



FIJIAN ELECTIONS OFFICE

Strategic Plan

2015 -2019

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## List of Abbreviations:

A-WEB	Association of World Election Bodies
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance & Elections
CSD	Corporate Services Directorate
DC	Divisional Coordinator
DSOE	Deputy Supervisor of Elections
EC	Electoral Commission
ED	Electoral Decree [2014]
ERV	Electoral (Registration of Voters) Decree [2012]
EMB	Election Management Body
EMIS	Election Management Information System
EVR	Electronic Voter Registration
FEEC	Fijian Electoral Education Centre
FBC	Fiji Broadcasting Corporation
FEO	Fijian Elections Office
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information Communication Technology
MIDA	Media Industry Development Authority
MIDD	Media Industry Development Decree [2010]
MOG	Multinational Observer Group
OPD	Operations Directorate
PIANZEA	Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators Network
PDW	Polling Day Workers
RMIS	Results Management Information System
SDCD	Strategic Development and Communications Directorate
SoE	Supervisor of Elections
SPC	Strategic Planning Committee
SPCT	Strategic Planning Core Team
SPE	Strategic Planning Expert

## Message from the Supervisor of Elections:

Bula

To be a successful election administration the FEO needs a roadmap and a strategic plan to focus the energy, resources and time of everyone in the organisation towards achieving commonly agreed goals and objectives. Planning and implementation in a proactive manner is the best way to deal with change and manage challenges. Proactive planning factors in possible risks instead of reacting to new situations by adopting short term quick fix solutions.



The Strategic Plan establishes the FEO's long-term goals and objectives. It further defines strategic foundations of the organisation like its mission, vision and core values and states where the organisation wishes to be in the future. In short, this first five-year strategic plan will equip the FEO to better plan and execute the next General Election.

It is essential that the learnings and best practices from the 2014 General Election be properly documented and carefully compiled into a plan for future elections. It is incumbent upon the FEO to focus on sustainability without compromising the integrity of the electoral process.

The FEO recognises that there is a need to develop capacity in elections in Fiji, not only for FEO staff, but all Fijians. Enhancing electoral knowledge has been identified as one of the primary focuses in this plan. Developing a practical and functioning operational plan for the next election has also been identified as high priority. Automation of processes and introduction of software solutions to reduce the risk of human error are also an integral part of the lead-up to the next election. Although a relatively new organisation, the FEO aims to become a regional electoral best practice leader and stretch beyond the region to attain membership of international electoral organisations.

I would like to acknowledge the Fijian Government and the donor partners for their continued support and assistance to the FEO throughout the strategic planning process and look forward to continued good relations as the implementation of the Strategic Plan continues.

I also acknowledge the staff of the FEO for their efforts in compiling the Strategic Plan with the assistance of Technical Advisors and I wish them the very best in progressing through the implementation of the plan.

Vinaka

Mohammed Saneem  
**Supervisor of Elections**

# 1. Introduction

## *The Fijian Elections Office*

The Fijian Elections Office [FEO] is an independent electoral management body formally established in March 2014 under the Electoral Decree, 2014. The mandate of the FEO is to conduct general and other elections in Fiji. The headquarters of the FEO is based in Suva and it has two (2) other branches in Lautoka and Labasa.

The Supervisor of Elections [SoE] is the head of the FEO and reports to the Electoral Commission [EC] under the legal framework. The FEO is made up of fifty-two (52) core staff in non-election years and up to three hundred and fifty (350) staff in an election year. The FEO's strict adherence to merit based recruitment has allowed it to attract professional and committed personnel to deliver its mandate.

The FEO conducts procurement through an independent and transparent procurement and tendering process. The FEO also owns and maintains a fleet of vehicles and other equipment required to carry out its functions effectively.

The Government through the Ministry responsible for Elections issues the FEO with an annual grant from the National Budget. Donor partners also assist the FEO in the implementation of its mandate through financial and technical support. Staff who are not from Fiji are recruited following the approval of the Minister responsible for Elections.

The FEO is recognised as a centre for electoral information in Fiji. The FEO also analyses electoral data collected during elections and from other sources to enhance the quality of its planning. This data is also used to produce literature on elections in Fiji for reference purposes.

In the period between national elections, the FEO conducts capacity building programmes for all Fijians about elections. The FEO also conducts in-house training for its long term and short term staff.

The FEO administers the conduct of Voter Registration and also administers Political Party Registrations and Disclosures. In addition to General Elections, the FEO has been tasked to conduct Trade Union Elections.

In 2014, the FEO organized and conducted the Fijian General Election for the new fifty (50) members of Parliament under the 2013 Constitution. The Multi-National Observer Group [MOG] concluded that the 2014 General Election in Fiji was fair and broadly represented the will of the Fijian People. The 2014 General Election also saw the lowest number of invalid votes in Fiji's history – 0.75%.

### *The Electoral Commission*

The EC is constituted as an independent, non-partisan authority that has responsibility for the registration of voters and the conduct of free and fair elections in accordance with the written law governing elections.

The EC is responsible for receipt and returning of the *Writ*, voter registration and maintenance of the Register of Voters, voter education, candidate registration, settlement of electoral disputes, including disputes relating to or arising from nominations, but excluding election petitions and disputes subsequent to the declaration of election results and monitoring compliance with any written law governing elections and political parties.

The EC consists of six (6) Commissioners and a Chairperson all of whom have been appointed for a term of three (3) years. The first Commission under the 2013 Constitution was appointed in February 2014.

The EC secretariat is provided by the FEO and is based in Suva at the FEO headquarters. The EC meets periodically during non-election years whilst it determines its meetings as per the need during elections.

The SoE reports on the activities of the FEO to the EC on a quarterly basis. The SoE provides reports to the EC as and when requested.

### *The 2014 General Election*

On 17 September 2014, Fijians voted in the General Election to elect the new 50 member parliament under the 2013 Constitution. A total of 84.6% of Fiji's 591,101 registered voters voted in the 2014 General Election. Only 0.75% or 3,714 of the 500,078 ballots cast were invalid, a record low for an election in Fiji.

The low number of invalid votes amongst those voting demonstrates the strength of the new electoral system, which gives every registered voter a single vote in a multi-member national constituency. Every voter had one vote and all votes had equal value.

Voters chose one candidate to vote for in a multi-member open list system of proportional representation. Each candidate was randomly assigned a unique three digit number prior to the election and these numbers appeared on the ballot paper.

The 2014 General Election was significant for Fiji as it was the first time Fijians voted under a Common Voter Roll. It was also the first time that Fijians voted for the same pool of candidates and did not have to stand in different queues based on their race.

The majority of voters cast their ballot on 17 September in what was also Fiji's first single day election, with the remainder having voted either by postal ballot or pre-poll vote.

### *The Multinational Observer Group Report*

The Fijian Government invited international observers from fifteen (15) countries co-led by Australia, Indonesia and India to observe the 2014 General Election. Observers were present in the country from receipt of nominations up until the *Writ* was returned.

Ninety-two (92) observers were part of the long term and short term observer missions. The Multinational Observer Group [MOG] issued a preliminary statement at the conclusion of the count and subsequently issued a comprehensive report.

The MOG Final Report recognised significant improvements achieved by Fiji in relation to elections and also made recommendations for improvement of certain processes for future elections.

The MOG concluded that the 2014 General Election in Fiji was fair and broadly represented the will of the Fijian people. The MOG Final Report was welcomed by the FEO.

### *Legal Framework*

The Electoral Decree which came into force on 28 March 2014 established the FEO as an independent office headed by the Supervisor of Elections. Under the terms of the 2013 Constitution (Section 76 (4)) the Supervisor of Elections is appointed by the President on the advice of the Constitutional Office Commission following consultation with the Electoral Commission.

Under the 2013 Constitution (Section 76(2)) the Supervisor of Elections, acting under the direction of the Electoral Commission, administers the registration of voters for elections of Members to Parliament, conducts elections of Members of Parliament and such other elections as Parliament prescribes and may perform such other functions as are conferred by written law.

The Supervisor of Elections is the legal successor to the office of the Registrar of Voters under the Electoral (Registration of Voters) Decree, 2012 and to the office of the Registrar of Political Parties under the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosure) Decree, 2013.

Under section 6 of the Electoral Decree, 2014 the Supervisor of Elections as head of the Fijian Elections Office:

- a) administers the registration of political parties;
- b) administers the registration of voters and maintains the Register of Voters;
- c) administers the registration of candidates;



- d) implements voter information and education initiatives;
- e) conducts election of Members of Parliament and such other elections as prescribed under section 154, including the conduct of voting, counting and tabulation of election results;
- f) oversees compliance with campaign rules and reporting requirements; and
- f) performs any other function as conferred by the Decree or any other written law.

The FEO is further guided by the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding & Disclosures) Decree, 2013 and the Electoral (Registration of Voters) Decree, 2012.

Section 154 of the Electoral Decree, 2014 further promulgates that the FEO takes on legal responsibility in conducting elections for elected bodies of trade unions, municipalities and such other elections determined by the Minister.

### *Fiji's International and Regional Commitments Regarding Elections*

Fiji is a member of the United Nations (UN), the Commonwealth, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) and other regional and international organisations.

As a member of the UN, Fiji ratified the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Fiji has acceded to a number of international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, in 1995), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD, in 1973) and more recently, the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, in 2010).

The FEO is a member of the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators Network (PIANZEA). PIANZEA is a close association of Pacific electoral administrators who, in the Pacific spirit, collectively encourage the free flow of electoral information among member countries and provide assistance where possible.

The FEO has joined the Association of World Election Bodies (A-Web) during its second general assembly in 2015. A-Web is an umbrella organisation of election management bodies (EMB) with some 100 member countries' EMBs. It was founded in 2013 as a result of a global consensus on the necessity of an electoral organisation that can establish sustainable government through free and fair elections and contribute to socioeconomic development.

## 2. Strategic Planning Process

The FEO reviewed the 2014 General Election and the SoE published the Final Report about the 2014 General Election on 22 October 2014. The Final Report is available on the FEO website ( <http://www.electionsfiji.gov.fj/>).

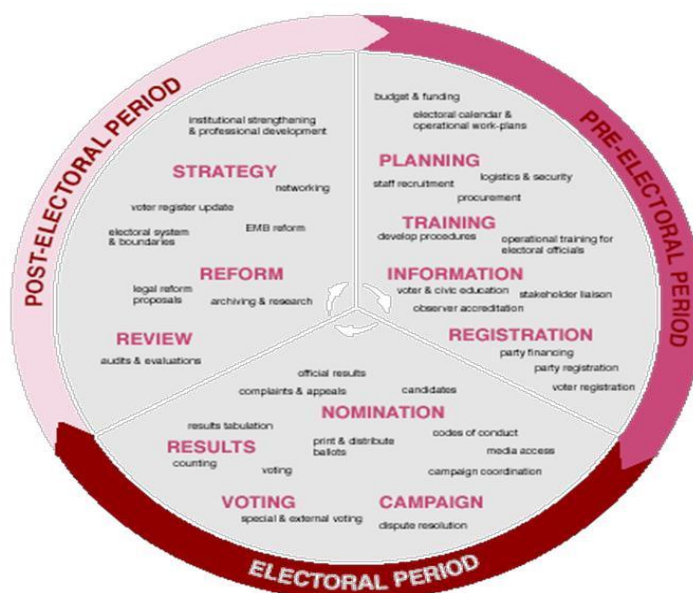
Based on lessons learned from the 2014 electoral process the FEO identified the developing of a strategic plan as a priority. It was important to conduct a coordinated process review and improvement exercise.

On 17 March 2015 the SoE announced at a press conference that the FEO had commenced its strategic planning exercise to draft its five-year strategic plan for the upcoming electoral cycle in line with international best practice.

### *Developing a Strategic Plan*

An effective planning process ensures that all electoral operations take place successfully, in a timely manner and are conducted in compliance with the legal framework.

The FEO takes stock of all the steps of the electoral cycle as illustrated below:<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> The cyclical approach to electoral processes and electoral assistance was designed by European Commission and International IDEA; see: <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/focus/focus-on-effective-electoral-assistance/the-electoral-cycle-approach>.

### *Strategic Planning Workshop*

A three (3) day Strategic Planning workshop for all FEO staff was conducted by an external EU funded Strategic Planning Expert (SPE). The SPE facilitated the workshops and outlined the advantages and basic parameters of strategic planning for FEO staff to fully embrace the benefits of strategic planning.

At the workshop, FEO staff discussed and agreed on a new vision, mission and core values of the FEO resulting in the finalization of its Strategic Foundations Document.

### *Planning Strategy*

For the strategic planning exercise the SoE appointed a Strategic Planning Coordinator [SPC] and decided to use as a planning reference the strategic planning process methodology example outlined by the *IFES Practical Guide for Election Management Bodies to Conduct a Strategic Planning Exercise* and adapt it to the Fijian circumstances.

The FEO also appointed an eight (8) member Strategic Planning Core Team (SPCT) which met for the first time on 16 March 2015. The SPCT adopted the structure of the Strategic Plan to contain the strategic goals, strategic objectives and activities. It agreed that the FEO will carry out a risk assessment for the activities in its annual plan.

The SPCT agreed that the annual review and planning cycle for the Strategic Plan will be from July to July of every year. This allows the FEO to strategically assess the progress of the activities for each calendar year midway whilst it also allows for the preparation of the budget plan for the subsequent calendar year.

The SPCT also approached the planning by splitting the FEO staff into their core areas of work and organizing the delivery of activities associated in each area independently first, followed by a synchronization session.



### *Developing the Strategic Plan*

The SPCT discussed the draft strategic objectives in great detail and agreed on fifteen (15) strategic goals. The SPCT decided that FEO directorates liaise with each other to group strategic goals according to the FEO directorates' responsibilities.

This resulted in the FEO executive management formulating the first three strategic goals, followed by four goals from Operations Directorate, three goals from Strategic Development and Communications Directorate and five goals from Corporate Services Directorate.

The FEO published its draft Strategic Plan including Vision, Mission Statement, Core Values, as well as fifteen (15) strategic goals for stakeholder consultation and comments on its website on 26 March 2015. Consultation meetings with electoral stakeholders were held on 30 and 31 March and questionnaires were also provided to them for feedback purposes.

The SPCT worked with their respective directorates with the assistance of external technical advisers (TA) on the gap analysis and the setting of strategic objectives for their respective goals.

Further, during the process that followed, the FEO staff translated strategic objectives into well-thought-through activities and assigned individual responsibilities and time lines as part of the strategic implementation plan.

A draft Strategic Plan was reviewed during a cooling period and following a final review, the final document was published.

### 3. Strategic Foundations of the FEO

#### *Vision Statement*

**Our vision is to be recognised as a leader in establishing best practices in the conduct of elections.**

#### *Mission Statement*

**Our mission is the professional and independent conduct of credible elections that enables every Fijian to participate in Fiji's democratic process.**

#### *Core Values*

The FEO believes in:

##### **Right to vote**

Every citizen over the age of eighteen has the right to vote

##### **One person, one vote, one value**

Every voter has one vote, with each vote being equal

##### **Secrecy of the ballot**

Every voter has the right to vote by secret ballot

##### **A single National Register of Voters**

Every registered voter shall be listed on a single National Register of Voters

##### **Honesty, Integrity, and Transparency**

The Fijian Elections Office values honesty, integrity and transparency in all its transactions.

##### **Independence and Impartiality**

The Fijian Elections Office is an independent body and shows no preference in either speech or action for any individual candidate or political party

##### **Professionalism**

The Fijian Elections Office is a professional body that adheres to the highest standards of conduct and practice

##### **Innovation**

The Fijian Elections Office aspires to introduce the most innovative solutions and practices in delivering its functions

## 4. Fijian Elections Office Staff

### *FEO Human Resources Principles*

The structure of the FEO has been developed in accordance with Section 6 of the Electoral Decree, 2014. The underpinning principles for the Human Resource Management strategies and activities of the FEO are:

- a) Merit based recruitment and selection focussed on selecting high performing, honest employees with high standards of integrity;
- b) Equal employment opportunity;
- c) Position based remuneration and benefits;
- d) Transparency and accountability in decision making;
- e) Fairness and equity in all staffing decisions; and
- f) Commitment to training and staff development in a variety of activities to enable all staff to reach their full capacity.

The FEO will ensure that all policies and procedures are consistent with these principles and is committed to creating and maintaining a high performing organisation.

### *Performance Management System*

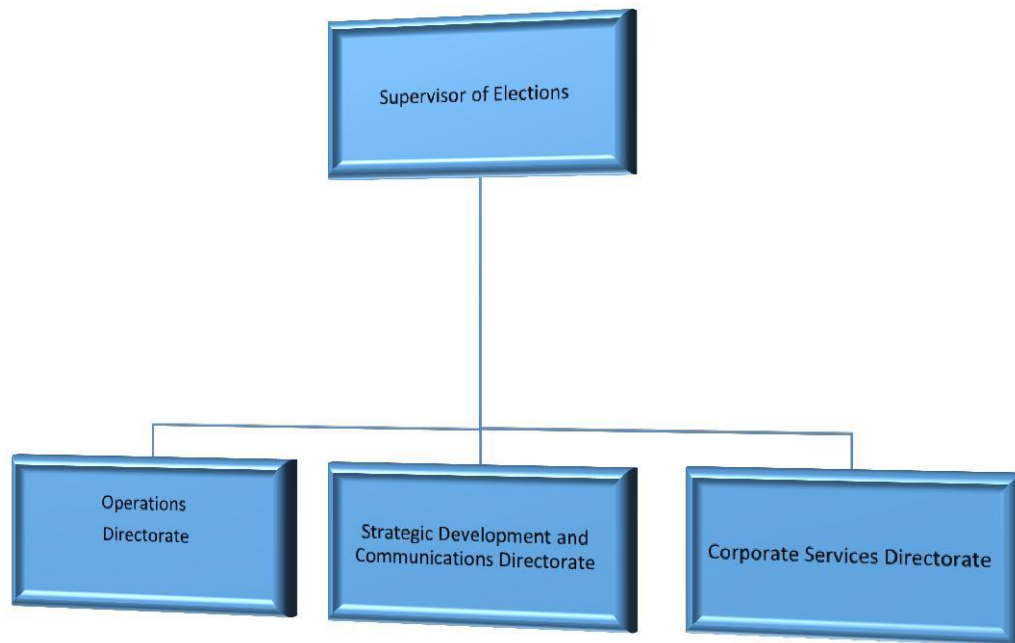
The FEO has developed a strategy for performance management which aims at establishing a culture in which individuals and groups take responsibility for the continuous improvement of business processes and their own skills, behaviour and contributions and commit to learning from experience.

The FEO performance management is part of and feeds into the strategic planning by defining expectations and key performance indicators expressed as objectives in strategic and operational plans. Measurement of progress and on-going feedback are core elements of the FEO performance management strategy. Performance management applies to all employees, not just the managers, and to teams as much as to individuals. It is a continuous process and reviewed periodically, not a one-off event.

### *FEO Organisation Structure*

The SoE during the elections period is assisted by a Deputy Supervisor and three (3) Directors i.e. Director Corporate Services, Director Strategic Development and Communications and the Director Operations.

A graphical overview of the core structure of the FEO is illustrated below:



The Operations Directorate (OPD) includes the Operations and the Industrial Elections department, as well as the four Divisional Coordinators. The Operations Directorate's core responsibilities include the maintaining of an accurate and current register of voters, the delivery of effective electoral services and to manage an effective logistics infrastructure.

The Director of the Strategic Development and Communications Directorate (SDCD) supervises three Coordinators who are covering the three main responsibilities of the Directorate: electoral procedures, training & staff development and stakeholder awareness. The SDCs work focuses on voter education, training of FEO permanent and temporary staff, as well as on advocating electoral best practice and procedures.

The Corporate Services Directorate (CSD) includes four Departments: Information Communication Technology (ICT), Procurement and Asset Management, Human Resources and Finance & Administration. The CSD's core responsibilities are the implementation of corporate governance within the legal framework, to recruit and retain skilled staff, to establish modern ICT systems for the FEO, ensure sustainable management of resources and to exercise prudent financial management.

During a General Election staff levels increase to some 350 FEO short term staff plus about 9,000 polling day workers on Election Day. During an election the FEO establishes a field structure with 18 FEO area offices which are opened some five months before an election and closed again after an election.

### *Training Strategy*

The FEO regards training as an investment and all staff are eligible to attend training to ensure they are able to carry out their assigned duties, and to develop their skills and potential for the future. Training is interlinked with performance management, and all core employees will identify any current and future training needs through their performance planning and review discussions with their supervisor. Attendance at any training activity will be balanced with the operational requirements of the FEO.

The Fijian Electoral Education Centre (FEEC) has also been set up in the FEO. The purpose of the FEEC is to enable the FEO to become a leading institution in providing electoral education in Fiji. The FEEC will focus on five (5) key areas:

1. Establish the training needs of the FEO;
2. Develop and offer electoral courses;
3. Obtain accreditations for courses developed;
4. Develop partnerships and provide inputs into academic programmes; and
5. Conduct on-going research on electoral best practises.

All core staff of the FEO will attend an induction program within their first month of employment. The full program for induction will be developed by the FEEC. The focus for induction will be on the rights and responsibilities of the employee in their particular role with the FEO and will include information on the role of the FEO and broad principles of democracy and election management.



## 5. Electoral Calendar

The following electoral calendar has been derived from the Constitution and the Electoral Decree, 2014. Dates fixed by the legal framework have little flexibility or discretion.

When	Reference	What
At least 3 years and 6 months after first meeting of Parliament	C. 58(3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dissolution of Parliament</li> <li>The President may, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, dissolve Parliament by proclamation, but only after a lapse of 3 years and 6 months from the date of its first meeting after a general election of the Members of Parliament</li> </ul>
Within 7 days from the expiry of Parliament or from the proclamation of its dissolution by the President	C. 59 (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Writ</i> for the election of Members of Parliament shall be issued by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister</li> </ul>
At least 44 days prior to Election Day	C. 170(3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Writ</i> for the first General Election of Members of Parliament under this Constitution shall be issued by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister</li> </ul>
Day of <i>Writ</i>	ERV. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closure of National Register of Voters</li> </ul>
At least 30 days prior to Election Day	ED. 41(1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of all polling stations and polling venues</li> </ul>
14 days after the date of the issue of the <i>Writ</i>	C. 60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End of Nomination Period</li> <li>The last day for the receipt of a nomination of a candidate for election to Parliament is 14 days after the date of the issue of the <i>Writ</i></li> </ul>
Maximum 30 days prior to Election Day	C. 61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Polling commences no later than 30 days after the last day for the receipt of nominations</li> </ul>
1 day following end of nomination	ED. 29 (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Display of Nomination</li> <li>Nomination must be displayed and published the day following the close of nominations</li> </ul>

When	Reference	What
1 day (12:00pm) following end of nominations	ED. 28(1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Withdrawal of Nominations</li> <li>Candidates may withdraw their candidacy up until 12:00pm on the day following close of nominations</li> </ul>
1 day (4:00pm) following end of nominations	ED. 30(3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objections to nomination</li> <li>An objection to a nomination must be delivered to the EC by 4:00pm on the day following close of nominations</li> </ul>
Within 3 days upon receipt of the objection on nominations	ED. 30(5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EC ruling on objection and notification of the person objecting and the candidate whose nomination is objected to</li> </ul>
within 7 days after the close of nominations	ED. 35 (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EC to give Notice of Poll in the Gazette and media including candidate names in alphabetical order</li> </ul>
within 7 days after the close of nominations	ED. 36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of a <b>National Candidates List</b> containing the names of all candidates according to candidate numbers</li> </ul>
Within 7 days following end of nominations	ED. 82(3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule of Pre-Poll published</li> </ul>
At least 21 days prior to Election Day	ED. 68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close of Postal Voting Applications</li> </ul>
48 hours prior to Election Day and on the Election Day until the close of polling at all polling stations	ED. 63 (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campaign blackout</li> </ul>
Election Day	C. 61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Election Day</li> <li>Polling commences no later than 30 days after the last day for the receipt of nominations</li> </ul>

When	Reference	What
Within 24 hours from receipt of Polling Station protocol of results	ED. 107	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Declaration of results</b> and the names of those candidates who are elected as members of Parliament must be done within 24 hours from the receipt of the original of the final protocol of results from all polling stations</li> </ul>
Within 21 days	C. 66(3)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election petition addressed to the Court of Disputed Returns</li> </ul>
Within 42 days (21 days of appeal)	C. 66(8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ruling by the Court of Disputed Returns within 21 days of the date when the petition or proceeding is brought before it</li> </ul>
Within 1 month	ED. 109	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SoE Report</b> submitted to the EC and published</li> </ul>
Within 60 days of Court decision	ED. 130(4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any repeat polling ordered by the Court to take place</li> </ul>
Within 3 months after the date of the election	ED. 14(g)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EC and the SoE submit a joint post-election report to the President and Parliament</li> </ul>

*C= Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, 2013*

*ED = Electoral Decree, 2014*

*ERV = Electoral (Registration of Voters) Decree, 2012*

## 6. General Election 2014; Review and Assessment:

### *Election Summary*

#### **KEY EVENTS /DATES AND TIME LINES ELECTION 2014**

➤ Electoral (Registration of Voters) Decree	28 June 2012
➤ Registration of Voters Began	03 July 2012
➤ Political Parties Decree	15 January 2013
➤ Promulgation of Constitution of the Republic of Fiji	06 September 2013
➤ Appointment of Electoral Commission	09 January 2014
➤ Electoral Decree	28 March 2014
➤ Appointment of Supervisor of Elections	28 March 2014
➤ Writ issued	04 August 2014
➤ Voter Registration closed	04 August 2014
➤ Party Registration closed	4 August 2014
➤ End of Nomination Period	by 12pm 18 August 2014
➤ Withdrawal of Nomination	by 12pm 19 August 2014
➤ Objections to Nominations	by 4pm 19 August 2014
➤ Appeals on Nomination issues finalized	22 August 2014
➤ National Candidates List published	23 August 2014
➤ Application for Postal Votes closed	27 August 2014
➤ Pre -Poll	commenced on 03 September 2014
➤ <b>Election Day</b>	<b>17 September 2014</b>
➤ Final Results Announced	22 September 2014
➤ Electoral Commission returns Writ of Elections to President	22 September 2014
➤ SoE published 2014 General Election Final Report	22 October 2014
➤ Joint Report by SoE and EC to President and Parliament	17 December 2014

### *Political Party Registration*

The Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) Decree, 2013 (PPD) was promulgated to create a more prescriptive and transparent registration process for political parties. The SoE is also the Registrar of Political Parties under the PPD.

A total of seven (7) political parties were registered. Applications for registration by three proposed parties were rejected by the Registrar of Political Parties.

The following political parties were registered for the 2014 General Election: Fiji Labour Party [FLP], National Federation Party [NFP], Social Democratic Liberal Party [SODELPA], People's Democratic Party [PDP], FijiFirst, Fiji United Freedom Party [FUFP] and One Fiji Party [One Fiji].

### *Voter Registration*

Prior to the Constitution and the Electoral Decree, 2014, the Electoral (Registration of Voters) Decree 2012 was promulgated. This provided for the establishment of an electronic, biometric national register of voters.

Beginning in 2012 the FEO conducted nationwide voter registration programmes in Fiji and overseas to allow all eligible Fijian citizens to register. Approximately 95% of the estimated 620,000 eligible voters registered resulting in 591,101 registered Fijian voters.

### *Voter Education*

In line with section 6 of the Electoral Decree, 2014, the FEO developed a voter awareness strategy using a multi-media and multi-lingual approach on when, where and how to vote. The FEO maintained a call centre (545) for almost 2 months answering more than 88,000 queries. A free SMS platform where voters could text their voter registration number to 545 was developed to allow a free and easily accessible mechanism for voters to access information about the location of their polling station. The 545 SMS system recorded more than 600,000 queries and over 100,000 of those queries were made on Election Day.

### *Candidate Nomination*

The Constitution and the Electoral Decree, 2014 sections 23 - 34 allow for the registration of party-nominated and independent candidates. The FEO received 262 nominations of which a total of 248 candidates were registered, all but two by the registered seven political parties. It was noted that the nomination of candidates was done by most parties on 18 August 2014 as this was the last day for receipt of nominations; this effectively prevented political parties from replacing any nomination that was not accepted.

### *Declaration of Assets, Liabilities and Income Procedures*

Under sections 16, 23, 24, 25 and 26 of the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) Decree, 2013 all registered political parties, their individual candidates and independent candidates were to declare their assets, liabilities and income for stipulated periods.

For this provision to be complied with, the FEO drafted a Declaration of Assets, Liabilities and Income Form to be completed by office holders of all registered political parties, their candidates and independent candidates. The FEO is required to publish the declarations once received from the political parties and registered officer and office holders of the party.

## *Accreditation of Political Party/Candidate Agents, Media, and Election Observers*

The FEO conducted briefings and drafted an individual Code of Conduct for political party/candidate agents, media, and election observers. For the 2014 General Election the FEO accredited 92 international observers who were part of the Multi-National Observer Group. No domestic observers were accredited. A total of 387 media personnel were accredited representing 34 media organisations.

## *Polling Day Workers*

Polling Day Workers (PDW) were recruited through open merit-based tests throughout Fiji. Of the more than 15,600 applicants a total of 10,913 were trained and a total of 9,030 PDW were appointed to work for the FEO on Election Day.

The FEO prepared a Presiding Officer Operations and Training Manual and a Polling Day Worker Operations and Training Manual for the coherent training and implementation of procedures. To avoid dilution of information the FEO decided against using a cascading training approach but trained 50 national trainers and training assistants for a roving training implementation by conducting 959 training sessions countrywide in over a period of approximately two months.

## *Postal Voting*

Postal Voting provided an opportunity for voters who were overseas and those who could not attend a polling station on Election Day, to cast their vote. Two thirds of the more than 12,000 postal votes sent out were received back. The Electoral Commission was disappointed with this outcome and is reviewing the postal vote process with a view to improving it before the next General Election.

## *Pre-Polling*

There were 549 pre-polling stations (with 66,389 registered voters) identified in accordance with section 82 of the Electoral Decree. In the majority of cases pre-poll schedules were adhered to as planned, however in some cases there were amendments made due to unforeseen circumstances e.g. weather, tides, etc. Within Fiji there are polling venues with the same or similar names which caused confusion when allocating resources such as the voter lists for pre-polling. In preparation for the 2018 General Election pre-poll schedules can be prepared at least six months in advance allowing FEO to furnish it to the voters in the proposed areas well ahead of time.

### *Election Day Polling and Counting*

On Election Day, 17 September 2014 polling took place from 7:30am to 6:00pm in 822 polling venues. Voters were assigned to a polling station closest to their residential address. The majority of the polling stations began operations on time. Polling agents and accredited international observers were permitted into the polling stations. The training of the presiding officers and polling day workers (PDW) proved effective as the PDW applied procedures consistently throughout the country. There was a very high voter turnout. A total of 84.6% of Fiji's 591,101 registered voters voted in the Election. Reconciliation and counting were conducted at the polling stations immediately after the closing of the polls. Presiding Officers called the National Call Centre to transmit provisional results and later forwarded official polling station result forms and record books in tamper-evident envelopes to the National Results Centre.

Challenges included the withdrawal of some 300 polling day workers the day before elections, attributed to personal fear for their own safety. The FEO was able to find replacements. Further, some logistical hiccups were encountered with signing of contracts and payments of salaries for PDWs. Also some voters arrived at polling stations with voter identification cards but discovered their names were not on the Voter List in that particular station even though they were apparently assigned to that particular polling station.

### *Results Centre and Results Management Information System (RMiS)*

The RMiS system was based on a double blind entry of results and used two modes; a provisional for the provisional results received by phone, as well as the official mode for the official results from the received official Protocol of Results. The RMiS system worked effectively and was an efficient way to produce the Final National Results Tally.

### *Budget*

The 2014 budget preparation exercise was done without any baselines as the demands of the 2014 General Election were different from the last election Fiji conducted in 2006. Since operational strategies were not fully prepared at the time, it was a predicted estimate of FJD 42 million based on assumptions of the operational strategy.

The 2014 General Election provided the FEO with particulars of expenses that will be required to conduct a one day election. The government budgeted almost FJD 18 million with an additional FJD 21 million received from international funding partners, first and foremost Papua New Guinea. While the overall budget available was over FJD 39 million the FEO had expenditures of only FJD 23.5 million as of 13 October 2014.

## 7. FEO Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities (SWOT) Analysis

Following the 2014 General Election the FEO conducted an assessment of its internal strengths and weaknesses which affect the FEO's current and potential performance.

Further, it analysed its external opportunities and threats that affect the operating environment in which the FEO functions.





## 8. FEO Stakeholders

As part of its strategic planning exercise the SPCT discussed who and which groups are electoral stakeholders in Fiji. The FEO grouped its electoral stakeholders into the following categories:

1. Fijian Citizens;
2. Political Parties and Candidates;
3. Parliament of Fiji;
4. Government Agencies;
5. Media;
6. Advocacy Groups; and
7. Suppliers.

### *Fijian Citizens*

The Republic of Fiji with some 900,000 inhabitants has an estimated 620,000 eligible voters, Fijian citizens above the age of 18. The 2013 Constitution recognises the principle of equal rights for all Fijians, replacing a previous legal bias in favour of one group.

The FEO has to ensure that a nationwide voter information and education programme is implemented on a timely basis, to inform and educate voters concerning the voter registration process, candidates and political parties, voting procedures, including postal and pre-poll voting and procedures for protecting electoral rights.

### *Political Parties and Candidates*

Fiji has seven political parties duly registered under the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) Decree, 2013. Party candidates are individuals who are included in the party list for a registered political party while an independent candidate means an individual who is nominated to stand in an election in accordance with the Electoral Decree and is not a party candidate.

The FEO has the responsibility to register political parties; process the nomination of candidates, monitor and enforce compliance with the Electoral Decree, 2014 regarding campaign finance and the Code of Conduct. The FEO has also the responsibility to inform candidates and political parties and to attend to complaints.

Following the development of a new Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of Fiji), the General Elections was held on 17 September 2014 to select 50 Members for a new unicameral Parliament. The new Parliament opened on 6 October 2014. Currently three political parties are represented in Parliament. ( <http://www.parliament.gov.fj/>).

The Parliament of Fiji has the powers to pass and amend relevant electoral legislation and legislation which has an impact on electoral processes. Further, Parliament passes the budget which includes the provision earmarked for the FEO.

### *Government Agencies*

The FEO has several governmental agencies as its stakeholders. The SPCT identified the following as key stakeholders:

- a) **Minister responsible for Elections** is the line minister responsible for matters related to elections. The FEO also liaises with other government ministries through the Ministry Responsible for Elections. Parliamentary queries regarding the FEO are handled through the Minister.
- b) **Ministry of Justice** is the civil registry and custodian of all civil records. The FEO utilizes the data for various purposes in the performance of its functions.
- c) **Department of Immigration** maintains the travel history and passport related details of Fijians. The FEO refers all queries regarding candidate eligibility under the requirements for verification by the department.
- d) **Ministry of Provincial Development** maintains the regional infrastructure within Fiji. The FEO liaises with the Divisional Commissioners from the Ministry for logistics and local support.
- e) **Fiji Corrections Services & Judicial Department** are information hubs for details of imprisonment records of individuals and assist the FEO in determining the eligibility of a person to be a candidate or a voter.
- f) **Fiji Police** are primary providers of security and also logistics to some extent. The FEO also utilizes the Criminal Records Database held by the Fiji Police for various eligibility checks.
- g) **Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption [FICAC]** is the primary investigator and prosecutor of all electoral offences. The FEO reports any suspected electoral offence to FICAC.
- h) **Bureau of Statistics** provides the FEO with the required statistical data to assist it in its planning and logistics.
- i) **Ministry of Education** is a key Ministry that FEO liaises with for access to schools and students e.g. schools to use as polling venues and voter enrolment of students.
- j) **Ministry of Finance** is the custodian of Government finances and the FEO liaises with the Ministry through its line Ministry for funding purposes.

## *Media*

### Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA)

The Media Industry Development Decree, 2010 (MIDD; amended in 2013) regulates media in Fiji. The MIDD provides the Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) as the regulatory body.

MIDA collaborates with the FEO to implement media training and capacity building in election reporting as well as to introduce appropriate guidelines for media reporting within the legal framework.

The FEO also liaises with local and international media organisations. The FEO considers the following large media organisations as key partners in delivering its mandate:

- a) Fiji Broadcasting Corporation [FBC] - The FBC operates one TV channel and six radio channels covering the country.
- b) Communications Fiji Limited - Communications Fiji Ltd operates five radio stations covering the country.
- c) Fiji Television Limited - Fiji TV Ltd operates Fiji One TV which is the leading TV broadcaster in Fiji and the Pacific region and pay TV channel SKY Pacific.
- d) The Fiji Sun - Daily newspaper with some 30,000 daily copies.
- e) The Fiji Times - Daily newspaper with some 30,000 daily copies.

## *International Cooperation Partners*

The FEO has received support including technical support, in-kind support and funding from international cooperation partners. These partners have been Papua New Guinea, Australia, the European Union, New Zealand, India, the People's Republic of Turkey, Korea and the UK.

## *Advocacy Groups*

The FEO maintains an open approach to advocacy groups within the legal framework.

## *Suppliers*

The FEO has more than 50 different suppliers who were contacted to provide comments on the draft strategic plan and past procurement processes. The timely supply of professionally produced and delivered electoral materials is key to the functioning of the FEO's electoral processes. Crucial aspects jeopardize the whole electoral calendar and process.

### *Stakeholder Consultation and Information*

The FEO published its draft Strategic Plan including Vision, Mission Statement and Core Values, as well as 15 strategic goals for stakeholder consultation and comments on its website (<http://www.electionsfiji.gov.fj/strategic-planning-survey-questionnaire/>).

The FEO further created and provided six different strategic planning survey questionnaires for the following categories: Civil Society Organisations and Non-Government Organisations; generics, government departments, medias, political parties and suppliers. Consultation meetings with electoral stakeholders were held on 30 and 31 March 2015 and questionnaires were sent out and shared beforehand.

The SoE gave a press conference about the commencing of the FEO strategic planning exercise to inform electoral stakeholders and the Fijian voters on 17 March 2015. The FEO also published a newspaper advertisement about the possibility of participating in the stakeholder consultation process and providing comments to the FEO.

### *Stakeholder Communication Strategy*

The FEO stakeholder communication strategy currently comprises publications in the media and issuing of press releases. Stakeholders are also engaged via social media and email platforms. An interactive and informative website is also maintained to provide current and accurate information.

The FEO actively participates in public events to ensure that its services are accessible to Fijians. It also conducts public exercises such as school visits and registration drives to maintain contact with voters and also to promote its services.

A wide range of intellectual, educational and communication materials have been produced by the FEO for these purposes.

## 9. Fijian Elections Office Strategic Goals and Strategic Objectives

Defining the FEO's strategy involved identifying the required changes to move the FEO towards its vision. Strategic planning allows the FEO to determine basic long-term goals and objectives, adopt necessary courses of action and commit required financial and human resources to achieve these goals.

The FEO with its three directorates has identified the 15 strategic goals below for the five-year strategic plan 2015 to 2019. The FEO directorates liaise with each other but Strategic goals are grouped according to the directorates' responsibilities. This resulted in the FEO executive management formulating the first three strategic goals (green), followed by four goals from Operations Directorate (yellow), three goals from Strategic Development and Communications Directorate (red) and five goals from Corporate Services Directorate (blue).

1. Implement excellence in leadership
2. Align the Fijian Elections Office's functions to the legislative roles and responsibilities
3. To be recognised as a reputable and professional electoral management body in advocating electoral best practice at national, regional and international level

4. Maintain an accurate and current National Register of Voters
5. Deliver effective electoral services to all eligible voters across Fiji
6. Conduct elections in line with best practices
7. Establish and manage an effective logistics infrastructure for the efficient delivery of elections

8. Enhance the knowledge and skills of Fijian Elections Office staff and stakeholders through training and capacity building
9. A well informed community capable of actively participating in electoral processes
10. Formulate and implement effective and lawful procedures for the conduct of elections

11. Implement the highest standards of Corporate Governance within the legal framework
12. Establish modern and responsive Information Communication Technology [ICT] systems for the Fijian Elections Office
13. Recruit and retain skilled staff through applying fair and merit based processes
14. Ensure that the Fijian Elections Office has sustainable management of physical resources and infrastructure to meet its legislative mandate
15. Exercise prudent financial management

The FEO SPCT has agreed on 15 strategic goals. In total the three FEO directorates identified 59 strategic objectives with more than 600 activities. The FEO outlines below in greater details the 15 strategic goals with its 59 strategic objectives for the electoral cycle 2015 to 2019:

### **Goal 1: Implement Excellence in Leadership**

The role of the executive is to promote highly skilled work environment with motivating and captivating leadership. The FEO as an organisation should aspire to become a leader in organisational management and development. The following objectives operate to facilitate this goal.

#### **Objective 1: Maintain highest standards of ethical and professional conduct at work**

*Implement a Code of Conduct and customer service policy for the FEO to ensure that staff maintains professional conduct at work at all times and maintain highest standards of customer service.*

#### **Objective 2: Implement innovative solutions to improve the administration of elections in Fiji**

*Use innovative solutions to improve the conduct of elections by implementing an Election Management System (EMS), mobile voting platform and elections toolkit.*

#### **Objective 3: Strengthen collaboration and networking with stakeholders to build confidence and trust in the FEO activities**

*Liaise with key stakeholders on a continuous basis on matters relating to legal advice, FEO annual budget and donor support and technical assistance.*

### **Goal 2: Align the Fijian Elections Office functions to the legislative roles and responsibilities**

The FEO will at all times comply with the relevant laws governing its mandate. It must ensure that all its activities conform to the legal requirements.

**Objective 1: Implement and review FEO policies, procedures and guidelines within the legal framework**

*Assess and identify implementation of new policies, procedures and guidelines as well as review the existing policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure compliance within the legal framework.*

**Objective 2: Implement an internal audit framework for the FEO in line with international audit and compliance standards**

*Conduct internal audit reviews for effective governance and risk management practices in line with international audit and compliance standards.*

**Objective 3: Successfully conduct operational functions of the FEO**

*Successfully conduct operational functions of the FEO through quarterly management meetings and consultation with the Electoral Commission on matters required by the Electoral Decree.*

**Goal 3: To be recognised as a reputable and professional electoral management body in advocating electoral best practice at national, regional and international levels**

The FEO will advance itself as a reputable and credible organisation within the National, Regional and International frameworks. In joining internationally recognised institutions, the FEO will enhance its stature and recognition as a leading advocate of electoral best practices and electoral conduct.

**Objective 1: Strengthen collaboration and identify partnership programmes with other Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and international organisations**

*Liaise with EMBs and explore membership of electoral associations to benefit from knowledge exchange and electoral visitor programmes.*

**Objective 2: Establish FEO as an electoral resource for other Electoral Management Bodies in the Pacific**

*Establish the FEO as an electoral information hub by sharing electoral resource materials with other EMBs in the Pacific.*

**Objective 3: Strengthen the FEO's stature in the regional and international electoral arena**

*Build strong network ties with regional and international EMBs and international organisations through exchange of electoral knowledge and experiences.*

## **Goal 4: Maintain an accurate and current National Register of Voters**

The Electoral Decree specifies that the Supervisor of Elections as head of the FEO administers the registration of voters and maintains the Register of Voters. The FEO aims to maintain an accurate and current register of voters for conducting inclusive elections and to avoid disenfranchisement.

### **Objective 1: Review the current Electronic Voter Registration System (EVR)**

*The EVR system is a new system that has been adopted and implemented in accordance with the Electoral (Registration of Voters) Decree, 2012. The EVR system was first used in the 2014 General Election, hence the need for a review to improve this EVR system for future elections.*

### **Objective 2: Register all eligible voters**

*The FEO is mandated to register all eligible voters who are Fijian citizens and have reached the age of 18. The Electoral (Registration of Voters) Decree, 2012 stipulates that the FEO must conduct continuous annual registration for new voters.*

### **Objective 3: Maintain an accurate National Register of Voters**

*The National Register of Voters contains the names and other relevant information of all registered voters. It allows the FEO to ensure that a voter votes only once in any General Election.*

### **Objective 4: Have an accurate Voter List**

*The Voter List is a finalised list containing the names, registration numbers and residential addresses of all voters in a polling station. This list is only used on Election Day. Therefore, it is important that the Voter List contains accurate information of all voters to allow the FEO to maintain a transparent electoral process.*

### **Objective 5: Establish an effective registration system for overseas voters**

*The FEO ensures that all Fijian citizens residing overseas are given an opportunity to exercise their constitutional right to vote. Therefore, the FEO will establish an effective overseas registration process to ensure that all Fijians abroad are registered to vote.*



## **Goal 5: Deliver effective electoral services to all eligible voters across Fiji**

The Electoral Decree specifies that the Supervisor of Elections as head of the FEO conducts the election of members of Parliament and such other elections as prescribed under section 154 including the conduct of voting, counting and tabulation of election results.

### **Objective 1: Identify the best model for delivery of FEO electoral operations services**

*In delivering effective electoral services, it is important that the FEO identifies and adopts international best practices for the conduct of elections. In preparation for the next General Election, the FEO will decentralise operational services for effective and efficient service delivery.*

### **Objective 2: Produce a comprehensive and accurate list of Polling Venues for the 2018 General Election**

*The FEO will utilise the Geographical Information System (GIS) to identify and locate suitable Polling Venues. This will assist the FEO in developing and implementing a stringent logistics plan and safeguarding voter accessibility for the next General Election.*

## **Goal 6: Conduct elections in line with best practices**

At the core of its functions the FEO is responsible for the professional, impartial and efficient conduct of electoral services. The degree to which the FEO staff is prepared to implement its various tasks during the electoral process in accordance with the legislation and procedures is instrumental to the success of elections. Fiji faces particular challenges with the geographical spread of its electorate across 110 inhabited islands. Electoral best practices guide the FEO's conduct.

### **Objective1: Provide input to Strategic Development and Communications Directorate on recommended legislative changes to ensure more effective electoral procedures**

*The FEO will ensure more effective electoral procedures by identifying recommendations to provisions in the Electoral Decree which affect the operational aspect of conducting General Elections.*

**Objective 2: Ensure best counting mechanisms are in place by 2018**

*In order to ensure transparency of the counting process the FEO will recruit and train competent PDWs. Furthermore, it will implement a results management system that will compile and eventually produce a final result from all polling stations.*

**Objective 3: Ensure effective and well-communicated pre-poll procedures and criteria**

*The FEO will establish pre-poll procedures by reviewing the 2014 General Election schedules, establishing pre-poll criteria, assessment of pre-poll venues, development of a deployment plan and schedules within a specified time.*

**Objective 4: Assess requirements of voters with disabilities and voters with special needs**

*The FEO recognises the need to develop and implement strategies so people living with special needs have access to electoral processes.*

**Objective 5: Provide postal voting services to eligible voters**

*The FEO will provide efficient and timely postal voting service to qualified voters by reviewing past processes and implementing the recommendations for the 2018 General Election. Furthermore, the FEO will engage a professional and reliable postal courier provider(s) for domestic and international services.*

**Objective 6: Ensure effective conduct of the 2018 General Election**

*An election operational plan is an integral part of any EMB. Therefore, it is vital for the FEO to have a robust operational plan in place for successful delivery of the next General Election.*

**Objective 7: Ensure an effective and efficient post-election period**

*The FEO will conduct a comprehensive timely review of the 2018 General Election in order to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the electoral processes applied. This will allow the FEO to improve its electoral processes for future conduct of general elections.*

**Objective 8: Provide input to Strategic Development and Communications Directorate on recommended procedural changes to ensure effective conduct of Trade Union (TU) Elections**

*Ensure more effective electoral procedures by identifying recommendations to provisions related to elections in the Electoral Decree which affect the operational aspect of industrial elections.*

**Objective 9: Review Counting Procedure for TU elections**

*The FEO will implement effective and efficient counting procedures. This will be done by reviewing the existing procedures and addressing any inconsistencies. This will ensure transparency in the counting process.*

**Objective 10: Assess requirements for TU members with disabilities and special needs**

*FEO recognises the need to develop and implement strategies so people living with disabilities and living with special needs have access to all electoral processes in relation to TU Elections.*

**Objective 11: Provide postal voting services for TU elections**

*FEO will provide efficient and timely postal voting service to eligible voters by reviewing past practices and complying with Constitutions of individual Trade Unions and Section 154 of the Electoral Decree. Furthermore, the FEO will engage a professional and reliable postal courier provider(s).*

**Objective 12: Ensure effective conduct of TU Elections**

*The FEO will put in place a robust operational plan to ensure the successful delivery of TU elections.*

**Objective 13: Ensure an effective and efficient post-election period**

*The FEO will conduct a review in order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each TU election. A post-election report of each TU election will be submitted to the SoE and the respective TU within a specific timeframe.*

## **Goal 7: Establish and manage an effective logistics infrastructure for efficient delivery of elections**

The management of logistics infrastructure and especially the efficient logistical administration of election related assets and equipment requires a well-organised and transparent system. This is necessary to ensure efficient maintenance and preservation of large quantities of diverse equipment for the conduct of elections. FEO warehouses and FEO field structures have been among the key challenges during the 2014 General Election. Permanent FEO field structures and sufficient time to establish FEO area offices will assist in reducing logistical challenges.

### **Objective 1: Ensure adequate and appropriate materials are available for all pre-poll, postal, and polling day activities**

*In the conduct of any General Elections the FEO will establish and implement a logistical plan for effective and efficient delivery and return of electoral materials.*

## **Goal 8: Enhance the knowledge and skills of Fijian Elections Office staff and stakeholders through training and capacity building**

Given the sensitive and vulnerable nature of an electoral process, conducting elections in a professional manner requires a precise execution of activities. Well qualified and trained staff is required to ensure the efficient delivery of electoral services.

While the electoral conduct of the FEO and its temporary staff in the polling stations were appraised in the 2014 General Election the retention of knowledge and skills has been a challenge for the FEO. Considering the importance and the need to retain well-experienced FEO staff the FEO intends to conduct training and capacity building programmes. The FEO developed a comprehensive training plan including a number of BRIDGE workshops. It was further decided that the FEO as a regional leader in electoral good practice open training and capacity workshops to electoral offices of the South Pacific sub-region.

For the 2018 General Election the FEO field level, especially area offices, support the decentralized PDW training implementation by roving national trainer teams as occurred in the 2014 General Election.

### **Objective 1: Establish the Fijian Electoral Education Centre (FEEC) to offer both internal and external training on elections**

*Training represents an investment in staff development, career planning and performance appraisal. Its focus is on the acquisition of the required attitude, knowledge and skills to facilitate the achievement of employee career goals and the organisation's strategic objectives. The FEEC will endeavour to achieve these by offering accredited training courses on elections through the development of training modules and delivery of training.*

**Objective 2: Ascertain the training needs of FEO staff**

*The training needs of FEO staff will be ascertained through the creation of a Needs Development Assessment (NDA) tool that will ensure that the right training is provided to the right FEO staff. Therefore, training develops the skills, knowledge and attitude required to achieve competency standards.*

**Objective 3: Provide capacity building programmes for FEO staff**

*FEO staff will receive adequate, professional skills and competency based training through delivery of induction training for new staff members, Building Resources in Democracy and Governance in Elections (BRIDGE) workshops and leadership training as well as capacity building measures to meet the training needs identified under the NDA tool.*

**Objective 4: Deliver electoral training programmes to the relevant stakeholders**

*FEEC will develop training modules and manuals based on the NDA identified by the relevant stakeholders and the training will be delivered to them accordingly. Furthermore, the FEEC can be a platform for organisational transformation, a mechanism for continuous organisational and individual continuity and a vehicle for global knowledge transfer in electoral education.*

**Objective 5: Review and develop operational training programmes for the conduct of elections**

*A comprehensive training plan and curriculum will be developed and delivered in preparation for the conduct of the next General Election. The 2014 General Election training materials will be revised and training materials for the next General Election updated.*

**Objective 6: Gain accreditation for the establishment of the Fijian Electoral Education Centre**

*FEEC to be registered with the Fiji Higher Education Commission for the purpose of offering accredited electoral training courses for capacity building.*

**Objective 7: Implement and review the first five year Strategic Plan (2015 -2019.)**

*The SDC Directorate is the guardian of the implementation and review of the first-five year Strategic Plan. The SDC Directorate will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan by organizing a strategic planning review workshop to discuss progress and revision of the Strategic Plan.*

## **Goal 9: A well-informed community capable of actively participating in electoral processes**

A well informed community capable of actively participating in electoral processes is at the core of the FEO's responsibility in implementing voter information and education initiatives.

The FEO has successfully implemented different public outreach and voter education programmes during the 2014 General Election despite facing significant challenges. There were about 220,000 registered voters (37 per cent) under the age of 30 who had not voted in previous elections. Additionally, the electoral system had changed resulting in a completely new ballot paper. The FEO focused its voter education programme on procedural matters such as how to cast a valid vote, where to vote and assistance available at polling station.

The FEO emphasizes its efforts to further increase community awareness about registration and voting, especially in remote areas and among vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the FEO acknowledges the important role of electoral stakeholders in the electoral process by the provision of information materials, the development of a communication strategy and an up-to-date website.

### **Objective 1: Increase voter turnout in the 2018 General Election by empowering communities to participate and vote in elections**

*The FEO will increase community awareness on elections by developing and implementing programmes for schools, education institutions, stakeholders with special needs and the general public. Furthermore, the FEO will develop a programme targeting new eligible voters to register and participate in the next General Election.*

### **Objective 2: Develop and implement an information plan for stakeholders**

*The FEO will formulate and implement an information plan which includes maintaining of the FEO website and verifying information for accuracy prior to uploading and dissemination of FEO newsletter internally, delivering press releases and organising press conferences and talkback programmes through mass media.*

### **Objective 3: Establish a well maintained library for internal use**

*FEO will establish and maintain its own library for internal use by identifying possible materials and by developing procedures. This will enhance the knowledge and capacity of FEO staff.*

## **Goal 10: Formulate and implement effective and lawful procedures for the conduct of elections**

The availability of specific lawful procedures providing effective and coherent guidance for the areas not covered by the Electoral Decree helps in the uniform and predictable implementation of elections.

The timely availability of effective and lawful procedures for the conduct of elections will assist the FEO to make decisions fairly and impartially, and if communicated openly to electoral stakeholders increase the level of trust in the performance of the FEO. Most importantly, the coherence and clarity of procedures will support the polling staff and reduce legal uncertainty or differential interpretations.

### **Objective 1: Complete the Post-Election Review of the 2014 Electoral Procedures**

*A post-election review of the 2014 General Election will be conducted by revising all FEO procedures and updating the same in time for the next General Election. The availability of specific lawful procedures will help in the uniform and predictable implementation of the next General Election.*

### **Objective 2: Submit 2014 Post-Election Review Reports to Executive Management**

*A post-election report will be submitted to Executive Management illustrating the procedures applied in the 2014 General Election. The root cause of applying such procedure and recommendation will improve the electoral procedures.*

### **Objective 3: Update all Electoral Procedures based on recommendations from the Executive Management**

*Systematic updating of the electoral procedures will enable the FEO to be better prepared for future electoral responsibilities.*

### **Objective 4: Develop Information Booklets that are in compliance with applicable electoral laws**

*The FEO will develop and publish materials relevant to applicable electoral laws to enhance information sharing with its stakeholders. This technique enables stakeholders to learn effectively at their own pace.*

### **Objective 5: Establish a Quality Assurance Check List for all electoral materials published by the FEO**

*The FEO believes in quality assurance when delivering its services. Therefore, all FEO electoral materials will be of a high standard that meet the FEO criteria along with international best practices.*

## **Goal 11: Implement the highest standards of Corporate Governance within the legal framework**

The Corporate Services Directorate focuses on strengthening institutional excellence and professionalism at all levels of the organisation. Building institutional capacity, adhering to and achieving performance standards, managing human and financial resources as well as strengthening institutional memory, retaining well qualified skilled staff and managing relations with government agencies and suppliers are demanding tasks which require thorough planning and strong management.

### **Objective 1: Compile and Implement Standing Orders**

*The Standing Orders comprise the FEO approved policies and procedures that guide FEO staff on the overall functions of the FEO. This forms the basis of ethical behaviour and conduct expected from all FEO staff.*

### **Objective 2: Review and update Standing Orders**

*The Corporate Services Directorate will ensure that the Standing Orders are periodically reviewed to address any inconsistencies or new developments in the ever changing business environment. The review will enable FEO to be consistent with international best practices.*

### **Objective 3: Provide Excellent Customer Service in line with FEO Corporate Governance**

*The FEO believes in excellent customer services at all times. Therefore, it will incorporate International Service Organisation (ISO) guidelines and standards to deliver the best customer services. A customer and quality focus will permeate tomorrow's superior organisation.*

## **Goal 12: Establish modern and responsive Information Communication Technology (ICT) systems for the FEO**

Technology if applied wisely offers avenues to strengthen internal systems, improve information and knowledge management, and ensure that electoral operations are supported by timely, accurate and easily accessible information. However it is imperative that the different systems are integrated with each other and allow efficient, reliable and correct usage of data.



**Objective 1: Ensure Independent Information Communication Technology [ICT] systems to allow the FEO to manage its core businesses**

*In today's ever changing technological era, the FEO's current reliance on the Financial Management Information System (FMIS) has limitations on business decision making. Therefore, having an independent state of art technological system will enable the FEO to generate reports efficiently and effectively for sound decision making.*

**Objective 2: Implement an independent Electoral Management Systems for FEO to manage its core business**

*The Electoral Management System is required by the FEO for the smooth running of operations in line with corporate business. This will enable a centralised modus operandi for electoral operations based on the actual needs of FEO.*

**Goal 13: Recruit and retain skilled staff through applying fair and merit based processes**

Conducting elections in a professional manner requires skills for execution of activities by well trained and specialised staff. The FEO's staff knowledge of elections was gained mostly from personal experience, self-study, on the job training and by participating in electoral training workshop conducted by the FEO or outside Fiji.

While the current staff expertise available in the FEO is remarkable the FEO also faces difficulties in retaining well qualified and experienced staff especially after an election. The FEO also faces the challenge of finding new qualified staff with electoral experience in Fiji.

Given the importance of well qualified staff the FEO created the SDC Directorate which directly focuses on capacity enhancement and training programmes for FEO staff with educational opportunities in partnerships with EMBs and international organisations in support of elections. The Corporate Services Directorate established professional merit-based recruitment procedures and a human resources plan in line with international best practices.

### **Objective 1: Maintain an Organisation Structure to ensure it meets the Human Resources needs of FEO**

*The Human Resources play a vital role in any organisation through which competitive advantage can be attained. Thus, it is important to maintain a competent human resource to meet the election needs of the FEO in line with planning, controlling, leading and organising operational outputs.*

### **Objective 2: Maintain a fully-fledged Performance Management System [PMS]**

*The FEO has established a PMS that allows for assessing progress towards the achievement of desired goals by FEO employees. The aim is to improve and better aligned performance with organisational objectives by providing a dynamic link to employee recruitment, selection, training and development, career planning, remuneration and benefits, health and safety and employment relations as the vital tool.*

### **Objective 3: Be an employer of choice**

*The FEO encourages merit-based recruitment with comprehensive training and development, career planning and performance appraisal. It is envisaged that these practices will enable the FEO to become an attractive employer in Fiji.*

### **Objective 4: Formulate and implement the recruitment plan for the execution of 2018 General Election**

*Recruitment is crucial in contemporary work environment to increase competition and address global skilled shortage transparent election. Therefore, it is incumbent upon FEO to have a structured recruitment processes as a means of delivering behaviours seen as necessary to support its culture and strategy.*

**Goal 14: Ensure that the FEO has sustainable management of physical resources and infrastructure to meet legislative mandate**

The Area Offices are the hub of the FEO field operations and should be established well ahead of elections and operated by competent FEO staff. The permanent offices at divisional level will improve its decentralised management of resources. The FEO aims to maintain a sustainable management of physical resources and infrastructure to provide all its electoral services to full satisfaction.

### **Objective 1: Implement an efficient system for management of FEO assets**

*Resources are scarce related to Election Management Bodies (EMBs) demands. Therefore, it is important to retain the current assets in a workable condition so that they are sustained over a long period of time.*

### **Objective 2: Improve physical resources and infrastructure for all FEO offices**

*The FEO deals with inventories and materials that are reusable. As such, proper storage facilities are needed to preserve and conserve these resources for future use. Failure to do this will result in the deterioration of these vital resources.*

### **Objective 3: Devise and Implement a Procurement Plan for the execution of Elections**

*A Procurement plan is an integral part of any EMB. Therefore, it is vital for the FEO to have a robust procurement plan in place for successful delivery of elections as FEO electoral materials are normally sourced from overseas, thus, the need for such a plan.*

## **Goal 15: Exercise prudent Financial Management**

Promulgated in the legislation (ED Section 15) Parliament must ensure that the FEO is allocated sufficient financial resources from the Government budget for the timely and effective performance of its duties and functions and exercise of its powers. The FEO submits to Parliament a multi-year budget for each electoral cycle of four years for planning purposes, and shall submit to Parliament on an annual basis, an estimated budget for the following year, based on which the budgetary funding for the FEO for the following year will be determined. External and internal financial auditing is part of FEO's good practice.

### **Objective 1: Efficient and effective management of FEO funds**

*Finance plays a vital role in any organisation. Similarly, the FEO endeavours to put in place stringent financial measures to utilise its funds to obtain the maximum returns. Every effort will be made by the FEO to minimise wastage of this key resource.*

### **Objective 2: Appraise possible income generating activities for FEO**

*Currently the FEO is reliant on government and the donors to fund its core business. To be self-reliant in the long run the FEO will explore alternative avenues to generate income for future sustainability.*

## 10. Monitoring Mechanism to Review Implementation of the Strategic Plan:

A meaningful monitoring mechanism to review the implementation of activities is an important pillar in the strategic planning process.<sup>2</sup> This five-year strategic plan has been designed at the beginning of the 2018 electoral cycle from May 2015. This strategic plan requires the relevant directors and managers to undertake continual monitoring of the activities being implemented within their directorates and area of responsibility.

The FEO decided that the Directorate of Strategic Development and Communications will be in charge of the implementation and review of the strategic plan. Each quarter (every 3 months) the FEO will conduct a quarterly strategic review to monitor progress in implementing activities in achieving strategic goals and objectives.

Every three months the FEO staff will further review their individual activities and reassess possible risks, the probability as well as the impact of risk and discuss possible risk mitigation and solutions.

Unless the FEO measures the progress against implementation it will be constrained by operations in constant crisis mode. Activities within each directorate should be regularly monitored and evaluated to verify whether activities are completed as planned and scheduled.

For that reason the FEO assigned the responsibility for each activity to an individual FEO staff member. In making these evaluations directors, coordinators and managers must keep track of, constantly and simultaneously, a combination of elements within the work plans of their directorates and area of responsibility. Monitoring can become a meaningless exercise unless it has clear lines of accountability.<sup>3</sup> That is also the reason why the FEO connected individual performance appraisal indicators with the FEO's activities.

In this sense each member of the directorate's team is individually accountable to the relevant supervisor for the successful completion of their specific activities for which they have been responsible. However, each team member is also collectively accountable to the team and its director for the broader implications of his/her performance in successfully implementing activities. In turn, directors are accountable to the FEO SoE and DSoE for their directorates' performance.

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<sup>2</sup>IFES Practical Guide for Election Management Bodies to Conduct a Strategic Planning Exercise; 2011;p.83

<sup>3</sup>IFES Practical Guide for Elections Management Bodies to Conduct a Strategic Planning Exercise; 2011;p.84

Since managing an electoral process can always entail changes the strategic plan should be able to necessary alterations.<sup>4</sup> Timely corrective actions need to be taken quickly to compensate for the dynamic evolving electoral environment. However, while being flexible to adapt to change in the strategic plan the FEO management, directors and supervisors will assess and understand the reasons for deviations and document them as lessons learned.

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<sup>4</sup> IFES Practical Guide for Election Management Bodies to Conduct a Strategic Planning Exercise; 2011; p.86

## 11. Conclusion

This first Strategic Plan lays the foundations for the next five years of the Fijian Elections Office until after the 2018 general election. The purpose and design of this Strategic Plan is to be a living document inter-linked with the result based management system of personal performance appraisal. The Strategic Plan will be more than a reference document since it will guide the FEO's electoral conduct and provide the direction required with the specific strategic goals and objectives identified.

The vision, mission statement, and core values of this Strategic Plan were designed and discussed in a Strategic Planning Committee workshop of the FEO. The three directorates' staff defined strategic objectives and corresponding activities and tested them with their colleagues. The strategic planning process itself was very conducive to familiarize the FEO staff with result based management and strategic planning but also to emphasize the FEO team spirit of all working for the same vision, mission statement, core values and strategic goals.

This Strategic Plan also sends out a message to all electoral stakeholders that the FEO is ready to fully take on the tasks ahead. For the electoral stakeholders it is a reference document to better understand the complexity of electoral conduct, the FEO's responsibilities, and where possible, to support it in achieving its strategic goals. In this sense this Strategic Plan also guides the electoral stakeholders in preparing themselves for the next election. During the upcoming reviews of the Strategic Plan adjustments can be made to adapt to new and unforeseen circumstances and take into consideration concerns raised by electoral stakeholders. The more electoral stakeholders are satisfied with the work and outcome of the administered electoral processes, the more credible and reputable the FEO becomes.

During its first strategic planning exercise the FEO arrived at a clear vision to be recognised as a leader in establishing best practices in the conduct of elections. The FEO's mission is the professional and independent conduct of credible elections that enables every Fijian to participate in Fiji's democratic process. The upcoming periodic reviews and the planned formulation of the second strategic plan after the 2018 General Election will address the extent to which its mission was achieved and the FEO met its self-set goals and objectives.

## Annexes:

### *Annexure 1: Members Strategic Planning Core Team and Strategic Planning Committee*

#### **Strategic Planning Core Team (SPCT) Members:**

1. Supervisor of Elections –Mohammed Saneem
2. Deputy Supervisor of Elections - Michael Clancy
3. Director Corporate Services –Kamlesh Sharma (DCS)
4. Director Strategic Development and Communications –Avinash Kumar (DSDC)<sup>5</sup>
5. Procurement and Asset Manager–Riaz Hanif (DBS)
6. Legal Compliance Coordinator –Ana Mataiciwa (DSDC)
7. Ops Coordinator –Petero Pagkale (DOPS)
8. Elections Coordinator –Viliame Vuiyanuca (DOPS)
9. FEEC Coordinator–Asenaca Kolinivala (DSDC)

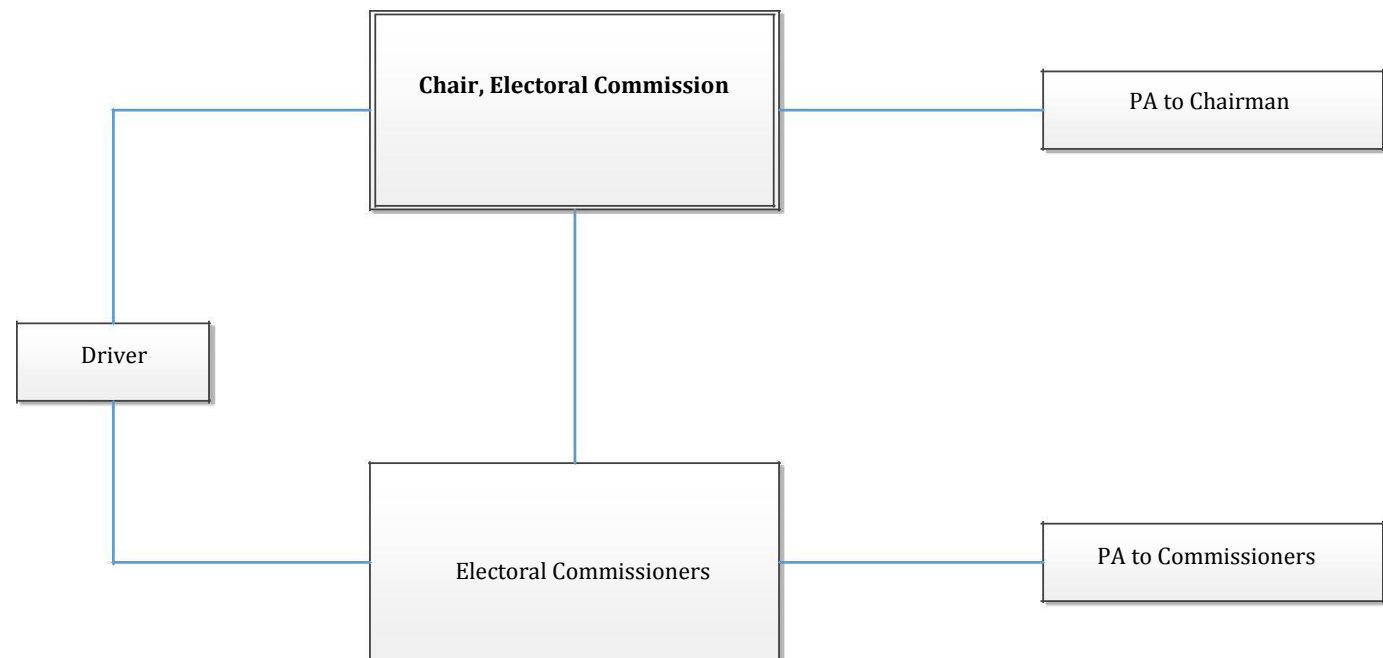
#### **Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) Members:**

1. Financial Controller –Nina Filipe
2. Manager Industrial Elections –Michael Ng
3. Manager EMIS –Sadie Tunaulu
4. Human Resources Manager –Yogesh Prasad
5. Elections Coordinator –Salaoetau Yavaca
6. Elections Coordinator –Anaseini Senimoli
7. Elections Coordinator –Aisea Wainiqolo
8. Research and International Relations Coordinator –Sheenal Sharma
9. Operations Coordinator –Litia Sema
10. Postal Ballot Coordinator –Osea Bolawaqatabu
11. Stakeholder Awareness Coordinator –Amita Prasad
12. Operations Officer –Apenisa Narawa
13. Operations Officer –Aarti Devi
14. Stakeholder Awareness Officer –Joni Sau
15. Asset Management Officer –Susau Finiasi
16. Personal Assistant –Afreena Hussein
17. Financial Officer –Isireli Robanakadavu
18. Registry Officer –Joji Baba

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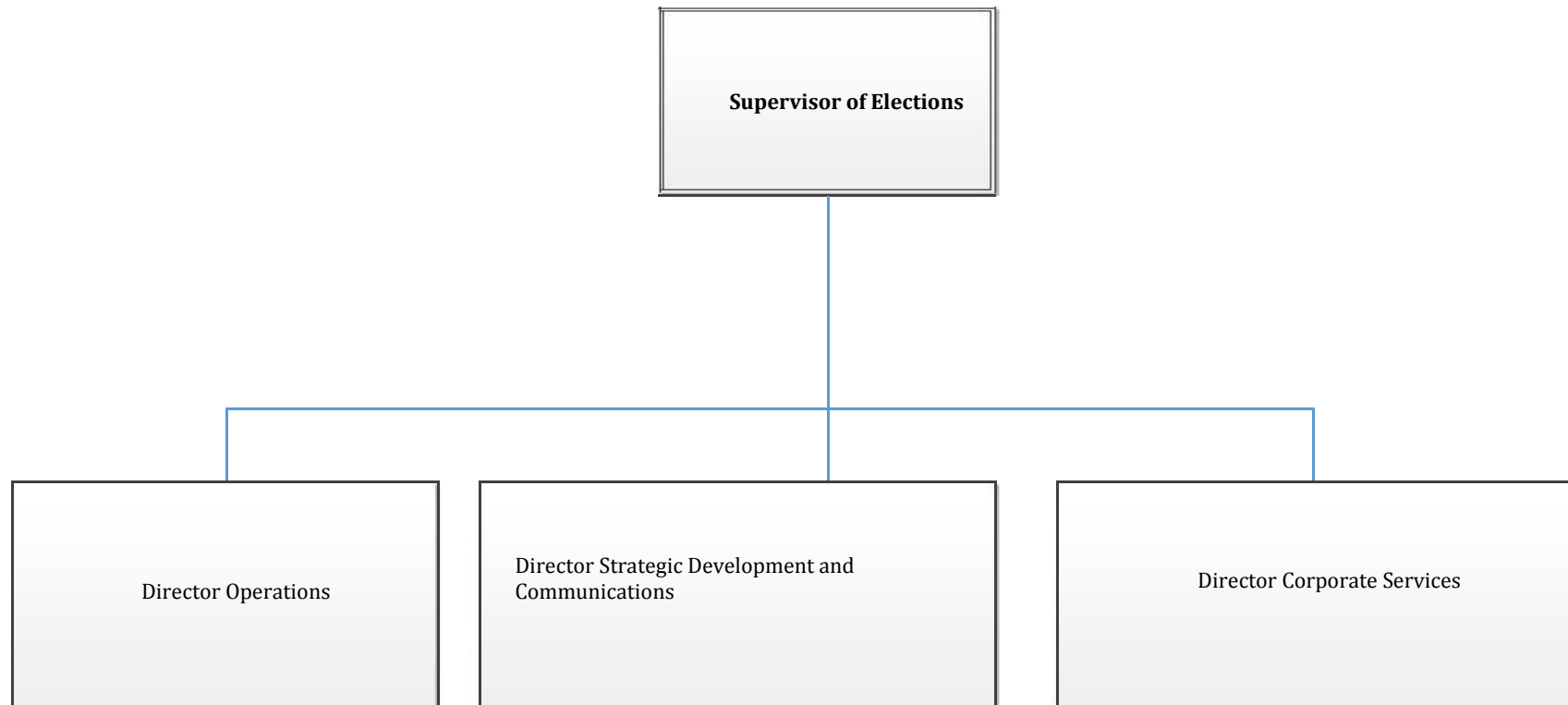
<sup>5</sup> Joined the SPCT upon recruitment on 24 March 2015

## Electoral Commission

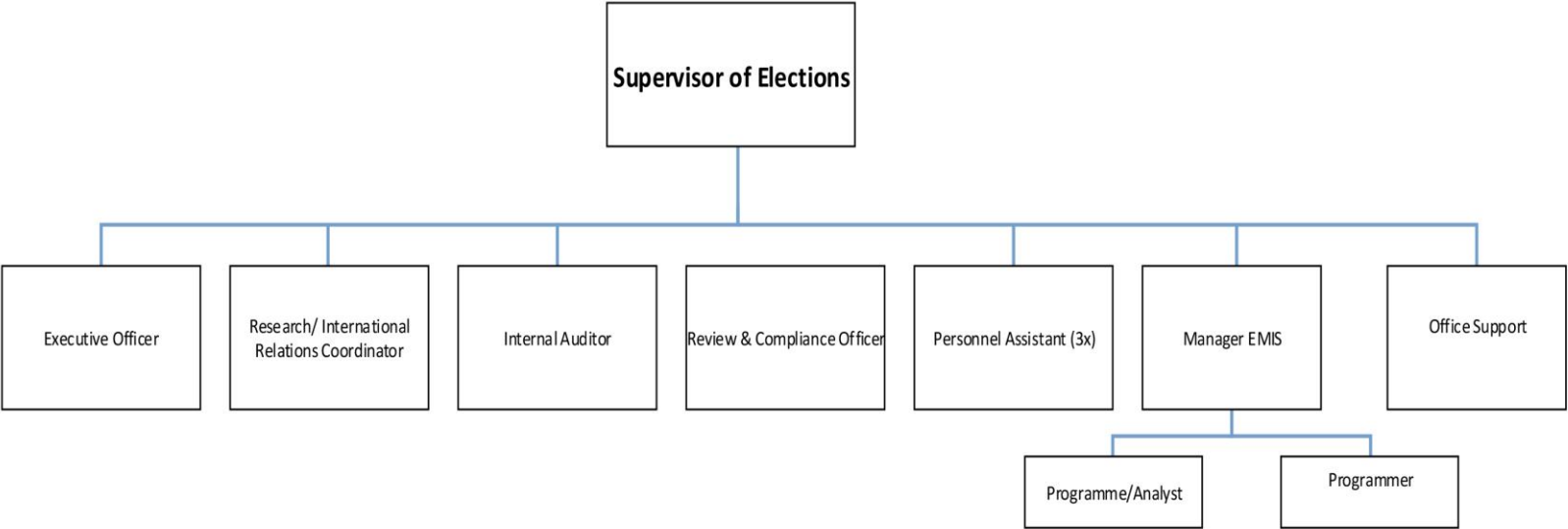




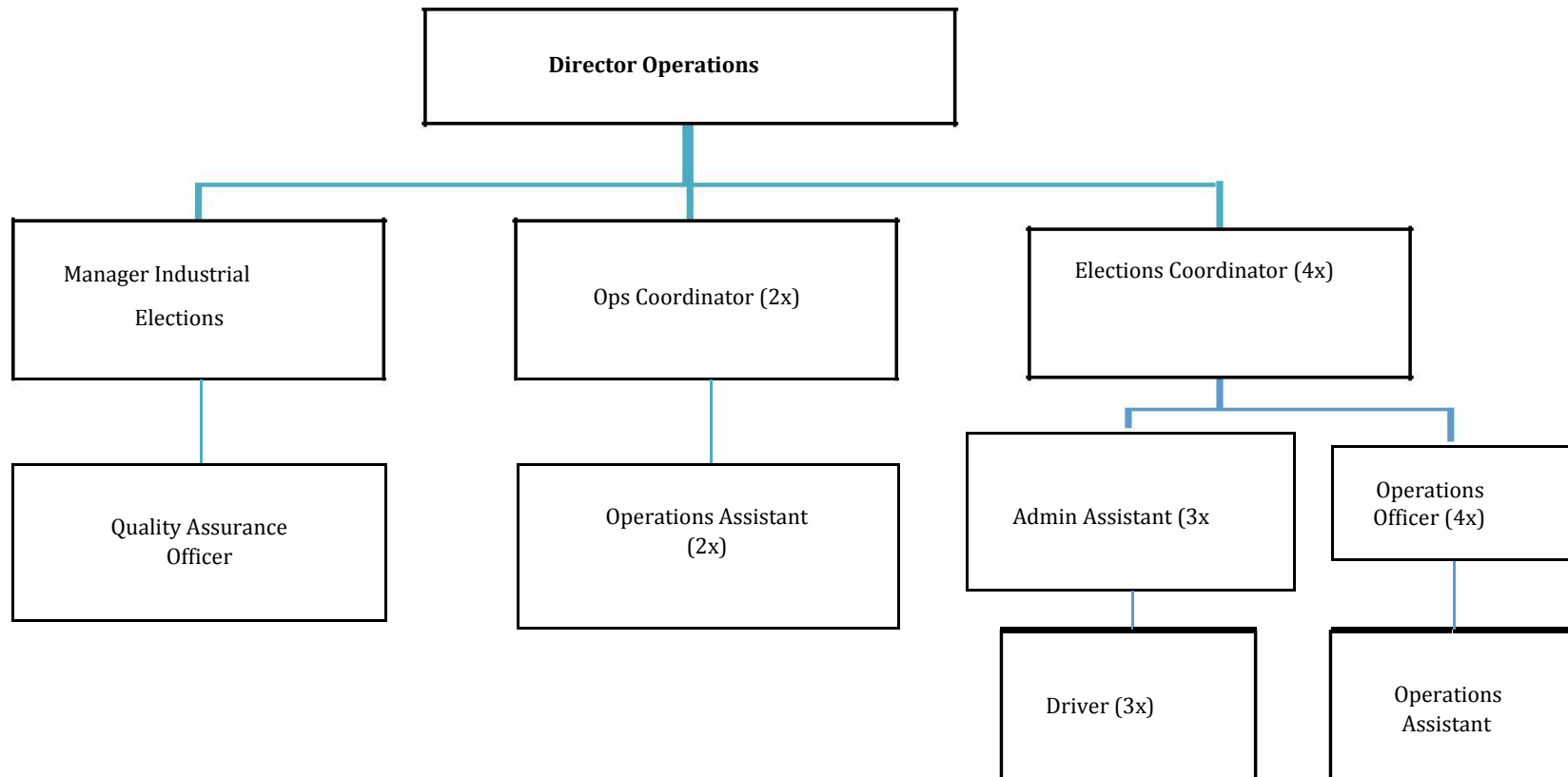
# Fijian Elections Office



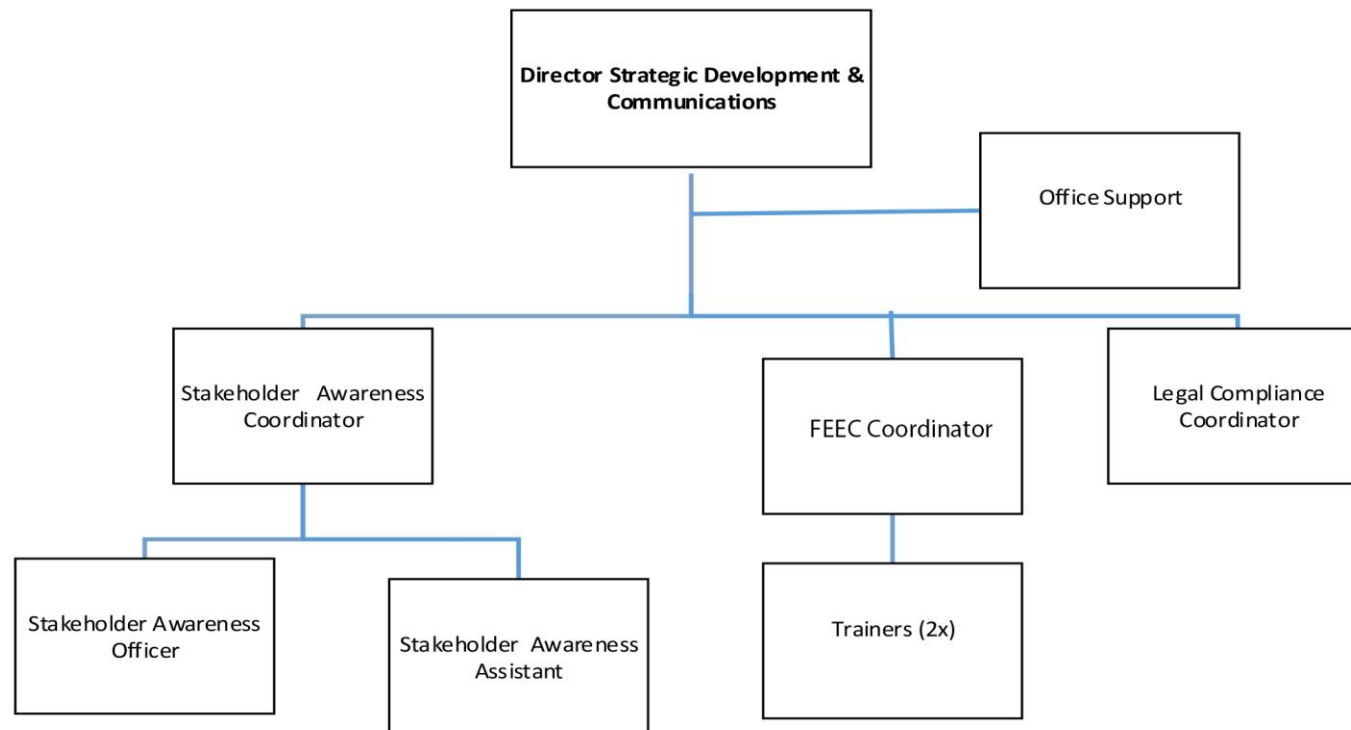
# Executive Directorate



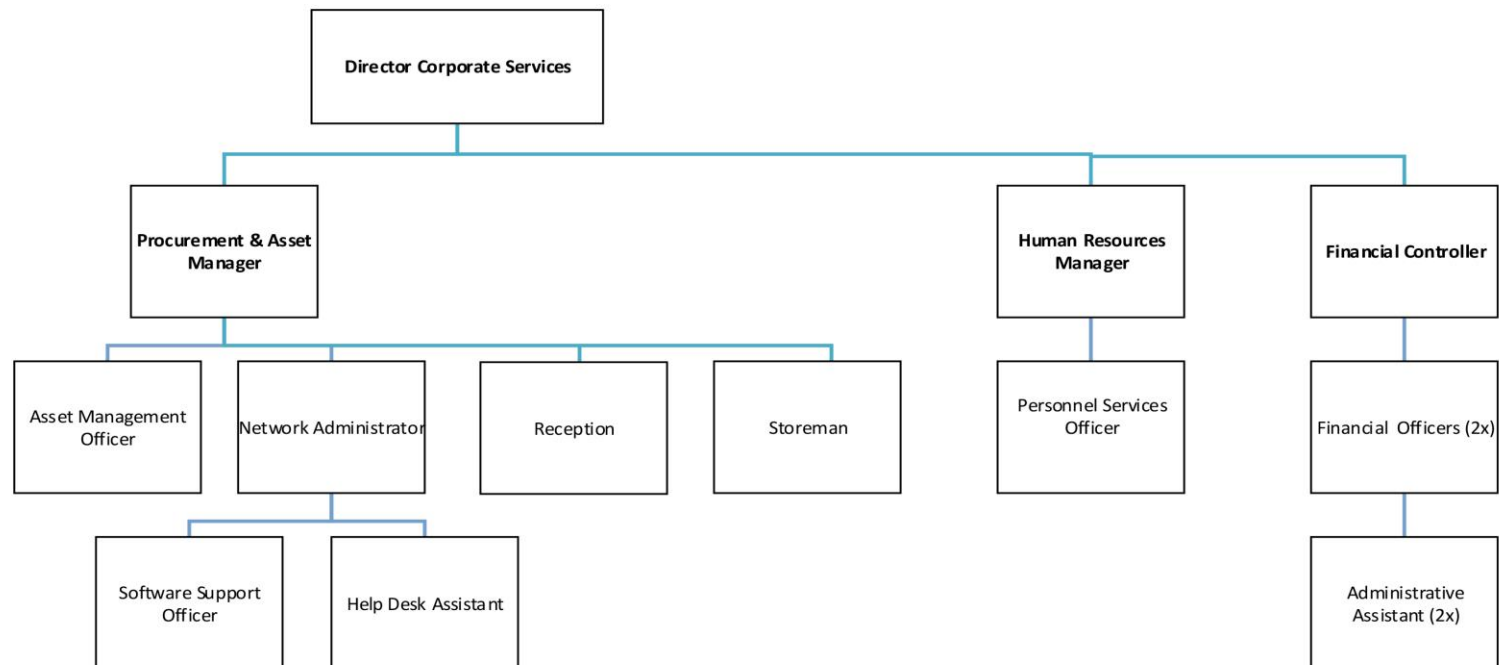
# Operations Directorate



# Strategic Development & Communications Directorate



## Corporate Services Directorate



## **FEO Milestones (2015-2019)**

### **Year 2015**

- Commencement of five-year Strategic Plan (2015-2019)
- Established mobile phone voting platform
- 2014 General Election review completed
- FEO Warehouse completed and operational
- IT systems for management of Finance, HR and Payroll acquired and operational
- FEO Standing Orders published
- Phase I Voter Registration conducted
- Geographical Information System (GIS) Database established
- Naming Convention revised
- Fijian Electoral Education Centre (FEEC) established and operational
- Schools Voter Awareness (Phase 1) completed
- 2014 Electoral Procedures Review completed
- FEO Library established

## **Year 2016**

- Memorandum of Understandings with government institutions signed
- Strong networks established with regional and international electoral management bodies
- Electoral complaints database established
- Contracts for Print Management and Office Stationary and Equipment established
- Staffing structure for 2018 Elections determined and approved
- International Service Organization Certification 9001:2008 acquired
- Phase II Voter Registration conducted
- Provisional National Register of Voters displayed
- Polling Venues assessed and logistics reviewed
- Electoral Procedures completed
- Pilot Election Operational Training completed
- Phase II Voter Awareness completed

## **Year 2017**

- Election Implementation Plan submitted to the Electoral Commission
- 2018 General Election Calendar implemented
- Political parties and candidates handbook developed
- Compile and finalize purchasing and tender arrangement for 2018 Elections
- 2018 General Elections Purchasing and Tender arrangements compiled and finalized
- Election staff recruitment begins
- Information Technology platform for 2018 General Election ready
- Final List of Polling Venues for 2018 General Election produced and published
- Phase III Voter Registration conducted
- Preliminary Voter List produced and displayed
- Divisional Area Offices established
- 2018 General Election Training Plan completed
- 2018 General Election Media Strategy Plan developed and implemented
- Phase III Voter Awareness completed



## **Year 2018**

- General Election conducted
- Supervisor of Elections Report submitted and published
- Joint Report by the Supervisor of Elections and Electoral Commission published
- Purchase and stocking of 2018 General Elections materials completed
- Staffing for 2018 General Election completed
- Accurate disbursement of 2018 General Elections funds done
- Final Phase of Voter Awareness completed
- Election Operation and Logistic Plan completed
- Final Voter List produced
- Conduct 2018 General Election
- 2018 General Election Stakeholder Information Session delivered
- 2018 General Election Voter Awareness completed
- 2018 General Election Communications Strategy implemented
- 2018 General Election Operational Training completed

## **Year 2019**

- Post-election and internal audit review completed
- 2018 General Election review report submitted
- Commence implementation of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan
- Review of Corporate functions completed
- Update of Strategic Plan and Standing Orders completed
- Independent audit opinion on 2018 Elections completed
- Post-Election review completed
- Voter Registration Phase I conducted
- Polling Venues assessed and reviewed
- Post-2018 General Election Review of SDC directorate completed
- Annual Strategic Develop Plan reviewed
- Review of FEEC activities completed