women's Rights Movement

Online calls for information were posted on the following list serves:

FemLINKPacific

Pacific Women's Information Network (Pacwin)

Search strings

'Mobile' or 'm' or 'e' or 'mobile app*' or 'digital'

Government

'Banking' or 'financ*' or 'money' or 'commerce' or business'

Health

'Education' or 'learning'

Participation

Vanuatu or PNG or Solomon Islands or Samoa

'Women' or 'gender'

Interview guide – Key Informant Interviews

Introductions

Introduce self

Research purpose and how UNESCAP will use findings to identify examples of good practice and develop an e-government and gender equality toolkit for policy makers/implementers

Informed consent explain consent process, invite questions and sign form

Personal background

Please tell me a little about yourself and your current role

E-government in Fiji

How has your organisation been involved in the Fiji Government's E-government Programme?

Probe: what other government departments/ministries has your organisation cooperated with on E-government? On what projects? What has worked well and what could be improved?

Does your organisation use any E-government applications/ ICT for online service delivery? This could include mobile phones for example.

Probe: What are these online service delivery applications?

Are any of these online service delivery applications directed at women?

Is there any data on citizen uptake?

What does the connectivity architecture look like in Fiji? Connectivity architecture includes mobile broadband, fixed broadband, wired/ wireless, services/speed/capacity (servers, apps, platforms)/user-cost and human capacity – what is the digital literacy picture in Fiji?

How do Fijian women access the Internet? Do they face barriers when trying to get online?

Does Fiji have a national ICT/e-Government strategy? What other relevant policy/strategy documents are there?

Gender in Fiji

In your view, what are the key gender equality and women's empowerment priorities in Fiji?

Thinking about your knowledge of e-government applications/ ICT, to what extent do you think they currently consider gender in design and implementation? For example, the 'digital divide' whereby men and women have different access to Internet, ICTs, mobile phones

Key questions for any E-government applications/examples (e.g. mWomen) that emerge:

What is the history of the initiative?

Who was involved? (i.e. which organisations)

Who in the Department/Ministry has responsibility for the initiative? Name/s of key people

What worked well in the collaboration (e.g. between Ministry and Vodafone) What worked less well?

Who is the initiative aimed at?

Were women involved as a particular audience?

Where and how has the initiative been implemented? What offline strategies accompany online strategies?

Do you think the initiative has made any difference? Why/why not? What impact has the initiative had? (at individual level, family/household level, socio-cultural level, economic level) Is there monitoring data?

What has been the uptake? What has been the uptake by women?

Regulatory environment

Do legislative frameworks exist for governing the connectivity infrastructure? For example, are you aware of any of the following instruments in Fiji:

a   Legal and policy frameworks regulating delivery of e-government services

b   Citizens charters for responsive and accountable e-government services

c   Data security and privacy legislation

d   Availability of e-government governance information in the public domain

e   Service level and data protection agreements in PPP delivery models.

Finally, is there anyone you would recommend the Review should speak to?

Thank you for your time and contribution.

Interview consent form

United Nations Economic Social Commission for Asia Pacific (UNESCAP) Review of e-government for Women's Empowerment.

I (insert name) of (insert organisation) agree to participate in this interview for the UNESCAP Review of e-government for Women's Empowerment, as outlined in the information provided to me by Roshika Deo.

I understand that:

My participation is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time.

Whether or not I participate will not affect any current or future relationships with UNESCAP or any other organisation/agency.

With my permission, the researcher will list my name and role as a contributor to the research in an appendix.

The researcher will seek to keep my information strictly confidential. No information in the report will be attributed to individuals.

I can request any information collected from me to be withdrawn at any time up until the analysis stage.

If I withdraw, I can request that any information collected from me be returned or destroyed.

With my permission, the interview may be taped, and may be transcribed.

Digital recordings, notes, and summaries will be stored securely by the researcher and will not identify me.

I understand the aims of the UNESCAP Review of E-government for Women's Empowerment, have read this consent form, and been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this interview.