

Drawa Rainforest Conservation Project – Fiji

The Drawa project is Fiji's first independent carbon and conservation project to be endorsed by the national government. It encompasses 4,120 ha of tropical rainforest on Vanua Levu, of which 1,723 ha is eligible for generating carbon credits. In a first for Fiji, the entrepreneurial Drawa landowners have exchanged logging for conservation. It is truly a game-changer; rather than selling timber, landowners produce and sell carbon credits and maintain the multitude of benefits of keeping their forest intact.

The Drawa Block

The project area straddles Cakadrove and Macuata provinces in Vanua Levu, Fiji. Nine indigenous (Taukei) landowning clans (mataqali) own the Drawa Project Area. Most of the Drawa block is covered by rainforest, with areas in and around the villages used for gardening and horticulture.



Protected forest

The Drawa block rainforests are now protected under customary agreements and are soon to be legally protected under a 99 year Conservation Lease. (The lease has been approved and is about to be signed). The forest is managed through a conservation management plan. The Drawa project was the recipient of the SPREP-SPC award for Excellence in Implementing Island Ecosystem Management Principles.

Making carbon credits – winning the race to save rainforests

Globally the loss of rainforest contributes around 14% of annual greenhouse gas emissions. Without the Drawa Project the rainforest of Drawa would most certainly have been logged and contributed to this global problem. In fact logging coupes were already drawn up at Drawa. There was a race for the forest, but in this case conservation won! The project creates carbon credits by measuring the forests and the emissions reductions. One tonne of CO₂ emissions saved is equal to one 'carbon credit.' The Drawa project creates 18,800 carbon credits for each year that the forest is protected.



Left: The Drawa project was developed between 2011- 2015 through a community – led process.

Project benefits

Jobs and livelihoods

The sale of carbon credits creates employment for Drawa people. Rangers have already taken up their positions - some are paid through grant funds and other work is undertaken voluntarily. Revenue from carbon sales will be used to increase the number of forest ranger jobs.



Above left: Drawa Rangers proudly receive their uniforms (March 2017). Above right: Since 2015 the Cooperative has installed over 100 hives and sold more than 4 tonnes of honey.

Community development

The Drawa Cooperative has developed a community development plan to guide investment of project income. However they have already started to develop some of their projects with impressive results. The Cooperative's beekeeping business provides income-generating opportunities for Drawa women. The Cooperative also plans to invest in improved water supply infrastructure.

Nature and Biodiversity

Fiji's forests are globally unique and significant. The project area protects habitat for numerous endemic plant and animal species.



Above: The endangered Fiji Ground Frog (Platymantis vitiana). Photo: P.Ryan, NatureFiji. Right: the Drawa project ensures healthy rivers and drinking water

Forest services

The Drawa Block forests provide essential goods and services that help to maintain healthy and resilient communities. When T.C. Winston struck Fiji in 2016, the Drawa forest afforded protection from gale force winds and flooding. In the aftermath of the cyclone the forest provided access to traditional foods that supported the villages through the time required for crops to recover.



"The forests sheltered our village (Drawa)... only a few houses were partially destroyed. They (forests) provide us with food such as wild yams and edible ferns, and our rivers and streams are still able to provide us with food such as fish, prawns and eels. We are also able to hunt for bats... Through our efforts of forest conservation, we find ourselves lucky to still have these resources that are able to sustain us while we get back on our feet."

Mr. T. Duna, March 2016 (translated)

Project partners

In April 2015, Drawa landowners registered a Cooperative that takes responsibility for managing the forest and the income generated from the carbon project. Local NGO Live & Learn Fiji (registered since 1999) provides business, governance and technical support.

The project is one of the first projects developed under the Nakau Programme www.nakau.org, a regional Pacific Islands network of 'fair trade styled' carbon and conservation projects. The Nakau Programme provides the methodologies for measuring emissions reductions and monitors projects to ensure best practice in environmental management and governance.

Project certification

The Drawa Project is certified under the Plan Vivo International carbon standard (considered the world's best carbon standard for ensuring socially equitable outcomes). Credits are issued to the Markit Registry in New York.



Left: The Drawa project is a partnership between The Drawa landowner Cooperative, Live & Learn and the regional Pacific Islands Nakau Programme

Buying credits

Businesses can become a partner in the Drawa Rainforest Conservation Project by purchasing carbon credits.

Purchasing credits is an easy and low risk option for building corporate social responsibility credentials and promoting an environmentally friendly image. Carbon credits or 'offsets' purchased from the project can either reduce the buyers 'carbon footprint' or go a step further to achieve carbon neutrality.

Investment in the project is low risk because Drawa carbon credits are performance based – they represent the successful achievement of the previous years forest protection. However the purchase also provides income that enables future forest conservation activities.

Buyers also have the option of getting hands on and can visit the project site.



Left: Buyers from Opus and ZeroMission travelled from Sweden to visit Drawa in May 2017

Nakau Programme Partners and supporters

