



Fijian Elections Office
My Election. My Fiji

STRATEGIC PLAN

2020 – 2023

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List of Abbreviations

BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
CSO	Civil Society Group
DM	Divisional Manager
DSOE	Deputy Supervisor of Elections
EC	Electoral Commission
EMB	Electoral Management Body
EMS	Election Management System
EORS	Election Official Recruitment System
ESAG	Electoral Security Advisory Group
EVR	Electronic Voter Registration
FEED	Fijian Electoral Education Centre
FEO	Fijian Elections Office
FICAC	Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption
IFES	International Foundations for Electoral Systems
KYE	Know Your Election
MIDA	Media Industry Development Authority
MOG	Multinational Observer Group
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCC	National Counts Centre
NCL	National Candidates List
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	National Results Centre
NRV	National Register of Voters
PDW	Polling Day Worker
PIANZEA	Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators
PMS	Performance Management System
RMIS	Results Management Information System
SPC	Strategic Planning Committee
SPCT	Strategic Planning Core Team
SoE	Supervisor of Elections

Table of Content

Mission	4
Vision	5
Message from the Supervisor of Elections	6
Introduction	7
Fijian Electoral System	8
Guiding Principles	10
Strategic Pillars	11
Strategic Goals	12
SWOT	14
Overview of the first 5 year Strategic Plan (2015-2019)	15
Strategic Planning Process in FEO	16
Consultations	19
Fijian Elections Office Directorates	22
2018 General Election	25
Electoral Calendar	31
Fijian Election Office Stakeholders	33
Monitoring and Implementation Strategy	39
Risk Analysis and Mitigation for the FEO's Strategic Plan	40
Milestone 2020-2023	42
Conclusion	44

MISSION

Our mission as Fiji's election management body is to implement internationally recognized election best practises in accordance with the law, effectively regulate political parties and efficiently register eligible Fijians to ensure that we deliver the highest quality of election services under the supervision of The Electoral Commission.



VISION

Our vision is to be recognised as a professional institution that conducts fair and credible Elections broadly representing the will of the Fijian people.



Message from the Supervisor of Elections



Bula Vinaka,

Welcome to the Fijian Elections Office 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.

The 2020-2023 Strategic Plan follows on from the success of 2015-2019 Strategic Plan. As the head of the organisation, I have found that such a structured planning approach is instrumental in building a sustainable, structurally stable and dynamic organisation.

Since its formation in 2014, the FEO, while conducting its core business as required by law, has actively worked on developing modern and advanced human resource management framework, asset and finance framework as well as a highly successful public relations framework. During this cycle, the FEO needed to build its own capacity and this was done with high degree of success.

In many facets, the FEO has had to establish itself into an already existing spectrum and this challenge has not only motivated the management and the team but has been a key driver of innovation at the office.

The second Strategic Plan is aimed at driving sustainability and building of capacity of secondary stakeholder institutions in the electoral environment. The FEO is also intending to mobilise mobile-based solutions for the monitoring and handling of various processes in the operational delivery of elections.

Emphasis will be placed in developing election education materials at various levels and promoting research into election specific issues. The FEO will introduce newer design of the VoterCard and expire the first VoterCard that was in issue from 2012 to 2017. Cooperation with business and financial institutions will be boosted through opportunities to promote voter participation.

The 2018 General Election allowed the FEO to firm up on several electoral processes that until 2018, were mostly theoretical. This allows the FEO to stabilize its election planning now that it is aware of the 'knowns' and at the same time prepare for the 'unknowns'. The 2018 General Election Reports, the internal FEO reviews and a range of international experiences will form the basis for the planning and delivery of the next general election.

Lastly, quite sadly, engineered distrust and deliberate misinformation is a tool used by some in the Fijian political scene. That is why the FEO has adapted the accounting term 'verifiability' to apply to elections in Fiji as a standard.

I wish to acknowledge the hard work put in by the Directors, their teams and the technical consultants at the FEO supported by international partners. I also wish to convey a special thanks to all the speakers at the midday seminar series, which formed part of FEO's consultations.

I pray to the Almighty for the continued success of the FEO and this Strategic Plan.

Vinaka Vakalevu.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mohammed Saneem'.

Mohammed Saneem
Supervisor of Elections

Introduction

Fijian Elections Office

The Fijian Elections Office ['**FEO**'] is an independent election management body responsible for the conduct of General Elections and other elections in accordance with the legal framework. Under the Electoral Act, 2014 ['**Electoral Act**'], the FEO is the Office of the Supervisor of Elections ['**SoE**'] and is situated at 59-63 High Street, Toorak, Suva. The FEO has 76 core staff and employs up-to 1500 short-term staff during elections period.

As per section 6 (2) of the Electoral Act, the SoE has complete independence to determine the composition of the FEO including the authority to determine the remuneration, the terms and conditions of employment and the recruitment procedure as well as the disciplinary processes to deal with staff at the FEO.

Under Section 6 of the Electoral Act, the SoE as head of the FEO:

- Administers the registration of the political parties;
- Administers the registration of voters and maintains the Register of Voters;
- Administers the registration of candidates;
- Implements voter information and educational initiatives;
- Conducts election of Members of Parliament and such other elections as prescribed under section 154, including the conduct of voting, counting and tabulating of election results;
- Oversee compliance with campaign rules and reporting requirements; and
- Performs any other functions as conferred by any other written law.

The Parliament through the Ministry of Economy issues the FEO with an annual grant from the National Budget. The FEO Strategic Plan forms the foundation for the FEO budget requests. This long term plan also allows the Ministry to support electoral activities throughout the electoral cycle.

Donor Partners have also assisted the FEO in the implementation of its mandate through financial and technical support. Key support was provided by Australia and New Zealand through the cycle with wide deployment of Technical Advisors. These Advisors were instrumental in developing the capacities of the FEO team in specialised electoral processes. Further, India and Republic of Korea have consistently provided trainings and support in kind.

The FEO had previously developed a five (5) year Strategic Plan, which was for the period 2015 to 2019. The purpose of having such a Strategic Plan was to give the FEO a five (5) year roadmap in terms of implementing its various activities in accordance with certain timelines. In essence, these activities had focused towards the build-up of the 2018 General Election.

This time, the FEO has developed a four (4) year Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2023. The term of this plan has been adjusted to suit the electoral cycle in Fiji.

Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission ['**EC**'] is an independent non-partisan authority, which consists of six (6) Commissioners and a Chairperson all of whom have been appointed for a term of three [3] years.

The SoE is also the Secretary to the EC. He or she is required to be present in all meetings of the EC but will be excused in the event the EC is required to make a ruling over a decision made by him or her.

The responsibility of the EC is laid out in section 75 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji which mainly includes the registration of voters and the conduct of free and fair elections in accordance with the written law governing elections and any other relevant law.

In the lead up to the 2018 General Election, the EC worked closely with the FEO in ensuring that the country was ready to proceed to the polls. The EC was required to meet and provide approvals on areas that they had authority as defined in section 3 (1) of the Electoral Act. This was carried out smoothly and allowed the FEO to effectively deliver the 2018 General Election.

The EC and the SoE published a joint report on the 2018 General Election that was tabled in Parliament and published widely by the FEO.

Fijian Electoral System

Fiji uses a modified Open List Proportional System to elect its members of parliament. The whole country forms the Constituency and voting is not compulsory. The voting age is 18 years and registration of voters closes at 6pm on the day the *Writ* for the General Election is issued by the President.

Registration process is open throughout the electoral cycle and voters are regularly encouraged by the FEO to update their details. The FEO has opened Voter Service Centres ['**VSC's**'] in major centres to facilitate the need. Various voter engagement exercises take place as well to ensure that voters have access to the FEO services. Upon registration, the voter receives a VoterCard. VoterCards have become a universal source of ID in Fiji and this in turn promotes the voter to keep their cards safe and up to date.

Nomination of candidates to the election is to be submitted to the SoE. Nominations are in the form of Party Lists for candidates of political parties while independent candidates nominate individually. Parties rank their candidates in order of preference at the time of nomination, however, the final order of the candidates is determined by the total number of votes they received at the election. Parties can only nominate as many candidates as the total seats in Parliament.

A day is set aside as Election Day and is usually a public holiday. Voters are assigned a polling venue of their choice at the time of registration and they can only vote at the assigned polling venue. Venues that have more than 500 voters are divided into polling stations so as not to exceed 500 as the maximum number of voters at any polling station. The FEO conducts voting in remote areas such as the highlands and the islands in the week before the week (in which the election day falls) the General Election is to take place. Postal voting is available to anyone who may not be able to attend their polling station on Election Day.

All candidates at the election are allocated a randomly drawn three (3) digit number. The draw is done publicly by the SoE. The ballot paper only has numbers and in-order to vote, a voter is required to either circle or tick or cross the number of the candidate they wish to vote for. The FEO provides voters with a Voter Instruction Booklet that contains the list of all the candidates and their numbers.

Voting is by ballot and each voter receives only one (1) ballot paper. In the event the voter makes a mistake on their ballot paper, they are entitled to one (1) replacement ballot paper only. Voting is from 7.30am to 6pm and voters can choose to attend at any time in between to vote. Assistance is provided by Election Officials to illiterate voters while persons with disability can choose to be assisted by a person of their own choice who must be a registered voter.

After the close of the voting at 6pm on Election Day and after all voters in the queue have voted, the Presiding Officer at the polling station will initiate the Counting process. Counting of votes on Election Day are done at the polling station and results are transmitted, first by phone and then by the official protocol of results to the National Results Centre in Suva. After 6pm on Election Day, the Pre-poll and the Postal votes are counted at the National Count Centre in Suva.

The FEO publishes election results in real time on Election night through its website and a specially designed results application for mobile phones. The results on the night are provisional in nature and the FEO stops provisional result announcement at 7am the day after the election. Thereafter, the FEO compiles the final results directly from the protocol of results and publishes it. Once all the results are received, the FEO prepares the Final National Results Tally and hands it over to the EC for the allocation of seats. The Final National Results Tally contains candidates listed in descending order of votes by party.

Seat allocation is done using the D'hondt formula. A threshold of 5% of the total number of votes cast has to be met by any party or independent candidate before they qualify for a seat. Once the elimination process based on the threshold is completed, the EC uses the Party total to calculate how many seats a party has attained. The EC then refers to the Final National Results Tally and awards seats to the highest ranking candidates, the seats that have been won by the Party. If an Independent Candidate had met the threshold, they win one (1) seat.

The EC returns the *Writ* to the President with the names of the Candidates that have been awarded the seat based on the above. During the term of Parliament, should a seat become vacant, the Candidate who is next in the Final National Results Tally for the same party will take up the vacant seat.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Right to vote

Every citizen over the age of 18 years has the right to vote by secret ballot

One person, One vote, One value

Every voter has one vote, with each vote being of equal value

A credible single National Register of Voters

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

Independence, Impartiality and Neutrality

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

Excellence in Service Delivery

Provide highest quality of electoral services to all Fijians in a professional, effective and timely manner

Good Governance

The Fijian Elections Office values accountability, honesty, integrity and transparency in all its transactions and will ensure that all legislative disclosures are properly and adequately done

Participation

Empowering every Fijian to take ownership of the election through active involvement

Innovation

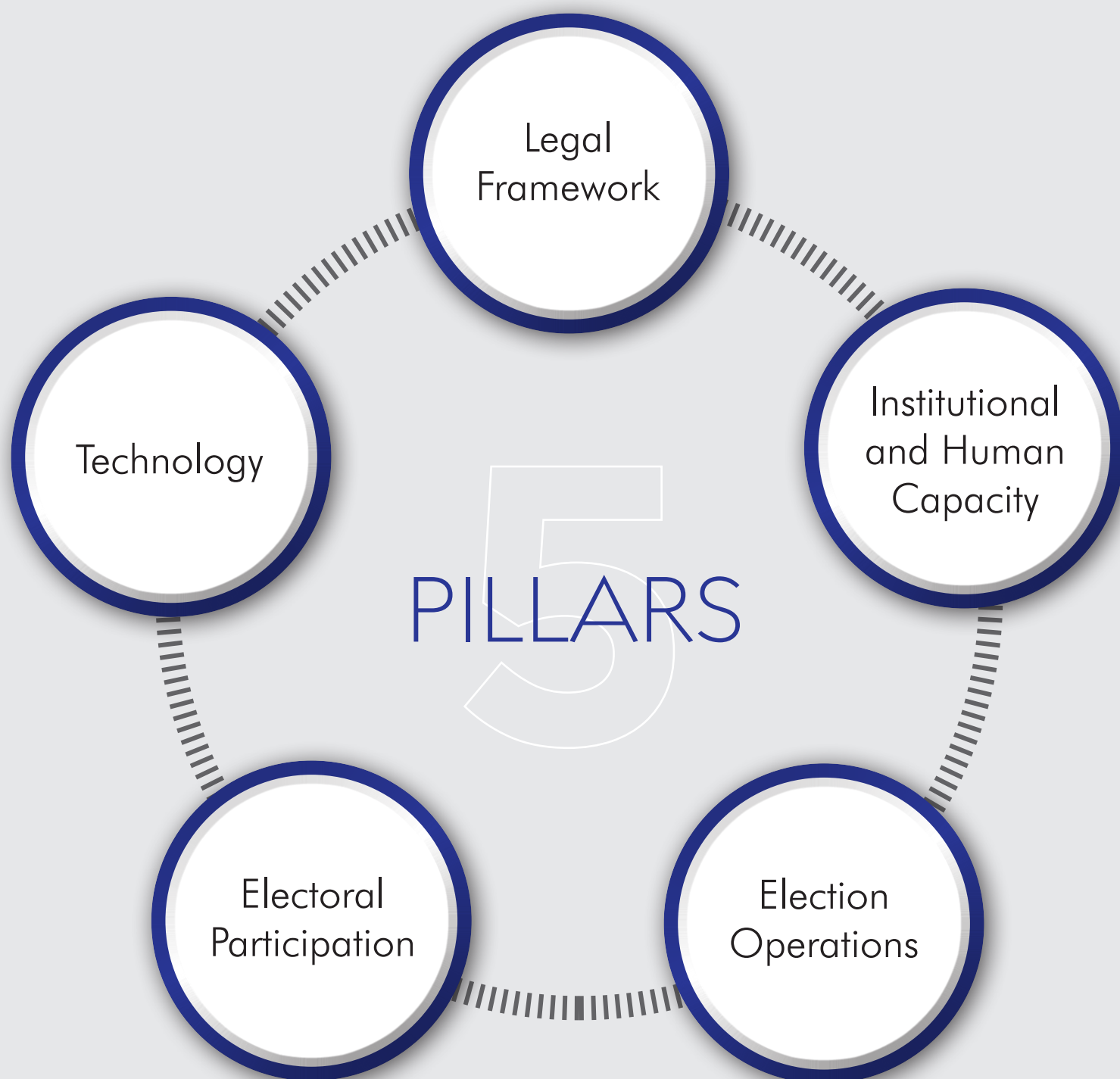
Strive towards continuous, innovative and practical solutions to contribute towards the evolution of electoral practices in Fiji

Verifiability

In elections, to mechanise Fijian Elections Office processes so that given the same data and assumption, an independent and impartial Observer can produce the same results



Strategic Pillars



Strategic Goals

1

Upholding the legal framework in delivering the elections

2

Strengthening the FEO's institutional and human capacity

3

Delivering election operations based on thorough planning and research

4

Strengthening electoral participation through effective outreach and engagement programs

5

Adapting the most latest and current technologies to enhance the efficiency of the delivery of FEO objectives

Pillar 1 – Legal Framework

Goal-Upholding the legal framework in delivering the elections

1. Ensure FEO Standard Operating Procedures comply with the law.
2. Provide relevant advice to and obtain directives from the EC.
3. Administer political parties in accordance with the law.
4. Streamline the nomination process for Candidates in the General Election.
5. Implement an effective mechanism to adjudicate complaints for the FEO.

Pillar 2 – Institutional and Human Capacity

Goal-Strengthening the FEO's institutional and human capacity

1. Implement excellence in leadership.
2. Pioneer research in areas of interest to the FEO.
3. Enhance the Human Resources Framework of the FEO.
4. An effective Procurement Program that ensures goods and services are acquired in a timely and financially prudent manner.
5. Providing management with accurate and timely advice to ensure FEO operates its finances with efficacy in a highly robust environment.
6. A systemized Asset and Infrastructure Management Program that bolsters FEO's operations.
7. Establish a statistics platform for effective planning and decision making.
8. Effective delivery of electoral services.

Pillar 3 – Election Operations

Goal-Delivering election operations based on thorough planning and research

1. Formulate a comprehensive General Election Plan and deliver the 2022/23 General Election.
2. Implement recommendations of the 2018 General Election Review.
3. Prepare the 2021 Fiji National Polling Venue Directory.
4. Implement a comprehensive Voter Registration Program.
5. Conduct an independent audit of the National Register of Voters.
6. Conduct elections as per section 154 of the Electoral Act.
7. Enhance collaboration with stakeholders to improve the delivery of elections.

Pillar 4 – Electoral Participation

Goal-Strengthening electoral participation through effective outreach and engagement programs

1. Introduce national programs that encourages voter involvement in the electoral processes.
2. Establish strategic collaboration with youth groups, CSO's, NGO's, faith based groups and informal groups in promoting electoral participation.
3. Initiating capacity building of political parties and interested individuals.
4. Exploring opportunities to introduce electoral education.
5. Establish FEO as the centre of election information.
6. Develop Communications Strategy for the FEO.

Pillar 5 - Technology

Goal- Adapting the most latest and current technologies to enhance the efficiency of the delivery of FEO objectives

1. Prepare comprehensive policies, procedures and user guides for the technologies available at FEO.
2. Establish a modern intranet solution.
3. Improve and enhance existing technological solutions at the FEO.
4. Test and certify software used at the FEO through independent audit.
5. Scope and reorganise the Human Resources managing Information Technology.

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STRENGTHS

1. Experience of running 2014 and 2018 General Elections based on the current legal framework.
2. Institutional knowledge and capacity.
3. Implementation of electoral curriculum in secondary schools.
4. Open merit recruitment system.
5. Continuing interests in Donors to build capacity of the FEO.
6. Effective collaboration with other EMBs.
7. Proper Quality Assurance mechanisms in place.
8. Conducting election simulations and mock exercises.
9. Membership with International Electoral Bodies.
10. Fully operational international standard warehouse.
11. Effective operational planning experience.
12. Cycle based planning.

W

WEAKNESSES

1. Limited specialised electoral vendors.
2. Seasonal (election time only), short term employment for high intensity workload.
3. The mere enormity of the exercise creates scenarios that require spontaneous decisions and reactive planning.
4. Limited career progression due to specialization sector.
5. Lack of specialised training providers for elections.
6. Expiry of lifespan of electoral items in between elections.
7. Inadequate office space.

SWOT

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Enhancement of the EMS and other IT systems to improve output, reliability and user experience.
2. Consider the environmental impacts of elections with a view to make elections environmentally friendly.
3. E-training.
4. Online recruitment system for FEO.
5. Knowledge sharing with other EMBs.
6. Develop specific trainings for various aspects of elections for FEO Staff as well as stakeholders.
7. Election curriculum in University and Primary School.
8. Custom made voter registration database.
9. Establish terms of engagement with Civil Society Organisations and Advocacy Groups.
10. Strengthen FEO capacity through engagement with professional skills institutions.

THREATS

1. Spread of Misinformation and Disinformation.
2. Failure on the part of stakeholders to understand the legal framework.
3. Lack of powers in the law for administrative instructions to prevent/ injunct breaches/ potential breaches.
4. Force Majeure events affecting electoral process.
5. Cyber attacks and sabotage.
6. Untimely failure of IT hardware resources.
7. Unbalanced media coverage of political party events.
8. Unregulated debate practices at campaign time.
9. Failure of electoral officials to follow standard operating procedure.
10. Electoral *Writ* period falls within cyclone season.

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Overview of the first 5 year Strategic Plan (2015-2019)

The FEO was successful in implementing its first Strategic Plan. This success is evident in the delivery of the 2018 General Election. All activities developed and implemented from 2015 to 2019 were a build up to delivering the main project, which was the 2018 General Election.

In analysing the major milestones achieved from the years 2015 to 2019, the FEO has achieved 80% of its milestones. There are some activities in 2019, which are currently in progress and if they were to be marked completed would increase the percentage rate.

We have also analysed the completion rate annually from 2015 to 2019 which is provided in the table below:

Years	Milestones Achieved
2015	86%
2016	83%
2017	100%
2018	93%
2019	42% (ongoing)
Overall Achieved (5 years)	80%*

**the year 2019 is still ongoing and hence the percentile rating does not reflect the outcomes of the 2019 activities, most of which are still ongoing.*

In the last five (5) years, the FEO had reviewed its electoral processes and procedures as well as finalised it in preparations for the 2018 General Election. As part of this review, the FEO also implemented recommendations by the Multinational Observer Group [**MOG**] in their report on the 2014 General Election. There were 38 recommendations in total and the FEO implemented 22 of those recommendations.

Strategic Planning Process in FEO

Overview

The experience of drawing the FEO Strategic Plan 2015-2019 allowed the Organisation to design an extensive plan for the 2018 General Election. The FEO considered lessons learnt from the two previous General Elections of 2014 and 2018 as a basis for its long term planning and preparation for the next General Election. It was crucial for the Organisation to conduct an extensive review exercise on the successes and shortcomings of the last Strategic Plan in order to identify the gaps and recognize the areas which would need improvements. This exercise, together with intensive research and consultations would ensure that a more practical, comprehensive and inclusive Strategic Plan is developed by the FEO for the next four (4) years.

Preliminary Approach

On 19 June 2019, the SoE released a press statement outlining FEO's plans for the next General Election beginning with the development of its Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2023. The development phase commenced with the FEO staff going through a BRIDGE Training on *Strategic Planning for EMBs* which was facilitated by BRIDGE Trainers from the Australian Electoral Commission, Mr Brian Latham and Ms Jennifer Hammond. The training was co-facilitated by two senior staff of the FEO, Ms Asenaca Kolinivala and Ms Ana Mataciwa.

Following the BRIDGE training on Strategic Planning, the FEO saw it necessary to select a Planning Team who would be responsible for the implementation of the planning process. As such, the FEO appointed a Planning Team consisting of two (2) separate committees to oversee the planning, development, compilation and finalisation of the four (4) year Strategic Plan. A Strategic Planning Coordinator was also appointed to coordinate the activities between the committees and oversee that the development of the Strategic Plan was carried out successfully.

The Planning Team for the FEO's Strategic Plan consisted of the following committees:

- **Strategic Planning Core Team ['SPCT']**

The SoE appointed a six (6) member SPCT on 21 June 2019. The SPCT reported to the SoE and was responsible for developing the overall strategic direction of the FEO by devising a Master Plan on how the Strategic Plan of the Organisation would be developed and implemented. The SPCT monitored the work progress of the Strategic Planning Committee and ensured that the Master Plan was carried out correctly in accordance with the agreed timelines. The SPCT was also responsible for carrying out consultations with external stakeholders and finalising the write up of the Strategic Plan document.

- **Strategic Planning Committee ['SPC']**

The SoE appointed a five (5) member SPC on 21 June 2019 to implement and initiate the Master Plan given by the SPCT to staff of FEO. They were responsible for collecting, analysing and collating the various activities and tasks required for the Strategic Plan through proper consultation with internal stakeholders. They also prepared output recommendations for the SPCT. Further, they ensured that reviews and outcomes of the Master Plan progress reports given by the SPCT were followed through with the FEO staff.

Planning Strategy

In line with international best practices and governance for Electoral Management Bodies ['EMBs'], the FEO decided to use as a planning reference the Strategic Planning process methodology outlined by international electoral expert, Antonio Spinelli in the IFES publication "*A Practical Guide for Election Management Bodies to Conduct a Strategic Planning Exercise*" and applied it to the Fijian context.

The FEO in its Strategic Planning exercise decided to adopt a four (4) year Strategic Planning cycle to coincide with Fiji's electoral cycle. This would guarantee that the planning for the next General Election, particularly on electoral operations are executed successfully, in a timely manner and are conducted in accordance with the legal framework.

During the preliminary discussions between the FEO Executive Management Team and the SPCT, a few guidelines were established to guide the Organisation in achieving its mandate and sole purpose which is to conduct a successful General Election in 2022 or early 2023. These guidelines lay the framework of the new Strategic Plan.

From these guidelines, and experience of the previous Strategic Plan, the SPCT agreed that the Strategic Plan would only comprise of the key strategies the FEO would like to engage in during the next four (4) years. A more detailed Annual Plan which would dictate how these strategies are achieved would stem out of the Strategic Plan. This change in approach would also highlight the maturity of the Organisation since developing its first Strategic Plan in 2015.

The SPCT agreed that the annual review and planning cycle for the Strategic Plan will be from July-July of every year. This would allow the FEO to strategically assess the progress of the activities for each calendar year midway and at the same time prepare the budget for the subsequent calendar year.

The SPCT also approached the planning exercise by deciding that the FEO would use cross cutting themes (multi-Directorate) in developing its Foundation document and strategic goals, thus moving away from the initial method (Directorate specific) used in 2015.

Developing the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan would be finalised in two (2) phases. First phase would be the Foundation document, which would include the Vision and Mission statements, Guiding Principles and the Strategic Pillars. The latter would be the finalisation of Strategic Goals, Objectives and the Activities.

Foundation document

Defining FEO's strategic foundation for the Strategic Plan is important for the Organisations' continuation. It was therefore necessary that the Foundation document of the FEO properly reflected the image and aspirations the Organisation would strive to achieve in the next electoral cycle.

In developing this very important aspect of the Strategic Plan, multiple workshops on the development of the Foundation document were conducted for the FEO staff by the SPC. The SPCT had the main task of finalizing and submitting the document for review by the SoE and endorsement by the EC, before the development of phase two (2) occurred.

Strategic Planning Workshops

Numerous internal workshops and information sessions were held with the FEO staff to assist them in developing the various components of the Strategic Plan. These were conducted in an interactive manner where participants were able to understand the various concepts they learnt and apply it to their four (4) year plans.

The FEO conducted the following workshops for staff:

- **SoE's Workshop on FEO's 2015-2019 Strategic Plan: 25–26 June 2019**

This workshop mainly focused on the review of the 2015–2019 Strategic Plan activities. An evaluation was carried out on the activities that were supposed to be implemented including assessing the milestone achievements. From this workshop, staff were able to identify which activities were not completed and its reasons. The workshop was facilitated by the Review and Compliance officer.

- **Information session on development of Strategic Foundation document and cross cutting themes: 1 July 2019**

This workshop was held to discuss the development of the Foundation document. It enabled staff to understand the importance of the components of the Foundation document as well as its significance. The workshop helped staff to generate ideas around what could be the possible Foundation document of the Organisation and this is in terms of the Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles. This was facilitated by Manager FEEC and the Legal Compliance Coordinator.

- **Development of Strategic Goals and Objectives Workshop: 9–11 July 2019**

For this workshop, FEO Staff collectively learnt how to develop strategic goals and objectives. Then they were organised into their own Directorates to discuss and come up with their own set of goals and objectives which were then submitted to SPC. This was facilitated by Manager FEEC and the Legal Compliance Coordinator.

- **Workshop on Development of Strategic Activities: 23–24 July 2019**

In this workshop, FEO staff were trained on how to develop and identify the activities that the Organisation would pursue in the next four (4) years. It helped them understand the importance of having activities as well as gave them ideas of the content of the activities. This was facilitated by Manager FEEC, Legal Compliance Coordinator and SoE.

- **Strategic Plan Activities Workshop: 2–6 August 2019**

The FEO staff were organised into groups, for this workshop, from their respective Directorates and were required to document their activities for the next four (4) years. This was very important because these activities outlined what the Organisation was going to be doing in the next four (4) years. The final activities from the different Directorates were then submitted to SPC for review and finalisation. This was facilitated by SoE.

- **Risk Management Workshop: 15-16 August 2019**

This workshop was held to identify the potential risks the Organisation would encounter in terms of implementing the Strategic Plan. It also focused on developing the mitigating factors that would reduce the risks. FEO staff were able to understand the different types of risks and how they could be mitigated through the activities organised by the facilitators of the training. This was facilitated by Manager FEEC, Legal Compliance Coordinator and SoE.

- **Awareness Activities Workshop: 22 August 2019**

This workshop was specifically held to address the issue of low voter turnout in the 2018 General Election. FEO staff were required to research and look at practices of other countries in improving voter turnout before developing strategies and activities which would be incorporated in the Strategic Plan with a view of increasing voter participation for Fiji in the next General Election. This was facilitated by SoE.

- **Corporate Social Responsibilities Workshop: 28 August 2019**

This workshop was held to formulate activities which would enable FEO to fulfill its corporate social responsibilities in the next four (4) years. This was facilitated by the Legal Compliance Coordinator.

Consultations

To create acceptance, understanding and support for the Strategic Plan, the FEO went into a series of consultation process with its key internal and external stakeholders as it was important to gather their input and feedback on the proposed Plan.

Upon the completion of the Foundation document, FEO used various platforms to conduct its consultation process. It was crucial for the FEO to gather a wide range of feedbacks and views during these consultations as it would form the basis of activities in the second part of the development phase.

FEO published its draft Vision and Mission statements, Guiding Principles and Strategic Pillars on 10 July 2019 for comments and consultations from stakeholders on its website, www.feo.org.fj.

- **Internal Consultations**

The FEO embarked on a comprehensive consultation process with its staff at headquarters, as well as those in the Divisional offices. This was to ensure that all staff were aware of the foundation elements of the Strategic Plan, as it would form the basis for the development of strategic goals, objectives and activities.

- **External Consultations**

The following methods were used for the various consultation sessions:

1. All stakeholders including voters were requested to participate in an online survey on the proposed Foundation document and this was available on the FEO's facebook page, Fijian Elections Office and website on www.feo.org.fj.
2. Direct consultations were held with the public through the conduct of individual interviews at the three (3) VSCs located in Suva, Lautoka and Labasa.
3. PowerPoint presentations on the proposed Foundation document were conducted for the Political Parties, Diplomatic Community, Media and Government Agencies from 09 to 15 July 2019. These stakeholders were given the link to the online survey and were encouraged to give their feedbacks on the proposed document.

NO.	Date	Presentation to Stakeholders
1.	Tuesday, 09 July	Director Corporate Services presentation to the Political Parties
2.	Wednesday, 10 July	SoE presentation to the Media
3.	Thursday, 11 July	Director Corporate Services presentation to the Diplomatic Community
4.	Thursday, 12 July	Director Corporate Services presentation to Government Agencies

- **Mid-Day Information Sessions**

The FEO also invited various prominent people from other organisations to share with FEO their expectation as well as proposed initiatives that could be considered in the formulation of the Strategic Plan. A total of 22 prominent people from reputable organisations presented in these mid-day sessions. FEO staff were also required to note important points that could be reflected in the Strategic Plan.

The following is the list of invited speakers during the consultation process;

NO.	Date	Name	Designation	Organisation
1.	Tuesday, 16 July	Late Ms. Loata Vakacegu	Deputy Secretary	Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development
2.	Wednesday, 17 July	Mr. Rashmi Aslam	Acting Deputy Commissioner	Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption
3.	Thursday, 18 July	Mr. Kemueli Naiqama	Deputy Government Statistician	Fiji Bureau of Statistics
4.	Friday, 19 July	Ms. Anne Dunn	Commissioner	Online Safety Commission
5.	Friday, 19 July	Ms. Senikavika Jiuta	General Manager Operations	Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission
6.	Tuesday, 23 July	Mr. Sandeep Chauhan	Director	Star Printery Limited
7.	Tuesday, 23 July	Ms. Meizyanne Hicks	Director	Fiji Geospatial Council
8.	Wednesday, 24 July	Ms. Alison Burchell	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts
9.	Thursday, 25 July	Mr. Sanjeeva Perera	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Housing and Community Development
10.	Friday, 26 July	Mr. Josua Namoce	Manager Research and Policy Analyst	Parliament of the Republic of Fiji
11.	Tuesday, 30 July	Mr. Shahin Ali	Acting Director	Legal Aid Commission
12.	Wednesday, 31 July	Mr. Nouzab Fareed	Chief Executive Officer	Fijian Holdings Limited
13.	Friday, 02 August	Mr. Vijay Narayan	Communications Fiji Limited News Director	Communications Fiji Limited
14.	Wednesday, 07 August	Ms. Karishma Kumar	Executive Director	Aspire Network
15.	Thursday, 08 August	Mr. Gareth Baber	Fiji Airways Sevens Coach	Fiji Rugby Union
16.	Monday, 12 August	Ms. Nalini Singh	Executive Director	Fiji Women's Rights Movement
17.	Tuesday, 13 August	Mr. Ravinesh Krishna	Vice President	Fiji Human Resources Institute
18.	Thursday, 15 August	Ms. Krishneeta Reddy	Manager Advertising	Fiji Sun
19.	Friday, 16 August	Mr. Epeli Lesuma	Stakeholder Engagement Officer	Fiji Higher Education Commission
20.	Monday, 19 August	Ms. Tupou Draunidalo	Party Leader	HOPE (Political Party)
21.	Friday, 23 August	Ms. Susan Grey	Executive Director	FemLINK Pacific
22.	Tuesday, 01 October	Mr Nilesh Lal	Executive Director	Dialogue Fiji

*The FEO invited all political parties; however, only HOPE attended the mid-day information session.

Formulation of the Strategic Goals, Objectives and Activities

The SPCT discussed the draft strategic goals and objectives in great detail and agreed on five (5) Strategic Goals, 31 Objectives and 227 Activities for the FEO. Since the concept of cross cutting themes formed the basis of the Foundation document, it was prudent that the three (3) Directorates of the FEO liaised with each other in order to ensure that various important activities were reflected in this Strategic Plan.

Further, during the process that followed, the FEO staff developed well thought out activities and assigned individual responsibilities and timelines as part of the implementation plan. These activities and timelines were thoroughly checked and vetted by the SPC and SPCT before its inclusion into the draft Strategic Plan.

The draft Strategic Plan was reviewed by a Review Team set up by the SoE to ensure that the operational timelines were workable. This occurred during a cooling off period. This period was set aside for staff to take a break from the planning sessions and allow the Finance Department to calculate the costings of the Strategic Plan in its entirety.

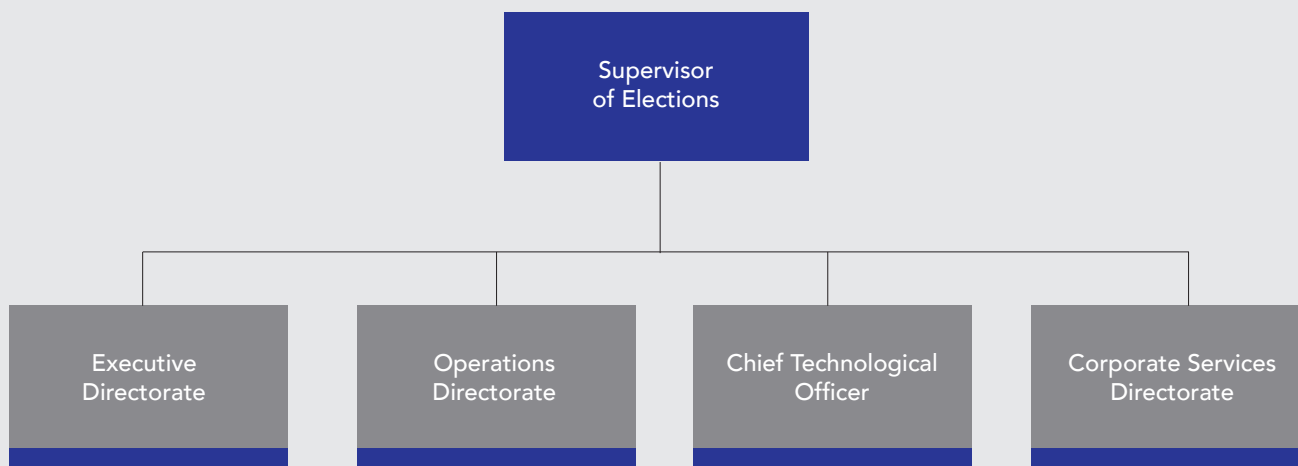
Following the cooling off period, final changes were made to the draft Strategic Plan before the document was submitted to the SoE for his final approval.

Fijian Elections Office Directorates

FEO Organisation Structure

The SoE during the election period is assisted by a Deputy Supervisor of Elections ['DSOE'] and three (3) Directors i.e. Director Corporate Services, Director Operations and Chief Technological Officer.

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



The Executive Directorate is supervised by the SoE. This unit comprises of Secretariat, Internal Audit, International Relations, Legal and Compliance, Design and Special Projects and Communications. This Directorate supports the SoE to manage and ensure that all functions of the FEO are carried out.

The Operations Directorate includes the Operations and the Industrial Elections department, as well as, the four (4) Divisional Managers. The Operations Directorate's core responsibilities include the maintaining of an accurate and current register of voters, assigning of polling venues, awareness activities, postal, Pre-poll and management of results.

The Information and Technology Directorate has been created under this Strategic Plan and is responsible for the overall IT infrastructure, networking, software development and providing IT support services. In particular, to ensure that the core systems such as Electronic Voter Registration ['EVR'], Election Management System ['EMS'] and the Election Official Recruitment System ['EORS'] are operating efficiently and effectively. This Directorate will oversee the development and deployment of new customised software systems at the FEO over the duration of this Strategic Plan.

The Corporate Services Directorate includes four (4) Departments: Procurement and Assets Management, Human Resources and Training, Finance and Administration and Ballot Paper Design and Production Division. This Directorate's core responsibilities are the implementation of corporate governance within the legal framework, to recruit, train and retain skilled staff, ensure sustainable management of resources and to exercise prudent financial management.

During a General Election, number of staff increases to some 1,600 FEO short term staff plus about 11, 000 Election Officials on Election Day. During an election the FEO normally establishes a field structure with 22 FEO Area offices which are opened some five (5) months before an election and 101 Hubs which are opened one (1) week before election and both are closed again after an election.

The Election Officials Recruitment and all election related training will be decentralised to the Divisional offices, which will be managed by Corporate Officers under the supervision of Divisional Managers.

FEO Human Resources Principles

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

- Merit based recruitment and selection-focused on selecting high performing, honest employees with high standards of integrity;
- Equal employment opportunity;
- Position based remuneration and benefits;
- Transparency and accountability in decision making;
- Fairness and equality in all staffing decisions; and
- 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 ['PMS']

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's 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's Performance Management strategy. Performance Management applies to all employees, not just the managers, and to teams as much as to individuals.

The PMS is a continuous process and reviewed periodically, not a one-off event. The Performance Management is based on the continuous assessment of the Strategic Plan on a quarterly basis and it is measured on the completion of the individual activities under each projects.

The FEO's PMS includes Probation Appraisal and Ongoing Performance Appraisal. The probation appraisal is linked with determining the status for the confirmation of employment. All employees on a contract of service which exceeds one (1) month are required to serve a period of probation.

The ongoing performance appraisal is linked with salary appraisal. For instance, an employee whose performance management indicates rating of "Excellence" or "Very Good" are eligible for one (1) step salary increment, whilst employees with rating as "Requires Development" will have training needs assessment completed and a program developed in order to improve the overall performance of the individual.

Fijian Electoral Education Centre ['FEEC']

Following the completion of the 2014 General Election, the FEO in its post-election period worked towards strengthening its training capacity. It decided to give high priority to training and education for capacity building. Accordingly, in 2015, the FEEC was established. Its purpose was to enhance the knowledge and skills of FEO staff and stakeholders through training and capacity building.

The objectives of FEEC was to:

- Establish the FEEC to offer both internal and external training on elections;
- Ascertain the training needs of FEO staff;
- Provide capacity building programs for the FEO staff;
- Deliver electoral training programs to the relevant stakeholders;
- Review and develop operational training programs for the conduct of elections; and
- Gain accreditation for the establishment of the FEEC.

Unfortunately, after a review was carried out for its activities from the period 2015 to 2019, it was established that FEEC was not able to fully achieve its objectives for the very purpose it was established for. It was noted that certain trainings were not conducted nor any content materials developed for these trainings. Hence, in August 2019 FEEC was closed down as the investments done were not resulting in any tangible outcomes.

Training and Development Strategy

The FEO will introduce ongoing organisational functions and knowledge trainings that will require all staff to attend and undergo assessments to ensure that the capacity levels within the Organisation increases.

Training helps boost the efficiency of employees as well as their productivity. It also helps with their morale, which can then increase productivity and reduce turnover.

The Training and Development Unit will develop training materials and assessment for all trainings conducted at FEO. These assessment criteria will:

- Determine the calibre of the applicants for all specific projects;
- Improve knowledge and skills;
- Obtain full attention of the participants during the training; and
- Determining the effectiveness of the training in enhancing individual's performance.

In addition, the recruitment of project based staff will be determined through the assessment conducted after the project based training. Part of this training will include test whereby the intellectual capacity attained during the training will be assessed. This will ensure that the right calibre of applicants are recruited for specific projects.

Decentralisation Strategy

During the 2018 General Election, the Divisional offices were established. The purpose of opening Divisional offices was to ensure that the FEO was accessible to its stakeholders and could effectively deliver its services in preparation for the General Election. Subsequent to opening of Divisional office, certain aspects of operations was decentralised. This includes the execution of projects such as Awareness, Nationwide Registration Drive, partial Recruitments and Training. Also Divisional bank accounts were opened for disbursement and better management of funds.

In the 2020 to 2023 cycle, there are plans for decentralisation to a greater extent. In the Divisional structure, more senior level positions will be established to undertake the greater roles and responsibilities that will be delegated. It is envisaged that operational projects such as Awareness, Voter Information Booklet Distribution, Voter Registration, Voter Services, Logistics Operations, Polling Venue Assessments, Recruitment of Election Officials and Training would be delegated to Divisional offices. As part of the decentralisation strategy there would be development of standard operating procedures for these projects as well.

The Divisional Managers will become more accountable in the management/administration of operations under their respective divisions.

2018 General Election

Timetable of Key Events/Dates

01 October 2018	<i>Writ</i> Issued to the Electoral Commission. Voter Registration closed. Political Party Registration closed. Postal Vote Applications opened.
02 October 2018	Nomination of Candidates opened.
08 October 2018	Display of Provisional Voter List.
13 October 2018	Display of Provisional Voter List concluded.
15 October 2018	Nomination of Candidates closed at 12 noon.
16 October 2018	Withdrawal of Nomination by 12 noon. Objections and Appeals closed by 4pm.
17 October 2018	EC finalised Appeals and Objections decisions. Ballot Paper Production commenced.
18 October 2018	National Candidate's List Draw.
24 October 2018	Postal Vote Applications closed at 5pm.
26 October 2018	Ballot Paper Production completed.
28 October 2018	Final Voter Lists printed.
05 November 2018	Pre-poll Voting commenced.
07 November 2018	Verification of Postal Ballots commenced.
10 November 2018	Pre-poll Voting concluded.
14 November 2018	Election Day. Provisional Results announced.
17 November 2018	Polling conducted for the 22 adjourned Polling Venues.
18 November 2018	Final National Results Tally handed over to the EC. Seat Allocation announced. EC Returned <i>Writ</i> for the 2018 General Election to the President of Fiji His Excellency, (Retired) Major General Jioji Konrote.
14 December 2018	Report by the SoE pursuant to section 109 of Electoral Act.

Writ for the 2018 General Election

On 01 October 2018, the President of Fiji, His Excellency, (Retired) Major General Jioji Konrote issued the *Writ* for the 2018 General Election to the Chairperson of the EC, Mr Suresh Chandra. This day also marked the close of Voter and Political Party Registrations, as well as, the opening of applications for Postal Voting.

Political Parties Registration

The SoE is also the Registrar of Political Parties. The Political Parties legal framework makes it mandatory for Political Parties and its Office Holders to file Declaration of Assets, Liabilities and Income for stipulated periods with the Registrar. Thereafter, the Registrar is required to publish these declarations.

The FEO's EMS which was introduced for the 2018 General Election consisted of five (5) modules including the political party registration module. This module allowed the Legal and Compliance team at the FEO to verify membership listings submitted by the political parties during registration. In line with the legal requirements, the system verifies that a voter is not a member of more than one (1) political party by comparing names and voter numbers to existing records in the system. The system was used to register three (3) political parties: Unity Fiji registered in July 2017; HOPE registered on 10 February 2018 and proposed party Zionist whose application was rejected on 06 December 2017. This system reduces data entry and verification time to four (4) days in comparison to ten (10) days in the past. The registration process has been more efficient and the processing time for applications has significantly reduced.

As at 01 October 2018, eight (8) Political Parties were registered with the FEO. These were: FijiFirst, Social Democratic Liberal Party, National Federation Party, Unity Fiji, HOPE, Fiji Labour Party, Fiji United Freedom Party and People's Democratic Party. However, this was reduced to seven (7) after the deregistration of People's Democratic Party on 31 October 2018.

Candidate Nomination

The nominations process is governed by section 26 of the Electoral Act and the eligibility requirements are outlined in section 56 of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji.

The *Writ* of the 2018 General Election had specified that the nominations process would commence on 02 October 2018 and close at 12pm on 15 October 2018. During the period of nominations, the FEO received nomination from six (6) registered political parties.

The FEO in ensuring that its candidates verification process for the 2018 General Election were carried out within the required timelines, took the approach of signing Memorandum of Understanding [**'MoU'**] with its relevant verification agencies to ensure that this process was carried out thoroughly within the required timelines. At the close of Nominations, 235 candidates were confirmed for the election.

Voter Registration

Facilitation for voter registration services had ceased on 4 August 2014, the *Writ* Day for the 2014 General Election and reopened in June 2015. This was to allow the FEO to review its voter registration system and procedures post 2014 General Election. The resumption of voter registration services ensured that voters had ample time to register, correct or amend their voter details before the 2018 General Election.

Beginning in 2017, the FEO conducted several nationwide voter registration programs in Fiji and overseas to allow all eligible Fijian Citizens to register. In 2015, the FEO took up the initiative to conduct a Fiji wide voter registration drive at secondary schools and tertiary institutions. This ensured students turning 18 years of age were registered and captured in the National Register of Voters [**'NRV'**]. During these voter registration sessions in schools, students were taken through a voter awareness presentation by the FEO teams. Since then, this event has become an annual event in the FEO's calendar.

Approximately 637, 527 voters were registered for the 2018 General Election.

Voter List

Prior to the conduct of the 2018 General Election, the FEO undertook an extensive internal review to determine the shortfalls and gaps in the various electoral procedures used in 2014.

One of the recommendations that came out of this review was the need to enhance and redesign the Voter Lists that would be used for polling in the 2018 General Election. This resulted in the Voter Lists being modified to allow Polling Day Workers to effectively and efficiently identify voters in the polling stations.

The law requires that FEO publishes the Voter Lists for verification purposes prior to the conduct of an election. The FEO ensured that the display of Provisional Voter Lists were carried out widely with all sectors of the communities in both the rural and urban areas. The FEO used its stakeholders who were already established in these communities such as the Turaga ni Koro's ['**TNK**'] and District Advisory Councillors ['**DAC**'] to conduct these verification processes. Provisional Voter Lists were made available to political parties upon payment of a prescribed fee approved by the SoE.

The FEO also introduced the 1500 SMS free text platform in early 2018 to allow voters to find their assigned polling station and was available for use on all mobile phone networks. Voters were able to make use of this service prior to casting their vote on polling day.

The FEO printed and distributed the final Provisional Voter List eight (8) days after the close of voter registration. After the finalisation of voter registration for the 2018 General Election, the FEO reopened its VSCs to facilitate replacement of VoterCards.

Ballot Paper Production and Management

The printing of Ballot Papers was tendered to a commercial printer and the successful tender organised with the FEO management to instil three (3) security features in all Ballot Papers.

For the 2018 General Election, the FEO saw it fit to have its Ballot Paper Production Manager work at the designated printing company in order to understand the complexity of printing materials within a tight schedule. This experience ensured the Ballot Paper Production Manager was able to properly plan and execute the printing schedule without any hindrance.

There were no reports of tampering or attempted fraud of Ballot Papers.

National Candidates List ['NCL']

The NCL containing the name of all candidates was prepared according to section 36 of the Electoral Act. A Ball Draw was held to assign numbers to individual Candidates and the numbers were drawn for all 235 Political Party Candidates. The numbers ranged from 508 to 743 and the number '666' was excluded by the EC from the series.

The NCL showed the Candidate's number, their name and their photograph. The NCL was prepared and published in the Gazette and the daily newspapers the following day, as well as broadcast on radio and social media. Copies of the NCL were provided to the EC, registered political parties and their candidates as well as copies displayed at all FEO's VSCs for public viewing.

Voter Education

In delivering its key messages for the 2018 General Election, the FEO used both existing and new channels of communications.

The use of these new channels was due largely to the ever-changing landscape of communications and how brands engage with their target audience. This has evolved over the years from simple radio and newspaper advertising to more complex integrated approaches using a range of communications mediums, such as television, digital publications and social media.

In order to capture our key target audience (voters), and to ensure the successful delivery of critical information relating to the conduct of elections in Fiji, a multi-media and multi-lingual voter awareness approach was used based on five (5) general themes: When to vote; Where to vote and How to vote; All Fijians should vote; General reminder for Election Day and Pre-poll voters and The Ideal voter.

The FEO's Voters Awareness Campaign for the 2018 General Election was named the Know Your Election ['**KYE**'] Awareness campaign. The FEO conducted 3,870 voter awareness sessions in Fiji which started from 15 March 2018 and ran throughout the election period.

Election Information Booklet

The Election Information Booklet ['**EIB**'] was produced in March 2018 as the primary awareness tool, containing all relevant electoral information for the voter. These included instructions on how to vote, illustrations of a standard polling station layout and pictorials, methods of voting, counting process, declaration of results and allocation of seats. The EIB was translated into i-Taukei, Hindi, Rotuman, Banaban and Chinese languages.

Accreditation of Polling Agents, Media and International Observers

The FEO conducted briefings and implemented individual Code of Conduct for polling agents, media, and election observers. For the 2018 General Election, the FEO accredited 77 International Observers who were part of the MOG. A total of 371 Media Personnel were accredited representing 18 Media Agencies.

Polling Day Workers

Polling Day Workers ['**PDW**'] were recruited through open merit-based tests throughout Fiji. Of the 18, 555 applications a total of 14, 508 were trained and 10, 071 were appointed to work for the FEO during the Pre-poll period and on Election Day.

For the 2018 General Election, a staffing formula was developed by the FEO to indicate the number of Election Officials required to work in a polling station on Polling Day based on the voter numbers allocated to that particular polling station. However, staff allocation for Pre-poll voting differed and was dependent on the mode of transportation used by the teams.

The FEO prepared various Operational Manuals and Task Sheets as a guiding tool for its staff. These manuals were used to develop comprehensive trainer guides, which were used by trainers during training sessions. To avoid dilution of information, the FEO decided against using a cascading training approach and instead trained a pool of 80 national roving trainers who would conduct the various operational trainings over a period of ten (10) months.

While waiting for the *Writ* to be issued, the FEO conducted refresher trainings for its Election Officials between the months of July and August 2018. Once the *Writ* for the 2018 General Election was issued, the FEO conducted refresher trainings for Presiding Officers and Assistant Presiding Officers. A total of 3,240 Presiding Officers attended this full day training which placed emphasis on the processes to be followed on Polling Day.

Postal Voting

Postal Voting provided an opportunity for overseas voters and those who could not attend a Polling Station on Election Day, to cast their vote. All voters that wanted to vote through postal voting were required to apply once the date of the General Election was announced.

When applications were received by the FEO, they were checked for completeness before being data entered into the EMS which had a module specifically created to manage postal voting applications for the 2018 General Election.

There were two (2) postal courier companies engaged for the delivery of postal voting packages to overseas and local voters. In cases where EMS courier could not deliver to local addresses, FEO made these deliveries itself. Over 90% of the 11,227 postal votes packages sent out were received by FEO on time for verification before being admitted to count.

Pre-poll Voting

The venues for Pre-poll were identified using the criteria outlined in the Electoral Act and incorporated into schedules was gazetted on 17 October 2018. Pre-poll was scheduled between 05 to 10 November 2018. The schedules took into account factors such as low voter numbers and remoteness of the locations. The military bases, naval bases and corrections facilities were also under Pre-poll.

For the 2018 General Election, gazebo like tents were used as polling venues replacing private residences. These light weight structures were easily erected and carried around by the Pre-poll teams.

The FEO developed a Presiding Officers Pre-poll Journal for each Pre-poll team. These customised journals were developed to outline the activities and programs the teams needed to adhere to during the Pre-poll voting period.

In the majority of cases Pre-poll schedules were adhered to as planned, however, in some cases there were amendments made to the schedules due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. weather, tides, etc.). Where it was necessary to reschedule polling, approval was sought from the EC and changes were made accordingly.

Election Day and Counting

Polling took place on 14 November 2018. Majority of the Polling Stations began operation at 7.30am and closed at 6.00pm to begin counting. Polling Agents and International Observers were permitted into Polling Stations. The FEO ensured that maximum number of voters at any Polling Station was 500. Voters were assigned to a Polling Station closest to their residential address.

All votes cast on Election Day were counted at their respective Polling Stations. The results from the Count were transmitted by Presiding Officers to a toll free dedicated number at the National Results Centre. Count for postal and Pre-poll votes were conducted at the National Count Centre.

Due to the adverse weather conditions on Election Day, the SoE, in consultation with the EC, had to adjourn polling for 22 Polling Venues with 25 Polling Stations around the country. This was adjourned to 17 November 2018.

National Results Centre ['NRC'] and Results Management Information System ['RMiS']

The NRC was activated on Election night to receive "phoned in results" from the Election Day Polling Stations and postal/Pre-poll results from the NRC which was also the venue where Final National Results Tally was tabulated.

The RMiS was the application software used by FEO to capture the data contained in the Protocol of Results forms and consolidated these results into the National Results Tally for progressive display of results. The RMiS was based on a double blind entry of results and used two (2) modes; a provisional for the provisional results received by phone, as well as an official mode for the official results from the received official Protocol of Results. RMiS also provided the consolidated results to the SoE and the EC to prepare the Final National Results Tally.

Command Centre Operations

To ensure that it is in line with its five (5) year Strategic Plan 2015–2019, the FEO acknowledged the need to establish a unit that monitors FEO's election projects at the Divisional level. The Command Centre was established to monitor the following election related activities:

- Divisional Monitoring Process;
- Information Request Process;
- Call Centre Process;
- Incident Management Process;
- Change Management Process; and
- Media and Weather Monitoring Process.

A total of 86 daily Divisional progress reports were submitted to the SoE as Executive Summary Reports from 01 October 2018 to Announcement of the Final National Results Tally. The reports not only included situation updates from the Divisional offices and Area offices but also progressive reports from the project owners to highlight the status of their individual projects and to identify any setbacks that can hinder the Election Day preparation. The reports further included media and weather updates. The Divisional daily reports were also compiled and submitted weekly to the EC informing them of updates gathered from the team in the four (4) Divisions.

Elections Management System

The EMS was the application used by FEO to capture and validate operational data for the 2018 General Election. It consists of five (5) modules, which are Polling Venue, Logistics, Postal, Party Registration and Candidate Nominations.

The EMS has two (2) modes, the Testing Mode that was also used for training and the Production Mode, which was where the live data was used by the Operations Directorate. The system can be accessed based on role and for some modules by division. This is to ensure demarcation of role and also data responsibility by location.

Geographical Information System ['GIS']

The establishment for the GIS Unit in 2016 proved to be a successful venture for the FEO. Over the past two (2) years, the FEO has developed various maps and datasets which have assisted the various Internal Departments in their projects. The FEO has also shared data with other organisations such as the Fiji Police Force, Fiji Navy, Fiji Military Forces and the National Disaster Management Office.

FEO Results App

The FEO Results App was developed to provide voters and the public direct access to the 2018 General Election results. The App was developed in-house without any vendor collaboration. The App enabled users to download it on their mobile devices (Android and IOS) and be able to view results in real time with notifications on when results were being updated. The App features allowed users to view results information by Party, Candidates and Polling Venues. Users could view the breakdown of results by Candidates for each Polling Venue. The App also provided statistical information of total votes of Political Parties as a pie chart and voter turnout as a bar graph.

The Multinational Observer Group Report

At the invitation of the Fijian Government, the MOG for the 2018 General Election was established. It constituted of Observers from ten (10) countries, the Melanesian Spearhead Group and the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat. This group was co-led by Australia, India and Indonesia.

There were 77 Observers who were part of the MOG, 25 long term and 52 short term observers. Their backgrounds included Technical Experts, Parliamentarians and Government Officials. They commenced operations in Fiji on 28 September 2018 and concluded on 21 November 2018.

MOG issued a preliminary statement on 16 November 2018 and subsequently issued a comprehensive report on 21 February 2019. The MOG Final Report acknowledged major improvements by Fiji in relations to election operations and provided recommendations for enhancement of certain processes for future elections.

The MOG concluded that the 2018 General Election was transparent, credible and the results broadly represent the will of the Fijian Voters.

Electoral Calendar

The following electoral calendar has been derived from the Constitution and the Electoral Act, 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"> Dissolution of Parliament. 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.
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"> <i>Writ</i> for the election of Members of Parliament shall be issued by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.
Day of <i>Writ</i>	ERV. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closure of National Register of Voters.
At least 30 days prior to Election Day	EA. 41(1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of all polling stations and polling venues.
14 days after the date of the issue of the <i>Writ</i>	C. 60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of Nomination Period. 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>.
Maximum 30 days prior to Election Day	C. 61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polling commences no later than 30 days after the last day for the receipt of nominations.
1 day following end of nomination	EA. 29 (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display of Nomination. Nomination must be displayed and published the day following the close of nominations.
1 day (12:00pm) following end of nominations	EA. 28(1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Withdrawal of Nominations. Candidates may withdraw their candidacy up until 12:00pm on the day following close of nominations.
1 day (4:00pm) following end of nominations	EA. 30(3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objections to nomination. An objection to a nomination must be delivered to the EC by 4:00pm on the day following close of nominations.
Within 3 days upon receipt of the objection on nominations	EA. 30(5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EC ruling on objection and notification of the person objecting and the candidate whose nomination is objected to.
Within 7 days after the close of nominations	EA. 35 (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EC to give Notice of Poll in the Gazette and media including candidate names in alphabetical order.

Within 7 days after the close of nominations	EA. 36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of a National Candidates List containing the names of all candidates according to candidate numbers.
Within 7 days following end of nominations	EA. 82(3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule of Pre-poll published.
At least 21 days prior to Election Day	EA. 68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close of Postal Voting Applications.
48 hours prior to Election Day and on the Election Day until the close of polling at all polling stations	EA. 63 (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaign Blackout.
Election Day	C. 61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election Day. Polling commences no later than 30 days after the last day for the receipt of nominations.
Within 24 hours from receipt of Polling Station protocol of results	EA. 107	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declaration of results 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.
Within 21 days	C. 66(3)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election petition addressed to the Court of Disputed Returns.
Within 42 days (21 days of appeal)	C. 66(8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruling by the Court of Disputed Returns within 21 days of the date when the petition or proceeding is brought before it.
Within 1 month	EA. 109	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SoE Report submitted to the EC and published.
Within 60 days of Court decision	EA. 130(4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any repeat polling ordered by the Court to take place.
Within 3 months after the date of the election	EA. 14(g)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EC and the SoE submit a joint post-election report to the President and the Parliament.

Fijian Elections Office Stakeholders

Stakeholders are a person, group or organisation that has interest or collaboration with an organisation, which can affect or be affected by the organisation's actions, vision, mission, objectives and policies.

In the 2018 General Election, the FEO had its group of electoral stakeholders in the following categories:

- Fijian citizens;
- Political Parties and Candidates;
- Parliament of Fiji;
- Government Agencies;
- Media;
- Advocacy Groups;
- Supplies;
- International Partners;
- Multinational Observer Groups; and
- Professional Skills Institutions.

Fijian Citizens (Voters)

Voters are the primary stakeholders in the electoral process. In recognising this, the FEO places special emphasis on voter registration, engagement and participation. Voters are also the final beneficiary of the electoral process. The FEO also plays the role of protecting the voter, educating the voter and guarding the rights and freedoms of the voter. In the delivery of its mandate, the FEO guarantees the secrecy of the vote and promotes and protects the freedom of choice.

The FEO under the Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act, 2012 uses EVR to register eligible voters. The EVR system captures essential personal data of voters such as name, date of birth, residential address, contact and next of kin details together with its biometric information capturing fingerprints and facial photographs.

For the 2018 General Election, the total registered voters were 637,527 compared to 591,101 for the 2014 General Election. There was an increase of 46,426 voters compared to the 2014 General Election. From the total registered voters recorded, female voters constituted 49.63% which was a total of 316,431 voters and males at 50.37% having a total of 321,096 voters. It can be forecasted that there will be an increase in the number of registered voters for the 2022/23 General Election.

The FEO is in charge of registration for eligible Fijian Voters who are residing abroad. These eligible Fijian voters can get registered and vote through postal voting during election period. The only two (2) requirements for registering overseas voters are, that an individual needs to have an original Fiji Certificate of Citizenship or a valid Fiji Passport for registration.

Countries which have a larger number of Fijians include New Zealand, Australia, United States of America and United Kingdom. Other regions such as Asia and Europe have low numbers of potential Fijian voters so registrations are carried out only once. Upon formal requests from Fijian communities abroad, Voter registration is facilitated. The FEO works closely with respective Fiji Missions abroad in reaching out to Fijians and ensuring that the registration drive is carried out successfully.

In Fiji, once a voter is registered, they are issued with a VoterCard. The VoterCard 1.0 was introduced together with the Biometrics Voter Registration system in 2012 which contained a unique voter number, photo, full name, date of birth and residential address of the voter. Then in April 2017, the FEO saw the need to re-design and update the VoterCard 1.0 to VoterCard 2.0 to include the FEO logo and contact details as well as the incorporation of additional security features to avoid copying and duplication of cards.

After the 2018 General Election, FEO further improved the VoterCard 2.0 by including the polling venue information which became VoterCard 2.1. Inclusion of this information was introduced earlier this year (2019) and allowed voters to be able to view and confirm their polling venue as printed on the card. Fiji has a distinctive voting system whereby voters are registered based on their usual place of residence. On Election Day, a voter can only vote at his or her designated polling station as stated in the VoterCard.

The VoterCard 1.0 will be expiring on 30 June, 2020 and all voters who are holding the VoterCard 1.0 will need to update their VoterCard to 2.1 which has their Polling Venue details included.

All voter details are kept in a single register of voters called the National Register of Voters. The FEO is mandated by law (Electoral Registration of Voters) Act, 2012) to prepare and maintain the NRV. To comply with the legislative requirements, the FEO carries out continuous registration of eligible voters between elections and does frequent data cleansing to ensure that the NRV is accurate and up to date.

A master Voter List is divided into sub-lists for use at each polling station while a single Voter List is a detailed record of every person who is registered and eligible to vote. This contains information such as voter's EVR number, name, address, and voter's photo.

When voters present themselves at a polling station, a PDW checks that a voter's name appears on the Voter List before allowing them to cast their Ballot. Signatures on the Voter List are tallied for the final turnout calculation for each polling station on Election Day. The Provisional Voter List is published for the voters to view, correct their details and update essential details prior to the Issue of the *Writ*.

The FEO used a variety of platforms to engage with voters. These platforms were designed to target various areas ranging from the 'future voters' in the Secondary and Tertiary schools to 'potential and current voters' in the wider communities.

As part of its 2015–2019 Strategic Plan, the FEO developed a Year 10 Introduction to Elections Curriculum in partnership with the Ministry of Education. A specific module on Elections was developed and incorporated into the existing framework of the Year 10 Social Science program. This module introduced students to the voting processes while at the same time prepares them for the roles and responsibilities of being a Voter.

The curriculum was successfully launched and piloted in all secondary schools around the country in the 2018 school calendar and continues to be part of the Year 10 Social Science curriculum to date.

As part of the FEO's strategy in delivering voter education programs to potential and future voters of the country, the FEO in its 2020–2023 Strategic Plan is intending to further introduce the topic of elections into the curriculums of Primary schools and Universities.

Further, the FEO has continuously conducted school registration drives for all secondary schools throughout Fiji since 2015. The targeted audience for this exercise are students that have turned 18 years old while still in their secondary school level of education. This has become an annual event for the FEO, which has seen enrolments of around 6,000 to 7,000 students on a yearly basis.

Inclusive of the school registration drive program is a 30 minutes information session which is conducted for years 11 to 13 students. This category of students consists of those who have turned 18 years old or will be turning 18 years old during the school year. The key messages delivered during this information session included:

- Who can register to vote;
- How to register to vote;
- Your responsibility as a voter; and
- Eligibility and Requirements for registration.

This method has been found to be an effective and convenient way of providing voter awareness to students while capturing large numbers of new registrations at the same time.

In improving dissemination of information, the FEO revamped its website in 2017 in preparation for the 2018 General Election. The website had been vastly improved to ensure that all of FEO's stakeholders are better informed and can easily access information. The most significant step towards voter engagement via the website was the inclusion of disability friendly features. Users with visual impairments could increase the size of the fonts or even enable an automated readout of the text on the page.

The FEO also managed two (2) Facebook accounts for the 2018 General election. This platform allowed the FEO to engage directly with voters and other stakeholders who are users of this communication tool. All FEO followers were able to access news updates through live videos of all media events, press conferences and live CCTV feed from FEO facilities such as its main warehouse which stores its election materials. Both FEO Facebook accounts had a following of around 100,000 followers during the 2018 General Election.

For day to day voter services, the FEO opened VSC to cater for voter registration services. The FEO used these VSCs to be distributing points for election materials. Various brochures and booklets were placed in these centres for voter information and distribution.

The FEO also conducted its nationwide Voter Awareness Campaign for the 2018 General Election very thoroughly, targeting all settlements, villages, schools and communities in the rural, urban and peri-urban areas. The awareness sessions were designed to be interactive where the election officials were able to present and explain to voters the various electoral processes and at the same time answer questions or queries that were posed to them. These sessions were very effective drawing from positive feedbacks received from the participants.

In addition to the voter awareness campaign, the FEO also organised special programs to register eligible voters and conduct awareness either through home visits, business visits and community engagement programs.

The Home visits or Mobile Registrations were conducted upon receiving a formal request from the eligible voter or by the voter's relatives for those who are unable to access the services provided at various VSCs. The applicant provides the details of the voter and the reason for the request which may include physical disability, old age or ill voters.

During the build up to the General Election, the FEO also organised voter services and voter awareness sessions for the staff of various organisations or corporate houses. Staff are given the opportunity to obtain a replacement card, new registration or update their details to reflect the same on the NRV List and to avoid frustrations during polling. This program has been a successful initiative given the large number of requests from the various organisations whereby staff take full advantage of the services provided to them.

The Community engagement programs were developed and implemented to provide voter services and awareness programs to the voters living in remote communities including the voters living in the rural and maritime locations, where the voters do not have access to the services due to the remoteness and inaccessibility of the areas they live in. This exercise includes the Nationwide Registration Drives and other planned registration drives which target schools, communities, villages and settlements.

Political Parties and Candidates

Political parties and candidates play an integral role as contestants. According to the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) Act, 2013 political parties in Fiji are to be registered with the Registrar of Political Parties who is also the SoE. Currently, there are seven (7) registered political parties.

Fiji uses a modified Open List Proportional Representation system in which Political Parties nominate candidates as Party List. Independent Candidates can individually lodge their nominations. Parties rank their candidates at the time of nomination, however, the final order of the candidates is decided by the number of votes each candidate receives.

Leading up to the 2018 General Election, FEO made various engagements with Political Parties including quarterly meetings, workshops and simulation exercises. In particular, there were six (6) quarterly meetings commencing from 2017 to discuss electoral issues with FEO and EC as well as ten (10) workshops and simulation exercises organised from 2016 to October, 2018 that assisted political parties in better understanding the electoral processes. Further, in equipping candidates and political parties with the relevant information required for the 2018 General Election, the FEO published the Polling Agents' Handbook in July, 2017 with the purpose of informing parties on the process of accrediting their polling agents, code of conduct, authorised designated areas as well as methods of voting, counting, tabulation of results, allocation of seats and electoral complaints mechanism.

Then in January, 2018 FEO also published the Candidates' Handbook that provided information on the nomination, withdrawal and appeal processes for candidates.

Moving forward, in strengthening its relationship with Political Parties and Candidates FEO intends to increase engagement with them by ensuring that there are more capacity building programs and trainings in the lead up to the next General Election. Induction programs will be developed for newly registered political parties. The FEO will also look into reviewing accreditation of polling agents and complaints processes to improve service delivery as well as ensure that information is readily accessible to political parties and candidates through brochures, pamphlets and an updated website.

It is to be noted that several core issues such as youth representation and participation, women's representation and participation, disabled persons representation and participation can now be directly dealt with at political party level and this is where the focus will transition.

Besides this, the political parties and candidates are required to comply with the Electoral Act, 2014 and the Political Parties Act, 2013 by ensuring that relevant Declaration of assets, liabilities, Income and Expenditure are submitted within the stipulated timeline. The FEO will work closely with the political parties and candidates to ensure compliance of these laws.

Parliament of Fiji

The last General Election was held on 14 November 2018. In the 2018 General Election, 51 seats were contested unlike in 2014 when only 50 seats were contested based on the 2013 Constitution.

The first sitting of the new parliament and the swearing in of the members of parliament took place on 26 November 2018. Currently, three (3) political parties are represented in Parliament with FijiFirst with 27 seats, SODELPA with 21 seats and NFP with three (3) seats.

The Parliament of Fiji has the powers to pass and amend relevant electoral legislations, which has an impact on electoral processes. Moreover, Parliament passes the budget for FEO for its planned projects and operations.

Government Agencies

A Government Agency is responsible for the oversight and administration of specific functions. There is a notable variety of agency types. Although usage differs, a Government Agency is normally distinct from both a Department or Ministry and other types of public bodies established by government.

The identified key government stakeholders for FEO are as follows:

- **Minister Responsible for Elections** is the Minister Responsible for matters related to elections in Parliament. The FEO also liaises with other government ministries through the Ministry Responsible for Elections. Parliamentary queries regarding the FEO are handled through the Minister.
- **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.
- **Department of Immigration** maintains the travel history and passport related details of Fijians. The FEO refers all queries regarding candidate's eligibility under the requirements for verification by the department.
- **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.
- **Fiji Corrections Services and 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.
- **Fiji Police Force** are primary providers of security and also logistics to some extent. The FEO also utilizes the Criminal Records Database held by the Fiji Police Force for various eligibility checks.

- **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.
- **Bureau of Statistics** provides the FEO with the required statistical data to assist it in its planning and logistics.
- **Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts** 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.
- **Ministry of Economy** is the custodian of Government finances and the FEO liaise with the Ministry through its line Ministry for funding purposes.

Media

The Media Industry Development ['MIDA'] Act, 2010 which was amended in 2013 regulates media in Fiji.

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:

- Fiji Broadcasting Corporation (FBC) - The FBC operates three (3) TV channels and six (6) radio channels covering the country;
- Communications Fiji Limited (CFL) – Communications Fiji Ltd operates five (5) radio stations covering the country;
- Fiji Television Limited;
- The Fiji Sun; and
- The Fiji Times.

For general elections, the FEO conducts media accreditations for media organisations and personnel to cover election coverage. Media training is also conducted which is co-funded by MIDA and training conducted by trainers from International Foundations for Electoral Systems ['IFES'] together with Media Handbook.

Advocacy Groups

The FEO maintains an open approach to advocacy groups within the legal framework. The FEO conducted various meetings with external stakeholders such as EDAWG, ESAG, FICAC and CSO's in preparation for the 2018 General Election.

Suppliers

Due to the nature of the operations of FEO, it has some specialised suppliers who only make and distribute the election materials.

During the 2018 General Election, FEO acquired materials from reliable vendors having regard to quality, timely delivery and back up services using its Procurement Policy.

For goods in excess of FJD \$200,000.00, the FEO's Tender Policy was followed. Goods, services and works of lesser value were purchased after obtaining a minimum of three (3) competitive quotations.

FEO appreciates the timely supply of election materials to successfully execute the election processes.

International Cooperation Partners

The FEO has received support, including technical support, in-kind support and fundings from international cooperation partners. These partners have been Australia, New Zealand, India, Korea and Belgium.

The FEO had received in-kind assistance from New Zealand and India in terms of key election material (voting screens and indelible ink respectively), as well as, funding from India to purchase key services (vehicles).

FEO had engaged Technical Advisors from Australia, New Zealand, Korea and Belgium that were based with the different Directorates to provide timely advice and share their knowledge and expertise with the FEO staff and New Zealand's bilateral support included topping up the salary of the DSoE.

Additionally, FEO has affiliated with regional and global agencies to build its capacity and share skills, knowledge and resources through the Electoral Network and is currently holding membership or affiliations with;

- A WEB – Executive Board Member since September, 2017;
- PIANZEA Network – Advisory Group Member;
- Commonwealth Electoral Network – Member of Executive Committee; and
- Association of Asian Election Authorities – Member.

Multinational Observer Groups

Pursuant to section 119 of the Electoral Act, the Minister Responsible for Elections may appoint or invite any person or organisation to observe any election and these persons or organisations are then accredited by the FEO.

FEO accredited 77 International Observers, which were from United States of America, Canada, France, Japan, New Zealand, Korea and United Kingdom. The Melanesian Spearhead Group brought Observers from Bougainville, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu as well as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat who brought in Observers from Rwanda, Tonga, French Polynesia and Federated States of Micronesia.

Professional Skilled Institutions

FEO believes in building the capacity and upskilling the Human Resources for the staff. FEO staff are encouraged to become members with the professional institutions to share and gather knowledge and skills in their specialised fields. FEO has staff who are members of Fiji Institute of Auditors, Fiji Human Resources Institute, Fiji Institute of the Accountants, GIS and Fiji Law Society.

Annually FEO funds the conferences costs for the staff of FEO to attend the conferences hosted by the respective professional bodies. Such conferences bring together all the personnel in the specialised field for networking and knowledge sharing.

Monitoring and Implementation Strategy

The final step in Strategic Planning process is to implement the plan and monitor the progress of the activities. The Strategic Plan for FEO has been designed for the year 2020 to 2023 due to the four (4) year electoral cycle.

Activities in this Plan have been tagged to various staff positions. These staff will be the sole custodian of the activity. Their supervisor and ultimately the Director to whom the staff reports to will be the direct authority on the activity. The Internal Auditor reviews the quarterly performance of each Directorate and tables its report to the SoE.

For the FEO Strategic Plan Year 2020 to 2023 cross cutting themes have been set for goals and objectives to promote coordination and increase resource efficiency though integration is not possible in all the goals and objectives.

With the clear line of accountability set for each individual activity in the Strategic Plan, the monitoring by either individual staff, respective Managers, Directors or the independent positions should be flawless.

The progress report for the review conducted by the Internal Auditor and Review and Compliance Officer will be discussed with the Directors by informing them of the performance of individual staff employed within their Directorates before it is escalated to SoE for the final endorsement.

The Executive Management Board should use reports against its annual plans to review progress towards meeting strategic objectives.

FEO has aligned the annual appraisal for each staff with the KPI's set in the Strategic Plan in ensuring all activities as set in the Strategic Plan timeline are achieved in a timely manner with the individual performance appraisal indicators aligned to this Strategic Plan. Annually, staff are motivated to achieve targets set to attain sufficient performance rating for benefits.

Monitoring Process

1	Data gathering on the projects, activities and KPI's on quarterly basis by Internal Auditor and Review and Compliance Officer.
2	Analyse the data including the Project Submission Papers and Project Reports.
3	Complete the monitoring matrix.
4	Compile the Findings Report from the monitoring matrix.
5	Discuss the findings with the respective Directors.
6	Submit the Findings Report to SoE.
7	Verification of Performance Management form vs Strategic Plan KPI's annually.
8	Approval of the Performance Ratings on PMS form.

Risk Analysis and Mitigation for the FEO's Strategic Plan

In order to successfully implement the Strategic Plan of the FEO, analysis of likely risks that can disrupt the implementation of the plan is important for the Organisation. Considering the significance and importance of this issue and huge impact or challenges these risks can cause, there is a need for the development of proper mitigating strategies to prevent or reduce the severity of these risks.

The FEO has considered specific strategies for mitigating risks and specific measures for reducing them in case of their occurrence. The likely risks that the FEO may encounter are categorised into two (2) groups; external and internal risk.

- **External Risks**

External risks include those instances where FEO has little or no control of and the implementation of the Strategic Plan is dependent on external factors or stakeholders. The external risks that the FEO have identified include the following:

1. Delayed or No Legislation in the areas identified in the Strategic Plan

Changes in legislation governing the conduct of elections in Fiji needs to be passed by the Fiji Parliament and is beyond the FEO's control. Delays or lack of will to pass the required legislation will have an impact on the performance and implementation of the Strategic Plan.

To mitigate this risk, the FEO will implement the activities in accordance with the existing laws and ensure that it is able to account for changes to the law, if and when that would take place.

2. Lack of adequate funding for the FEO

To carry out this Strategic Plan effectively, there needs to be sufficient and available financial capital to enable the scheduled implementation of activities. For the next General Election, the FEO is planning to decentralize its operational activities to its Divisional offices and this is reflected in the Strategic Plan. Decentralisation ensures that electoral activities and services are efficiently and effectively carried out in a timely manner. Lack of adequate funding or delays in accommodating budget requests for the FEO is considered as one of the main risks for the FEO as it could lead to the non-accomplishment of activities stated in its Strategic Plan.

To mitigate this risk, the FEO will ensure that proper and timely budget requests are submitted to the relevant authorities during the next four (4) year electoral cycle. The FEO intends to begin discussions with its major stakeholders such as the Ministry of Economy and the international community, which have been the main donors for electoral activities in the past on the implementation strategies of its Strategic Plan. This will ensure that financial support for the FEO is strategically planned and mapped out well in advance. The FEO will also ensure that its decentralisation activities are phased out evenly within the next four (4) years in order to avoid too much financial pressure at one particular time or financial year.

3. Unpredictable weather conditions

As a result of the Force Majeure that was caused by heavy rainfall and flooding during polling day in the 2018 General Election, the FEO is mindful of the irregular weather patterns experienced in the region during the last couple of years. The FEO expects to face similar issues, which could bring about natural catastrophes in its next planning cycle. Delays in activities due to natural disasters could lead to the non-completion of tasks in the Strategic Plan.

To mitigate the risk, the FEO will have a contingency plan strategy in place to mitigate and respond to these immediate situations when it rises. The FEO will continue to be in a state of readiness for any situation of this nature, which could arise at any point in time in the next four (4) years.

- **Internal Risks**

Apart from the risks that are of an external nature, there are a number of internal risks that can challenge the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Internal risks mostly include issues that the FEO is directly responsible for and is able to eliminate or reduce the severity of its impact. The internal risks that the FEO have identified include the following:

- 1. Resistance to Change**

As the FEO matures as an Organisation, it is important that FEO advance itself in the direction of becoming more established and stable in its affairs. This reflects how the FEO is willing to introduce new concepts and ideas in its evolution. However, the FEO sees challenges in managing this 'Organisational change' with resistance from its staff.

To mitigate this risk, the FEO will continue to expose its staff to international best practices in elections through capacity building programs and workshops, hold consultations, meetings and forums to address fears, doubts and uncertainties, which may arise in the Organisation.

- 2. Loss of experienced staff to implement the Strategic Plan**

The FEO is always facing the issues of retaining experienced staff. This has resulted in non-achievement of certain activities and tasks from the previous Strategic Plan. At the successful completion of the 2018 General Election, FEO staff have become marketable and widely sought after by other organisations. This has resulted in the departure of a great number of experienced staff during the post 2018 General Election period.

To mitigate this risk, the FEO intends to retain staff by providing better working conditions, environment and training opportunities to build capacity for them. To ensure skills and knowledge is not lost during the loss of experienced staff, self-development and knowledge transfer programs will be developed for the FEO to ensure that knowledge is transferred from one section of the Organisation to another to ensure its availability for future users.

- 3. Failure of IT infrastructure**

Cyber-attacks or sabotage and untimely failure of IT hardware resources remains to be one (1) of the major causes of delays, interruptions and non-completion of activities during the implementation stage of the Strategic Plan. To mitigate this risk, the FEO will develop and implement policies and procedures on actions to be taken when cyber-attacks occur and ensure that a disaster recovery plan for business continuity is in place.

The FEO will also put in place mechanisms to ensure that regular network monitoring and system audits are conducted. To reduce the severity impact of this risk, the FEO will ensure that adequate budgeting and aggressive up-skilling of necessary resources and staff skills are carried out effectively.

Milestone Year 2020

#	Milestone	Pillar #	Objective #
1	Develop an Online Register for political parties	1	3
2	Staffing structure for 2022/23 General Election approved	2	3
3	Implement Inventory Management System	2	4
4	Finalise the General Election Calendar for 2022/23	3	1
5	Publish Provisional Polling Venue List	3	1
6	Develop a four (4) year Voter Registration Strategy	3	4
7	Communications Strategy approved	4	6
8	Implement Industrial Election Management Platform	5	3
9	Establish IT Directorate	5	5

Milestone Year 2021

#	Milestone	Pillar #	Objective #
1	Finalise operational manuals, handbooks and trainer guides	1	1
2	PRINCE 2 – Project management training for senior staff	2	1
3	Finalise procurement plan for 2022/23 General Elections	2	4
4	Divisional offices are operational for 2022/23 General Elections	2	6
5	Finalise General Election 2022/23 operational plan	3	1
6	Publish Fiji National Polling Venue Directory (v 2.0)	3	3
7	Conduct Overseas Voter Registration	3	4
8	Audit of National Register of Voters	3	5
9	Implement E-Training platform and E-Service portal	5	3
10	Establish a software and network monitoring system	5	3

Milestone Year 2022

#	Milestone	Pillar #	Objective #
1	Declaration of Assets, Liabilities, Income and Expenditures for political parties published	1	3
2	100% Election Officials recruited	2	3
3	100% Election Officials trained	2	8
4	Area offices are operational for 2022/23 General Election	2	6
5	Conduct the 2022/23 General Election	3	1
6	Media training on elections conducted	4	4
7	Network and Software Audit completed	5	4

Milestone Year 2023

#	Milestone	Pillar #	Objective #
1	Review of the 2022/23 General Election processes	1	1
2	Supervisor of Elections report submitted and published	1	1
3	Joint report by the Supervisor of Elections and Electoral Commission published	1	1
4	Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 developed	2	1
5	Post-Election audit completed	3	1

Conclusion

This Strategic Plan (2020-2023) was compiled through the collaborative efforts of the FEO staff and Management. It allows all to have ownership of the activities they plan to undertake between 2020 to 2023 and it will also guide them in ensuring that the next General Election is delivered successfully.

In focusing on the period 2020 to 2023, the FEO has adopted new milestones that it aims to achieve. It will also look at strengthening collaboration with different stakeholders to ensure that all areas involving them will allow for maximum involvement and cooperation.

In terms of implementation, the FEO will closely monitor the implementation of all activities on a quarterly basis and milestones on an annual basis. The staff and management of the FEO are looking forward to the journey ahead with the responsibilities that come with it.

The ultimate aim is to stabilize the planning and delivery of elections in Fiji and reduce the ad-hoc changes that eventuate during the exercise. The enhancements of operational systems should result in greater control while at the same time allowing direct access to operational areas.

The plan seeks to secure greater collaboration and development of capacities of all Fijians and this will ultimately build stronger communities that understand the electoral process.

At the conclusion of all the activities in this plan, the FEO will have significantly raised the standards of delivery of elections and at the same time instilled confidence in voters in terms of the verifiability of the election process through the enhanced transparency of its activities.



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