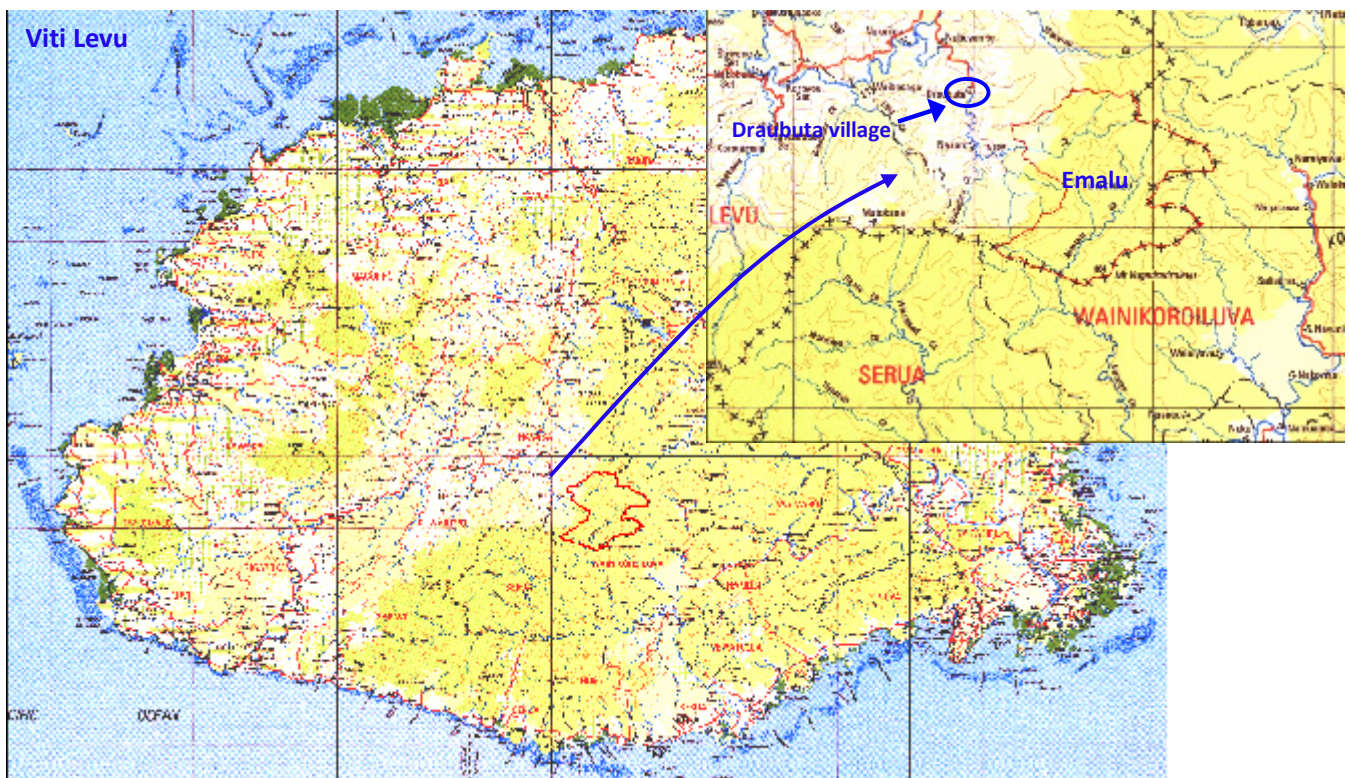


Mataqali Emalu – REDD+ Pilot Site

1. Overview of Mataqali land and people

The Mataqali Emalu of Yavusa Emalu of the Navosa Province has been selected as a pilot site for the Fiji national REDD+ programme. The Mataqali land covers an area of 7,347Ha covered predominantly by closed forest with multiple use function. There are also pockets of forests marked for protection due to sloping limitations and soil erodibility.

The forest on Mataqali Emalu is largely untouched and is part of one of the few remaining primary indigenous forests in Fiji. The land is currently uninhabited with most members of the Mataqali Emalu residing in Draubuta village.



2. Draubuta Village

The Draubuta Village has a population of around 368 with more than 60 households. Five Mataqalis make up the village:

1. Mataqali Koroivabeka (Tokatoka : Naboseiwale, Narogairua)
2. Mataqali Naqio (Yavusa: Mota, Tokatoka: Nadurusila)
3. Mataqali Navesiqiyani (Tokatoka: Navesiqiyani)

4. Mataqali Naocotabua (Tokatoka: Naocotabua)
5. Mataqali Emalu (Yavusa: Emalu, Tokatoka: Emalu, Duiyabe)

The Village sits on an alluvial plain with the Nasa creek running along the village and spilling into the upper reaches of the Sigatoka river. Accessibility to the village is a steep 1.5km descent by foot from the nearest dirt road. The vehicle river crossing just before the village is an Irish crossing. When the upper Sigatoka river floods this crossing is under water, cutting off access to the nearest Government station and public facilities.

Communication is restricted due its locality and the only form of communication is through Easytel phones. However, reception and services are intermittent.

There is no electricity and most power is supplied through diesel generators and batteries and energy from oil, kerosene and fuel wood.

The source of income for villagers is from agriculture with yaqona and dalo as the main cash crops. These crops are mainly sold in the Sigatoka market.

3. REDD+ Development

Preliminary assessment of criteria met by Emalu to qualify for REDD+

1. **Clear land ownership and land boundaries:** Boundary from NLC agreed on by Mataqali. Consent from all Mataqali members currently under in the process.
2. **Additionality:** Forest under threat from logging (*existing data and information:* the documented requests from Mataqali to Forestry Dept. for logging license, approach by logging companies to Mataqali members). There are no other funds available to help protect of sustainably manage Emalu forests.
3. **Economic feasibility:** Large area (more than 7,000Ha) with good stocking
4. **Controlling leakage/displacement:** Use of Yavusa land for agricultural needs identified. A land use plan to ensure other future land use needs are considered will be developed.
5. **Supportive social structure:** Consultations are on-going by the members of the Mataqali Emalu to develop a committee to take care of the welfare and development of the Mataqali members and village. Other Mataqali members in the village have also shown support for the project.

Youths in the village have high school education and have been actively involved in the pilot site surveys.
6. **Biodiversity value:** given its almost pristine state, it would be expected that the endemic flora and fauna found in neighbouring of forests would also be in Emalu.
7. **Cultural values:** a cultural mapping exercise was undertaken by the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs (Cultural Mapping Program) on July 2012 for the Mataqali which will also be considered in the land use plan.

8. **Gender:** the involvement of women in implementation and monitoring will be promoted.

3.1 Summary of consultations so far

Following an expression of interest from the Mataqali Emalu, a series of consultation meetings were undertaken in Draubuta village to discuss REDD+ and the issues surrounding the development of a REDD+ project. Other Mataqali members residing in the village also participated in these meetings. These meetings also included awareness-raising sessions on climate change and REDD+ and its implications for the landowners.

The village meeting held in January 2012 showed agreement from all attending Mataqali members to proceed with the REDD+ project. However, not all Emalu Mataqali members were present so another full consultation workshop was undertaken in January 15, 2013 with ALL Mataqali members to ensure that they have a common understanding of what they will be committing to.

3.2 REDD+ activity type requested

The Mataqali Emalu had expressed interest to undertake sustainable forest management (selective harvesting) in their forests. This is the “+ sustainable management of forests” under the UNFCCC REDD+ activity type. The given baseline scenario would be the conventional logging that would take place without this intervention. A forest management plan will be drawn up for the forest.

However, there are many implications in this regard. Given the isolation and lack of access into the area logging companies would have to invest highly to enter the forest. This drawback will be compounded by the decrease volume of timber extracted compared to that obtained through conventional logging. This option therefore, warrants further investigation in terms of feasibility for a logging company.

Another activity option proposed for the Emalu land is forest conservation. This is the “+ conservation of forest carbon stocks” in the UNFCCC REDD+ activity type. The baseline scenario is the conventional logging that has been proposed for the area and the threat from agriculture clearance. Forest conservation does not mean that the mataqali or yavusa members do not have access to the site but would mean that no commercial scale activity with regards to forest removal will take place. A land use plan to better manage activities within the forest will be developed.

4. Summary of Surveys (2012 – 2013)

Towards the development of a Project Design Document, the following has been undertaken:

4.1 Surveys

As part of the ecological and social documentation of the area and to assess the current forest carbon stocking of Emalu forest, the following surveys will be undertaken:

a. Socio-economic survey

Objective: to identify the social issues of both the Mataqali Emalu and the village of Draubuta together with financial components that influences the lives and development of villagers and Mataqali members.

Social issues will include non-formal (traditional) and formal (administrative) organisational and decision-making structures and rules relating to natural resource management, modes for addressing grievances (both formal and on-formal), gender issues, traditional relationships and connectivity to neighbouring villages, and influences of commercialisation and modernisation. The collection of traditional information on the use of their natural resources will also be undertaken.

Phase 1 of the socio-economic surveys was conducted in July 2012 for Draubuta village. A land use mapping exercise and a rapid household survey was also conducted for Navitilevu village, Navosa in March 2013. Phase 2 of the socioeconomic surveys will be undertaken in June, 2013.

b. Biodiversity survey

Objective: to assess flora and fauna biodiversity in the Emalu forest and mark out areas of high biodiversity and flora classified to be threatened.

Phase 1 of the biodiversity surveys was conducted by the Institute of Applied Sciences of the University of the South Pacific (IAS – USP). The final phase of these surveys was undertaken in March, 2013. Survey results have indicated Emalu forest as a biodiversity hotspot housing a diversity of habitats and ecosystem functions that hold important cultural significance to the people of Emalu.

c. Cultural mapping

Objective: Mapping of sites of cultural significance (like old village sites) and if required, survey and demarcation of village boundaries. The collation of traditional knowledge will also be associated with the mapping exercise.

A cultural mapping exercise will also be undertaken for the neighbouring villages of Navosa within the periphery of Emalu in June 2013.

d. Forest Inventory and carbon measurements

Objective: to calculate a site specific forest carbon calculation of the forest of Emalu and to establish project permanent sample plots.

Phase 1 of forest inventory and carbon measurements was conducted in July 2012. The second and final phase of the surveys was undertaken in Feb – March 2013.

Mataqali members and villagers were actively involved in the above surveys as guides, field assistants and resource persons.

e. Land Use Survey

Objective: to verify and assess the current land use and level of encroachment near and within the Emalu pilot site boundary. The ground-truthing survey was based on the Socio-economic surveys – Land Use mapping exercise that were conducted for Draubuta (July 2012) and Navitilevu village (March 2013).

Phase 1 of the land use surveys was undertaken in March 2013 where land owners were actively involved as guides and field assistants.