

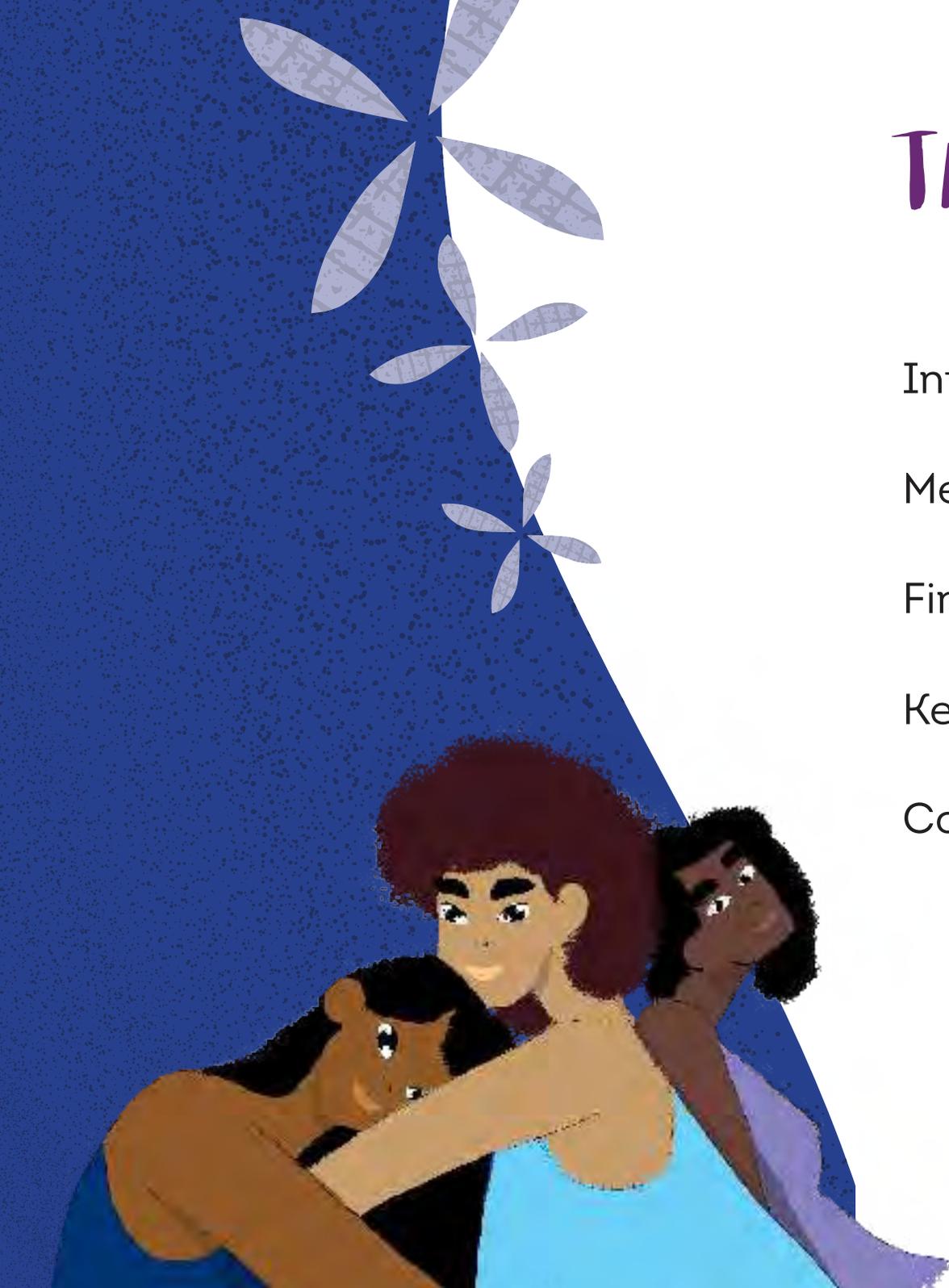


WOMEN'S FUND FIJI

TRUST DEED
CONSULTATIONS
SUMMARY REPORT

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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The Fiji Women's Fund (the Fund) is an initiative of the Australian Government's Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) Program. The Fund has committed AUD10.5 million from 2017 to 2022 for funding and capacity development support to women's groups, networks, and organisations in Fiji.

The Fund's mandate is to provide resourcing and capacity development support to women's groups, organisations and networks in Fiji to expand and enhance their work on women's empowerment and gender equality. The Fund achieves this through partnerships and direct funding.

A key aspect of the Fund's work is to reach out and support women's groups in rural and remote locations and those who are marginalised, including women with disabilities and those facing discrimination due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Fund has been operating well in terms of this goal.

The Fund enhances the Fiji Government's key gender equality strategies that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Fiji, including the National Women's Plan of Action and National Gender Policy, both led by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (hereafter referred to as the Ministry of Women).

A unique part of the Fund's design is that it is intended to become an independent body by 2022 with diverse sources of funding. As an autonomous entity, the Fund is expected to continue to support women's groups, organisations, or networks with capacity development, including knowledge, skills, resources and relationships to contribute to transformative change.

As part of the process of becoming independent, the Fund is implementing its localisation strategy which includes the trust deed development process. The Fund intends to register as an independent charitable organisation under Fiji's Charitable Trust Act. The trust deed is the legal document that will govern the entity. The trustees, who will manage the legal entity, will also be appointed as part of this process. To develop the trust deed document and understand stakeholder perspectives, the Fund commissioned a stakeholder consultation. This report contains the findings of that study, including key recommendations for how the Fund can solidify its identity and clarify its operations in the process of attaining independence.



METHODOLOGY

Twenty-four interviews were conducted with stakeholders using structured questions that were developed with the Fund Manager and vetted by the lawyer. Three workshops were also facilitated, two with the Fund's staff to develop the mission and vision, and one with the Steering Committee to refine the terms of references for the Trustees, the Governance Board, and the Grants Committee, for inclusion in the trust deed. Data were analysed qualitatively and emergent themes were noted. The themes, insights, and recommendations are summarised to produce this report.

The process and methodology are adaptive to findings, and several deliverables have been added to the process to honour stakeholder recommendations. Aside from a mission and vision session with the Fund's team, these include a meeting with the current Steering Committee to discuss the terms of reference for the Trustees, the Governance Board (which replaces the Steering Committee), and the Grants Committee, which will be attached as schedules to the trust deed. After this discussion, the trust deed draft and its attachments will be amended and presented

jointly with the legal team to the Steering Committee for endorsement.

The trust deed was submitted to the legal team for final vetting. As the legal team prepared the trust deed for submission, significant delays were caused by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, which prevented them from convening a gathering to obtain trustee signatures. One of our trustees had to sign our trust deed via postal mail while temporarily in New Zealand, which took time as well. Further delays were caused by legal ambiguities with regard to using the word "Fiji" at the beginning of our name. After discussions, the Transitional Steering Committee and Fund management team decided on a two-pronged strategy. The first was to obtain support letters from partners to lodge under the Fund's existing name; the second was to change the Fund's name to Women's Fund (Fiji) and lodge with that name. The application with the revised name was lodged with the Registrar's office in July 2021, and proved successful within a month, with its official date of registration is July 7, 2021. The entire process is summarised in the Process Map (Figure 1),

FWF Trust Deed Development Process Map

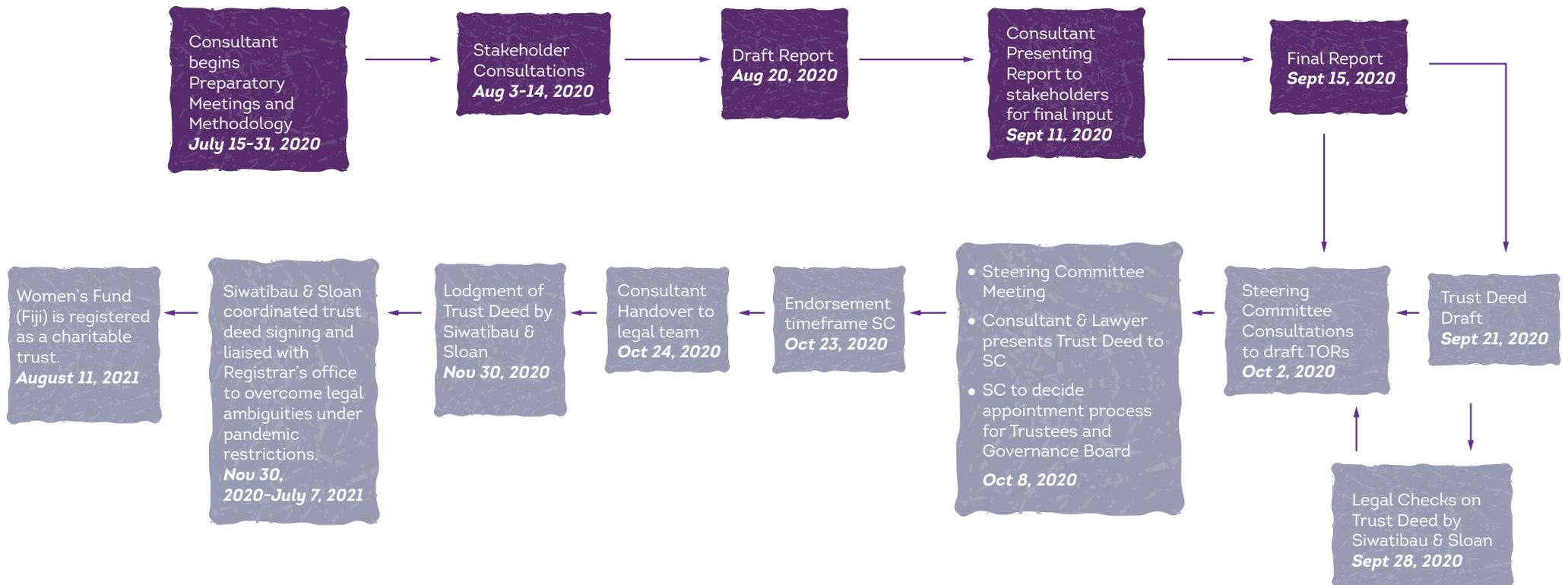
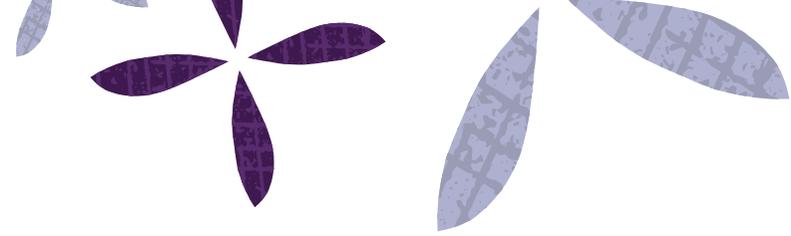


Figure 1: A process map depicting the trust deed development process, of which this report is one outcome.



FINDINGS

The emergent themes, lessons learned, challenges and other aspects of the data pointed to four main types of findings:

1. IDENTITY AND FUNCTION

The Fund is a flexible, empathetic, inclusive, and powerful organisation that is making a difference in the women's movement in Fiji. It has articulated its vision and mission as an independent body. It uses an ecosystem approach to assist women's groups in various stages and helps them become self-sustaining and resilient through capacity building and relationship building via a personal and empathetic approach. The Fund itself is developing and must prioritise self-care.

These are the final versions of the Fund's vision and mission after all the consultations were completed:

Vision:

An agent of change influencing the flow of resources to diverse women, girls, and gender non-conforming people in Fiji

Mission:

We are an empathetic and adaptive feminist fund that influences and mobilises financial and non-financial resources for feminist and women's rights organisations and movement, and our grantee partners, to progress the human rights of diverse women, girls, and gender non-conforming people in Fiji.

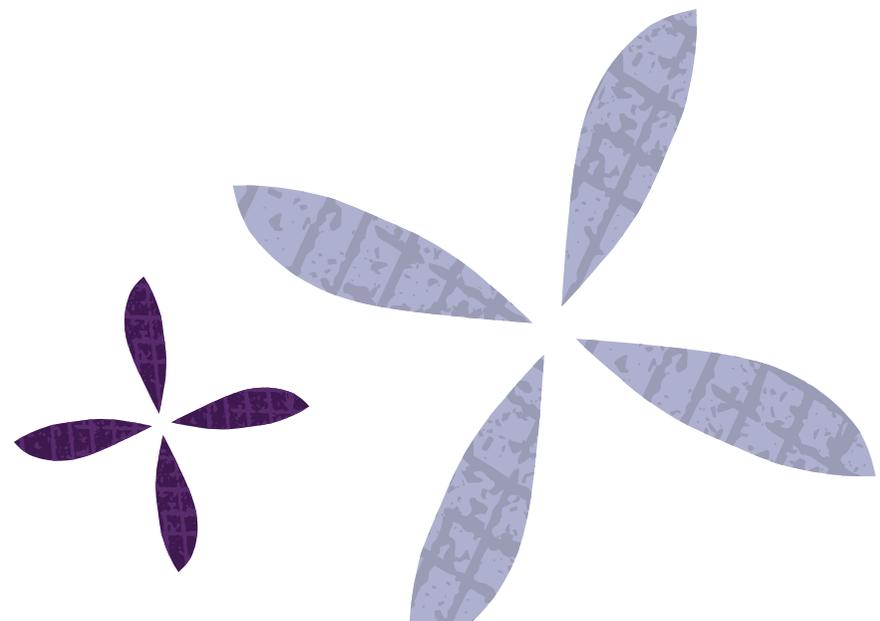
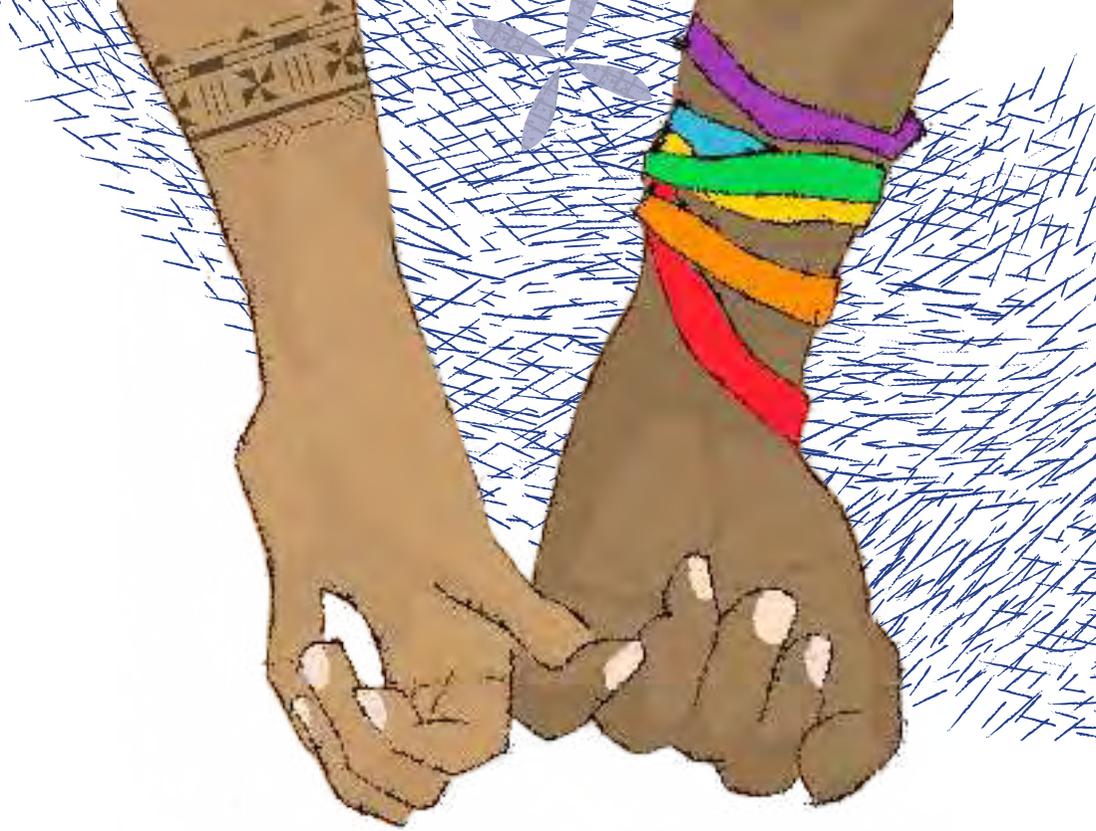
Charitable Purpose:

The charitable purposes of the Fund, as drafted as part of these consultations, and then refined by the legal team, are designed to contribute to and achieve its mission. The Fund works with its grantee partners to achieve the following charitable purposes which include, but are not limited to:

- a) Support the capacity of women and other marginalised groups within the feminist, disability and LGBTQI, spaces and networks in Fiji who have identified viable income generating projects that support business and community development in both rural and urban areas;
- b) Collaborate and create awareness, on the elimination of violence against women and girls by engaging community wide and rights-based approaches that would directly and indirectly reduce incidences of violence against women and girls in our communities;
- c) Support and promote capacity building, awareness campaigns, training, and educating women in rural and urban communities on financial literacy and management, economic empowerment, social inclusion and gender equality and establishing collective structures that provide women with access to resources and opportunities to improve their income generating skills and capabilities;
- d) Educate young women on the importance of women in leadership and support initiatives that are aimed at building their capacity and promotes their participation in the decision-making process in an effort to reduce poverty, improve standards of living and promote economic growth and prosperity in society;

- e) Promoting gender equality for women in sports through developing programs for young girls and women, and exploring avenues to fund recreational centres for women looking to participate in sports;
- f) Support local women's groups and organisations that implement and execute the sustainable use of their natural resources which contributes to sustaining their livelihoods and promotes the rural development in the agricultural sector;
- g) Support national efforts geared towards ensuring access to health and medical services for young women and women with disabilities in outer islands and rural areas;
- h) Offer resilience grants to women's groups and other marginalised groups to support the provision of crisis preparedness and recovery efforts, including but not limited to relief supplies and operations as needed; and
- i) Conduct fundraising, establish networks in the international and local arenas and seek sustainable financing and grants for its Mission and programmes to ensure long-term sustainability;

in Fiji and for the benefit of the people in Fiji





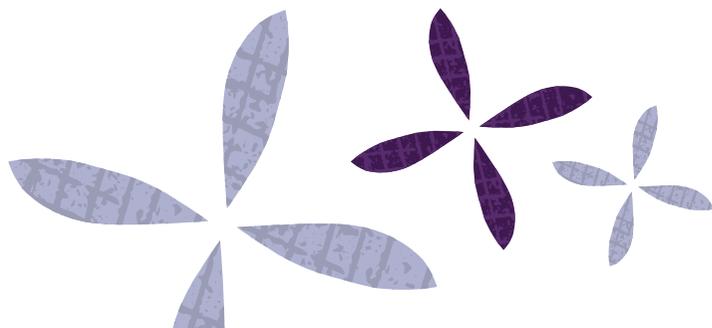
2. GOVERNANCE

The Fund needs to choose well-regarded, trustworthy, altruistic and charismatic trustees to govern the entity, as well as a dedicated, highly skilled, and diverse governance board to guide the Fund through its transition. Results clearly indicate that members of the governance board should be chosen based on the skill, commitment, and accountability this

transition requires. Moreover, future boards should be selected based on the Fund’s needs in each phase of development. Table 1 summarises the types of skills, experience, and qualities stakeholders recommended for each of the committees under the independent entity.

Trustees	Governance Board	Grants Committee
Legal + Financial Experience	Commitment to Key Principles	Women’s Movement, Civil Society Organisation + Private Sector Experience
Strategic	Legal + Organisational Development + Civil Society Organisations + Women’s Movement Experience	Impartial
Trustworthy	No Donors or Women’s Funds	Diligent
Altruistic	Accountable	Diverse
Diverse	Diverse	Disabled Peoples Organisation (DPO), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersexual (LGBTQI), Government and Fund representatives
Accountable		
Hands-off		

Table 1: A summary of what stakeholders recommended for governance bodies.



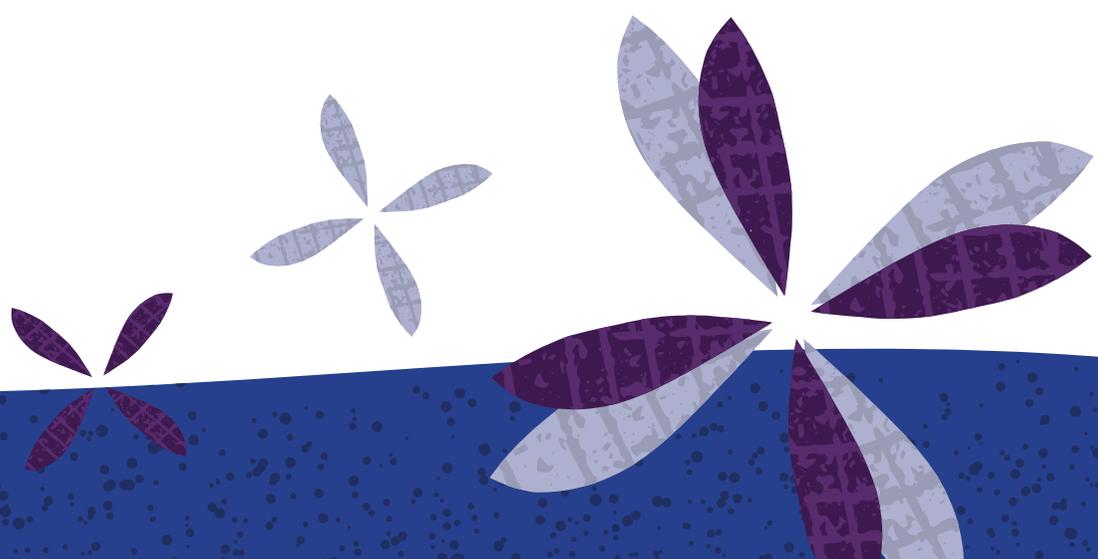


3. PROCESSES

Grantmaking is evolving to respond to grantee partner needs and changing external environments, emphasising resilience. The Fund needs to have clarity around its roles, responsibilities, monitoring, evaluation and learning, reporting, and audits both for itself and grantee partners to ensure accountability and transparency to itself and all partners. Relevant terms of references will be attached as schedules to the trust deed document prior to submission.

4. CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The transition to independence is a difficult undertaking because relationships are changing. It is critical to ensure an empathetic and respectful approach that builds understanding among stakeholders while fulfilling the needs of an autonomous national women's fund. A change management perspective would be ideal to support the Fund Manager, the Fund team, and other stakeholders to better understand their changing roles, have a sense of ownership, stay informed, and manage expectations.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations were developed after considering the results as a whole. The first step was a needs assessment:

- The Fund Manager needs change management expertise urgently to help her navigate the transition to independence.
- The Fund needs to prioritise self-care and sustainability in terms of resourcing, team cohesion, and overall resilience.
- The Fund needs to clarify, document, and expand its core operations to meet strategic objectives.
- Stakeholders need to be well informed, so they can manage their expectations and continue to feel a sense of ownership in this transition.

As a second step, recommendations were provided as a system of strategies (Figure 3) that have tactics for different time phases.

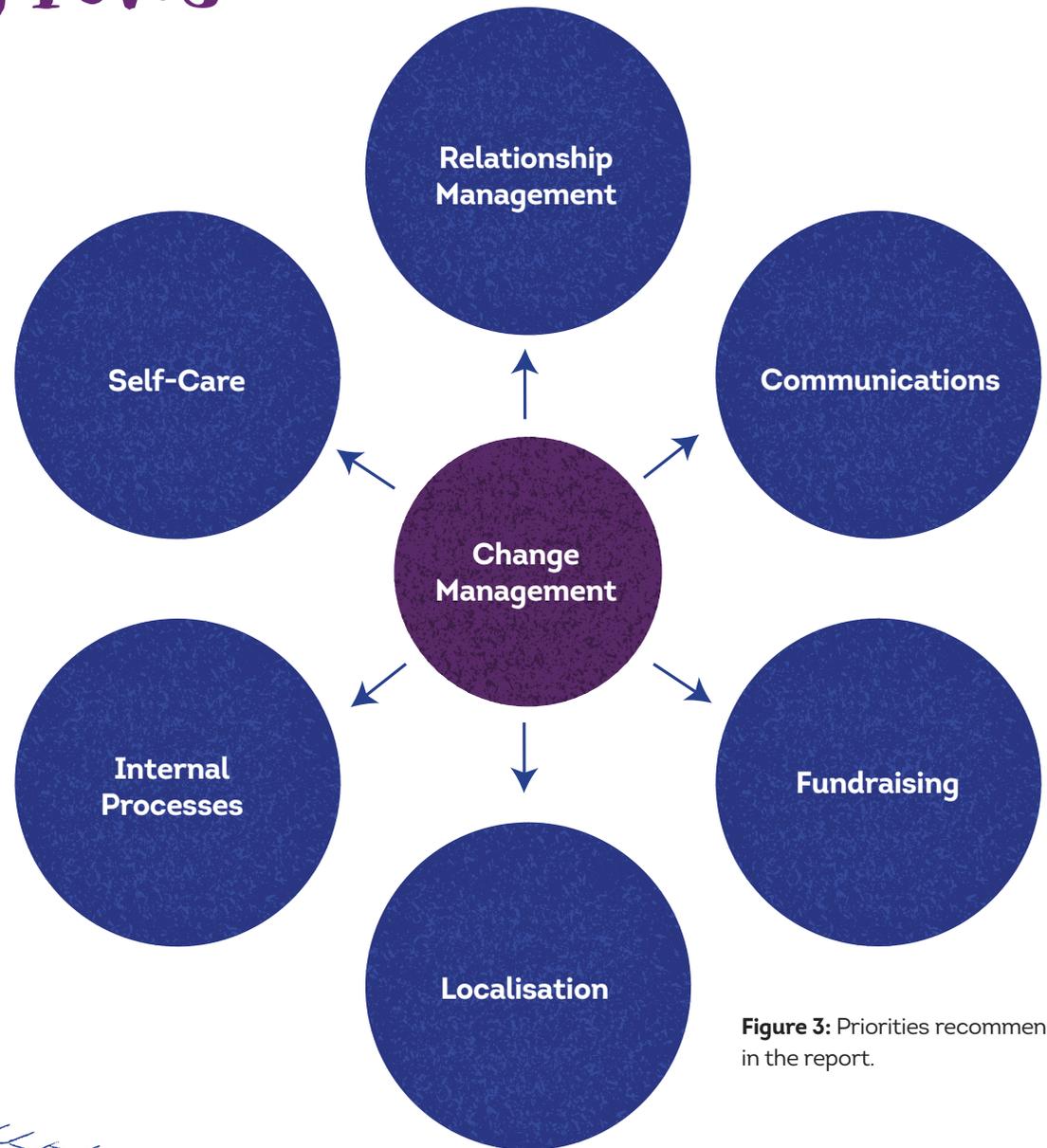


Figure 3: Priorities recommended in the report.



The third step was to generate a list of prioritised recommendations with tactics, listed below in three phases, together with the needs assessment.

PRIORITY 1: CHANGE MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE

- Appoint a change management expert to guide the Fund Manager and the Fund team through the transition, addressing the main points above.
- Appoint a transition task force or Transitional Steering Committee to lead the change with the Fund Manager.
- Mobilise funds for change management, including all processes and priorities for the Fund.

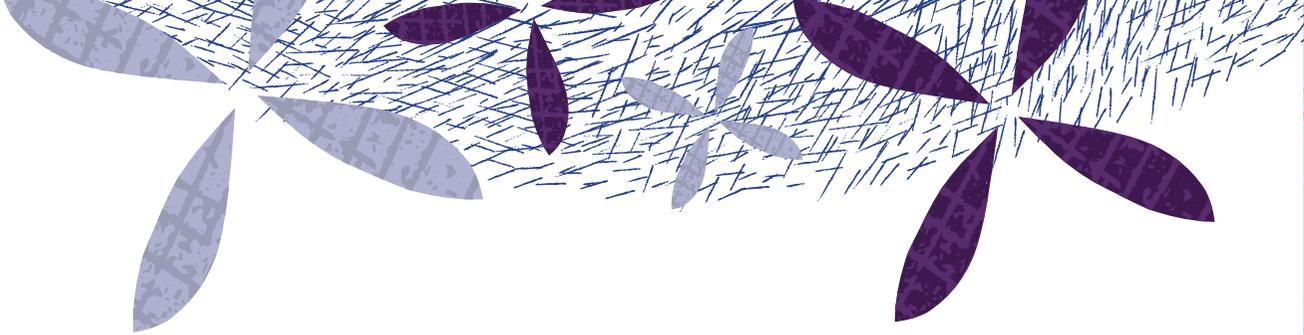
PRIORITY 2: TRUST DEED & RESOURCE MOBILISATION

- Continue with the trust deed process, integrating the needs of stakeholders and the Fund team, while balancing legal constraints.
- Schedule at least one stakeholder workshop within the next three months to improve understanding of the transition and manage expectations.
- Continue with resource mobilisation efforts with attention to resource diversity.

PRIORITY 3: STRATEGIC OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Complete strategic planning to identify objectives in more detail.
- Focus on expansion through resource diversity, coalition-building, deeper penetration into Fijian communities and, ultimately, regionalisation.
- Expand and implement the communications strategy.
- Comprehensively document all processes, including contingency planning.

CONCLUSION



It is crucial for the Fund to take a mindful and committed approach to identify and maintain its self-care practices, funding, and core operations so that these are well defined and sustained throughout its tenure. The Fund needs to conceptualise self-care in four ways:

1. Individual self-care;
2. Sustained resources for the Fund team's financial, professional, and emotional resilience;
3. Continuing the Fund's empathetic approach with grantee partners; and
4. Ensuring resource diversity and abundance for the Fund to continue its work in perpetuity.

The Fund is not only on its way to becoming the first national fund in Fiji and the first of its kind in the Pacific region, it also carries the hopes of many diverse and marginalised communities whose voices would otherwise never be heard or incorporated into policy, funding, and grantmaking decisions. To deliver on such lofty expectations, the Fund must combine good leadership with a commitment to building and maintaining its own resilience.

Secondly, the Fund needs to continue with a relationship-oriented and tiered approach as it moves forward with its localisation priorities – with each phase of priorities giving due attention to relationship management. Change management and, in particular, how relationships are managed at all levels as

circumstances change, will determine how resilient the Fund Manager and the Fund team can be, how much support stakeholders will provide, and how much success the Fund will ultimately achieve. Staying open and framing transitions with empathy and kindness will serve the Fund well. Data suggests the Fund is already moving in this direction, but it will benefit greatly from some change management and behavioural communication assistance.

Thirdly, managing communication with all stakeholders in the long term is crucial to maintain connection and solidarity as circumstances continue to change. The Communications Strategy must integrate the needs of disaster, uncertainty, expansion and other eventualities, and embrace a range of modalities from blogs, radio, reports, and even text messaging to reach all constituents. This must be carefully thought through to create reliable communication rituals that help all stakeholders feel included and updated about the Fund's activities and progress.

The Fund is a remarkable example of what is possible when the feminist approaches of nurturing, empathy, collaboration, and communication are followed with integrity. The Fund has great potential to bring far-reaching change to the women's movement and related movements in the nation and region as it moves toward true autonomy. Consistent attention to its own needs, relationships, and how it communicates will help the Fund achieve its goals with grace.



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