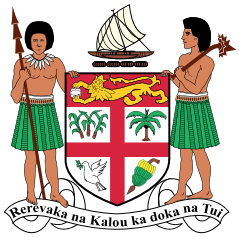
Guiding Framework and Checklist for Cultural Considerations for Planned Relocation in Fiji





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This Guiding Framework was developed under the guidance of Fiji's Taskforce on Relocation and Displacement of Communities Vulnerable to the Impacts of Climate Change (FTRD).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Planned relocation in Fiji is guided by the Government's **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Planned Relocation** (2023). The SOP establishes the procedural pathway for supporting communities facing climate-related and disaster risks, from pre-relocation assessment and decision-making through implementation and post-relocation support. Effective implementation requires practical guidance to ensure that cultural considerations are identified, respected, and addressed consistently throughout the process.

For *iTaukei* communities, culture is central to identity, social relationships, governance, and the interconnected relationship between people, land, sea, ancestry and spirituality, understood holistically as *vanua*. Planned relocation can affect customary land relationships, traditional leadership, spiritual wellbeing, social cohesion, language, traditional knowledge, livelihoods, and the transmission of cultural practices between generations.

The **Culture–Gender–Relocation Nexus study** commissioned by the Fijian Taskforce on Planned Relocation and Displacemen (FTRD), with support from the GIZ Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change (HMCCC) programme, highlighted the importance of understanding how relocation affects cultural systems, social organisation, traditional knowledge, and the differentiated experiences of women, men, youth and elders. The experiences documented in communities, including Vunidogoloa and Tukuraki, demonstrate the importance of culturally grounded engagement, customary decision-making, appropriate protocols, and sustained support before, during, and after relocation.

This Guiding Framework and Checklist for Cultural Considerations in Planned Relocation in Fiji has been developed as a supporting tool for implementation of the Planned Relocation SOP. It translates relevant cultural considerations into practical guidance for identifying, assessing, documenting, and addressing cultural risks, priorities, and safeguards. Furthermore, it supports government agencies, provincial and district authorities, traditional leadership, assessors, practitioners, implementing partners, and communities in integrating cultural considerations into relocation planning and implementation.

The framework complements the SOP; it does not replace it or establish a separate relocation process. It should be applied alongside the SOP, the Comprehensive Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Methodology (CRVAM) and other relevant supporting frameworks. This ensures that cultural safeguards are integrated into existing assessment, planning, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this framework is to support the consistent integration of cultural considerations and safeguards before, during, and after planned relocation by providing practical guidance and a structured checklist for use throughout the relocation process.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this framework are to:

- provide a systematic approach for identifying and documenting cultural assets, traditional knowledge, customary governance structures, ancestral relationships, and culturally significant places
- guide the integration of cultural protocols, community priorities, and customary decision-making processes into planned relocation processes
- support culturally appropriate, inclusive, and conflict-sensitive engagement, recognising the differentiated experiences of women, men, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, and other potentially marginalised groups
- identify measures to prevent cultural harm and safeguard cultural identity, spiritual wellbeing, traditional practices, and community cohesion during relocation
- support the monitoring and documentation of cultural safeguards, cultural wellbeing and continuity throughout pre-relocation, during relocation and post-relocation

1.3 Scope and Application

This framework applies to the identification, assessment, integration, and monitoring of cultural considerations in planned relocation processes in Fiji. It is intended for relevant government agencies; provincial and district authorities; traditional leaders; assessors; practitioners; implementing partners; facilitators; and affected communities.

The Culture Framework is intended to be applied across the three phases of the Planned Relocation SOP: Pre-Relocation (Phase 1); During Relocation / In-Relocation (Phase 2); and Post-Relocation (Phase 3). It covers cultural identification and mapping; traditional governance and leadership; protocols for land and place; cultural safety and community cohesion; language and traditional knowledge; infrastructure and cultural design; cultural preservation and continuity; monitoring and safeguards.

The accompanying Culture Checklist Guiding Tool provides practical prompts for applying the framework and recording relevant findings, actions and follow-up. The checklist should be adapted to the specific community context without compromising the SOP's requirements or the need to respect community-defined cultural priorities.

1.4 Relationship with the SOP and Supporting Frameworks

The Planned Relocation SOP remains the principal procedural reference for planned relocation in Fiji. This framework provides additional technical guidance on cultural considerations and safeguards within that established process. It does not replace the SOP, alter its decision-making requirements, or establish parallel procedures.

The Guiding Framework and Checklist for Cultural Considerations in Planned Relocation in Fiji complement the SOP and other Guiding Frameworks, particularly those on Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). While the GEDSI Framework promotes equitable, accessible and inclusive participation and outcomes, the FPIC Framework guides informed, voluntary and culturally appropriate community decision-making and consent. The Culture Framework focuses on cultural identity, customary governance, cultural protocols, traditional knowledge, ancestral relationships and cultural continuity. Together, these frameworks provide complementary guidance and should be applied in an integrated manner throughout the planned relocation process, rather than as separate processes.

The frameworks should also be used alongside the Comprehensive Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Methodology (CRVAM), Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) Framework and Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL) Framework.[1] CRVAM findings should inform the understanding of cultural and related vulnerabilities. The GRM should provide the recognised channel for receiving and addressing grievances, including those involving cultural harm or exclusion. MERL should incorporate relevant cultural indicators and evidence into monitoring, reporting, learning and adaptive management.

Findings and actions identified through the Culture Checklist should inform relevant SOP planning and implementation records and, where appropriate, the GEDSI, FPIC, CRVAM, GRM and MERL processes. Information should be shared and documented responsibly, respecting community protocols, confidentiality, and restrictions on sensitive cultural knowledge. Coordinating the tools should reduce duplication and support consistent decisions, accountability, and follow-up.

Implementation should follow the institutional arrangements established for planned relocation, including the roles of the relevant ministries, Fiji's Taskforce on Relocation and Displacement (FTRD), provincial and district authorities, traditional leadership, community structures, and implementing partners. Where guidance appears inconsistent, users should refer to the SOP and relevant national requirements and seek clarification through the established coordination arrangements.



1 The GRM and MERL Frameworks were still under development at the time of publication. Their application alongside this Framework should be guided by the respective frameworks once finalised and endorsed.

The Vunidogoloa relocation illustrates how **customary land, vanua identity, and spiritual continuity** fundamentally shape community readiness and adaptive decisionmaking. Although climate impacts – *'years of inundation, storm surges, coastal abrasion and unwarranted flooding'* – made the coastal site unsafe, villagers experienced profound emotional and cultural distress when leaving ancestral land (Charan et al., 2017). Their attachment to vanua, described as *'agonizing, poignant and one that is robbing them of their communal identity'*, slowed decisionmaking for decades and required extensive talanoa, chiefly leadership, and church involvement to build collective consent.

The relocation exposed the **cultural-spiritual dimensions of adaptation**, including the need to move ancestral graves, which villagers described as painful and spiritually significant. One interviewee recalled the move as *'very painful and upsetting'* underscoring the psychological and spiritual impacts of detachment from ancestral grounds (Charan et al., 2017). Governance and funding challenges further shaped the process. Multiagency coordination, lengthy consultations with iTaukei institutions, and the absence of a national relocation policy created delays.

The project cost approximately FJD $980,000, with the community contributing timber from its forest reserve. Officials noted that *'it is not easy for government to relocate a community … the process takes a lot of time as a lot of government departments are engaged'* (Charan et al., 2017).

Generational differences influenced readiness: younger villagers were more willing to move, while elders resisted due to cultural obligations, spiritual ties, and fear of losing identity. The case demonstrates that **relocation is not merely a technical intervention but a cultural transition** requiring attention to vanua relationships, spiritual obligations, social cohesion, and emotional wellbeing.

For the Culture Checklist Framework, Vunidogoloa provides a clear lesson: **successful relocation depends on culturally grounded processes that honour identity, land relationships, spiritual continuity, and collective decision-making**, supported by coherent governance structures and longterm community accompaniment.

Charan, D., Kaur, M., & Singh, P. (2017). Customary land and climate change induced relocation—A case study of Vunidogoloa Village, Vanua Levu, Fiji. In *Climate change adaptation in Pacific Countries: Fostering resilience and improving the quality of life* (pp. 19-33). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1 Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

Free, Prior and Informed Consent is a foundational principle for culturally appropriate planned relocation and must respect existing *iTaukei* traditional governance and decision-making structures while ensuring the meaningful participation of all affected community members, including women, youth and potentially marginalised groups.

Cultural decisions should be channelled through recognised forums such as the Bose Vakoro, *Bose ni Tikina, Matanitu, Vanua,* and the authorities of the *Turaga ni Vanua, Yavusa, Mataqali, and Tokatoka.*

Communities must be provided with complete, accurate, and culturally accessible information on relocation options, risks, and implications, using appropriate language and formats. Adequate time must be allowed for internal deliberation, consensus-building, and consultation across clans and families, in accordance with customary processes. FPIC is not a one-time event. It is an ongoing process that must be reaffirmed at all key stages of planning, implementation, and post-relocation.

Key considerations:

- Cultural decision-making must occur through existing traditional structures *(Bose Vakoro, Bose ni Tikina, Matanitu, Vanua, Turaga ni Vanua, Yavusa, Mataqali and Tokatoka).*
- Communities must be given full and understandable information and adequate time to deliberate.

2.2 Respect for Vanua

Planned relocation processes must uphold the holistic *iTaukei* concept of *vanua*, which encompasses people, land, spiritual relationships, traditions, language, identity, kinship systems, and reciprocal obligations. In this worldview, land is not merely a physical asset, but a living entity deeply connected to ancestry and social order.

Relocation interventions must therefore recognise and protect the interconnections between cultural practices, customary land tenure, spiritual beliefs, and social structures. Respect for *vanua* requires that relocation decisions do not isolate physical settlement from cultural meaning but safeguard the integrity and dignity of the community.

Key considerations: Respect for the holistic concept of *vanua* encompassing people, land, spirits, traditions, language, identity, kinship, and obligations

2.3 Inclusivity

Culturally appropriate relocation must ensure inclusive participation across all segments of the community, including women, youth, elders, people with disabilities, and minority or marginalised groups. While respecting traditional structures of authority, relocation processes must create culturally safe spaces for these groups to articulate their perspectives, priorities, and concerns. Women's and youth cultural roles, knowledge systems, and leadership contributions are particularly important for sustaining cultural continuity and social cohesion. Inclusivity strengthens the legitimacy of decisions, reduces conflict, and ensures that cultural impacts are not unevenly distributed within the community.

Key considerations: Women, youth, people with special needs, elders, and minority groups must be able to express cultural priorities and concerns.

2.4 Continuity and Cultural Resilience

Planned relocation should be designed to support the continuity of cultural identity and practices rather than their erosion. This includes safeguarding sacred sites, ceremonial practices, language use, customary governance, and traditional knowledge systems, and ensuring that they can be meaningfully practised at the new site. Cultural resilience is reinforced when communities are supported to adapt their traditions to new environments while retaining their core values and identities. The checklist should therefore promote intentional measures that enable cultural transmission across generations and reinforce a sense of belonging in the relocated setting.

Key considerations: Relocation should ensure that cultural identity, traditional knowledge systems, and traditional ceremonies continue at the new site; and that sacred sites and spaces are re-established at the new site.

2.5 Do No Harm and Spirit of Care

Relocation processes must be guided by a strong ethic of care that seeks to prevent cultural harm, whether accidental or intentional. Cultural practices, sacred knowledge, and heritage must be protected from exploitation, misrepresentation, or erasure throughout the relocation process. This includes ensuring respectful engagement by external actors, safeguarding confidential cultural information, and addressing cultural grievances promptly and appropriately. Applying a 'do no harm' principle reinforces trust, upholds dignity, and ensures that relocation interventions contribute positively to the long-term wellbeing of iTaukei communities.

Key considerations: Cultural practices must be protected from accidental harm, exploitation, or erasure during the relocation process.

2.6 Cultural Innovation, Revitalisation, and Expression

Planned relocation should not only protect culture but also create opportunities for its revitalisation, innovation, and expression. Relocation presents a unique moment for communities to actively reaffirm, adapt, and strengthen their cultural identity in new environments. This includes encouraging the continuation and evolution of traditional practices, language, art, storytelling, and knowledge systems in ways that remain meaningful to current and future generations. Cultural innovation does not replace tradition; rather, it allows culture to remain dynamic, resilient, and relevant while maintaining its core values and connections to the *vanua.*

Relocation processes should therefore support communities to revive cultural practices, document and share their histories, and create new cultural spaces and expressions that reflect both heritage and adaptation. This includes enabling communities to tell their own stories locally, nationally, and globally on their own terms, strengthening pride, identity, and visibility. Supporting cultural expression also contributes to healing, cohesion, and intergenerational learning, particularly for youth navigating change. Embedding cultural innovation within relocation ensures that communities are not only safely relocated but are empowered to carry their culture forward and share it with the wider world.

Key considerations:

- Relocation should support the revival, adaptation, and continued practice of cultural traditions, including language, arts, ceremonies, and storytelling
- Opportunities should be created for communities to document, preserve, and share their cultural knowledge and histories
- Spaces and resources should be provided to enable cultural expression and innovation, particularly for youth and future generations
- Relocation planning should support communities in maintaining pride in their identity and in telling their cultural stories locally and globally



3. CORE COMPONENTS OF THE CULTURE FRAMEWORK

3.1 Cultural Identification and Mapping

Identifying cultural assets that must be preserved or appropriately transferred is a critical component of planned relocation in Fiji as these assets embody the identity, continuity, and spiritual wellbeing of *iTaukei* communities.

Traditional meeting houses are not merely physical structures; they are central spaces for governance, knowledge transmission, dispute resolution, and ceremonial life. Sacred sites, including *koro makawa* (old village sites), burial grounds, and spirit sites, carry deep ancestral and spiritual significance, anchoring communities to their land and ancestors. Disrupting or neglecting these sites can cause profound cultural harm, distress, and resistance to relocation.

Equally important are genealogical connections *(veiwekani)*, which define kinship, authority, and social obligations within the *vanua.* Relocation that overlooks these relationships risks fragmenting social cohesion and undermining traditional leadership structures.

Traditional fishing grounds *(qoliqoli)*, forest areas *(veikau)*, and customary resource boundaries are integral to livelihoods, food security, and cultural practices. Their loss or misrecognition can lead to conflict, marginalisation, and long-term economic vulnerability.

Ceremonial objects, artefacts, and heritage items hold symbolic authority and are often tied to specific rituals and histories that cannot easily be replaced. Oral histories, legends, and cultural landmarks serve as living repositories of knowledge, guiding values, land stewardship, and intergenerational learning.

Documenting, protecting and, where necessary, respectfully transferring these cultural assets ensures that relocation does not result in cultural erasure, but instead supports cultural continuity, dignity, and community resilience. For these reasons, a structured cultural checklist is essential to systematically identify, safeguard, and integrate these assets throughout the relocation process.

Key considerations:

Identify cultural assets that must be preserved or transferred:

- Traditional meeting houses
- Sacred sites (old village sites *(koro makawa)*, burial grounds, spirit sites)
- Genealogical connections *(veiwekani)*
- Traditional fishing grounds *(qoliqoli),* forest areas *(veikau)*, and customary resource boundaries
- Ceremonial objects, artifacts, and heritage items
- Oral histories, legends, and cultural landmarks

These could be captured through different tools including participatory mapping, storytelling sessions, talanoa circles, and oral history documentation.

3.2 Traditional Governance and Leadership Protocols

Relocation processes in Fiji must recognise and respect traditional systems because these systems underpin authority, legitimacy, social cohesion, and decision-making within *iTaukei* communities. Consulting traditional leaders such as the *Turaga ni Mataqali, Turaga ni Yavusa,* and *Turaga ni Vanua* is not simply a courtesy. It is a cultural requirement that affirms customary governance structures and ensures that decisions are endorsed through recognised channels of leadership. These leaders hold collective responsibility for land, people, and ancestral obligations. Bypassing them can undermine trust, generate resistance, and delegitimise relocation outcomes. Equally important is the engagement of cultural spokespersons, elders, and recognised knowledge holders. They carry historical memory, customary law, land narratives, and spiritual knowledge which are critical for informed and culturally grounded decision-making.

Aligning relocation processes with local cultural decision-making pathways ensures that consultation is meaningful rather than procedural. *iTaukei* decision-making is typically collective, deliberative, and consensus-based, often requiring time for internal discussions across families, clans, and the wider *vanua*. Imposing externally driven timelines or parallel decision structures risks fracturing community unity and excluding key voices, particularly women, youth, or specific clans.

Recognising and integrating traditional conflict resolution mechanisms such as *veisorosorovi* and *veivakaturagataki* is equally important, as these practices prioritise reconciliation, restoration of relationships, and respect for hierarchy. When grievances or disagreements arising from relocation are addressed through culturally legitimate pathways, outcomes are more likely to be accepted, sustained, and peacefully resolved. Overall, respecting traditional systems strengthens community ownership, reduces conflict, and ensures that planned relocation upholds cultural dignity, social stability, and long-term resilience.

Key considerations:

Relocation needs to recognise and respect traditional systems

- Consulting the traditional leaders *(Turaga ni Mataqali/Yavusa/Tikina)*
- Engaging cultural spokespersons, elders, and knowledge holders
- Alignment of relocation processes with local cultural decision-making pathways
- Recognising traditional conflict resolution pathways *(veisorosorovi, veivakaturagataki)*

3.3 Cultural Protocols for Land and Place

Relocation in Fiji requires the careful observance of culturally appropriate rituals and protocols because movement from one place to another is not merely a physical transition, but a profound cultural and spiritual process. Before leaving an old village, specific rituals may be required to inform and seek the blessing of ancestors, acknowledge the spirits connected to the land, and provide cultural closure for the community.

Failure to observe these practices can cause deep emotional distress, fear of spiritual consequences, and resistance to relocation, particularly among elders. Similarly, entering or settling on new land often requires customary permissions, as land is inseparable from identity, lineage, and custodianship within the *iTaukei* worldview. These permissions affirm respect for the authority of traditional landowners and help establish harmonious relationships from the outset.

It is therefore essential that traditional landowners of the relocation site are appropriately consulted, recognised, and actively involved throughout the process, not only as stakeholders but as custodians of the land and its spiritual dimensions. Ceremonies such as *isevusevu* and *itatau* play a critical role in formalising relationships, seeking consent, and symbolically integrating relocating communities into a new *vanua.*

These rituals signal humility, respect, and reciprocity, and they give the relocation process cultural legitimacy. When such protocols are ignored or rushed, the consequences can include strained inter-community relations, unresolved grievances, and long-term social fragmentation. Observing culturally appropriate rituals and protocols therefore strengthens trust, ensures spiritual and social wellbeing, and contributes to the sustainability and acceptance of relocation outcomes.

Key considerations:

- Rituals must be observed before leaving the old village
- Customary permissions needed for entering or settling on new land are obtained
- Traditional landowners of the relocation site are appropriately consulted and involved
- Required traditional gifting or acknowledgment ceremonies are performed

3.4 Cultural Safety and Community Cohesion

Planned relocation can significantly disrupt established social structures if cultural considerations are not carefully integrated into settlement design and implementation. In *iTaukei* communities, social organisation is closely tied to *mataqali* and *tokatoka* arrangements, which influence kinship relations, leadership roles, mutual support systems, and daily interactions. Maintaining clan or *mataqali* layouts in the new settlement helps preserve these relationships, reinforces social cohesion, and ensures continuity of customary governance and responsibilities. When settlement layouts ignore these structures, communities may experience internal tensions, weakened leadership authority, and a breakdown of traditional support networks that are essential for collective resilience.

Relocation can also raise concerns about spiritual safety, particularly when communities move away from ancestral lands that have long provided spiritual protection and identity. Consulting traditional healers, priests, and recognised *vanua* guardians helps address fears related to spiritual dislocation, illness, or misfortune, and ensures that appropriate protective rituals and practices are observed. At the same time, relocation poses a real risk of cultural loss and identity erosion, especially when communities are separated from ancestral lands that hold genealogical, spiritual, and historical significance. A cultural checklist helps safeguard against this by ensuring that cultural practices, spaces, and knowledge systems are intentionally supported in the new location.

Ensuring that women's cultural roles are recognised and facilitated is equally critical. Activities such as *solevu,* weaving, food preparation, and ceremonial organisation are central to social life, cultural transmission, and community cohesion, and often require specific spaces and resources. If relocation planning overlooks these roles, women may be marginalised and cultural practices weakened. By embedding these considerations into a checklist, relocation processes can better protect social structures, promote inclusivity, and support the long-term cultural wellbeing and identity of relocated communities.

Key considerations

- Maintenance of clan/ *mataqali* layouts in the new settlement
- Ensuring spiritual safety (traditional healers, priests, vanua guardians consulted)
- Protection from cultural loss, identity erosion, or separation from ancestral lands
- Ensuring women's cultural roles (e.g., *solevu*, weaving, food preparation structures) are supported

3.5 Language, Traditional Knowledge & Skills

Language, traditional knowledge, and cultural skills are foundational to the identity, resilience, and continuity of *iTaukei* communities, and planned relocation poses a real risk of their erosion if these elements are not deliberately safeguarded. Local dialects, place names, and cultural expressions encode histories, genealogies, environmental knowledge, and social values that are often tied to specific landscapes. When communities are relocated, these linguistic and cultural markers can be lost or replaced, particularly among younger generations. Ensuring the preservation and continued use of dialects, traditional names, and cultural expressions helps maintain a sense of belonging and continuity, reinforces identity, and supports intergenerational transmission of knowledge in the new settlement.

Traditional livelihood practices such as weaving, carving, and customary fishing methods are not only sources of income and subsistence but are also vehicles for cultural teaching, social cohesion, and gendered knowledge transfer. Relocation planning that fails to accommodate these practices by overlooking access to materials, suitable spaces, or customary resource rights may undermine livelihoods and weaken cultural practice.

Equally important is the integration of traditional knowledge systems related to land, forests, water, and marine environments into planning and design. *iTaukei* communities possess generations of ecological knowledge that informs sustainable resource management, hazard awareness, and seasonal cycles. Incorporating this knowledge into relocation planning strengthens environmental sustainability, improves adaptation outcomes, and affirms the value of indigenous knowledge alongside technical expertise.

A checklist that explicitly addresses language, traditional knowledge, and skills therefore helps ensure that relocation supports cultural continuity, sustainable livelihoods, and long-term community resilience rather than cultural loss.

Key considerations:

- Preservation of dialects, names, and cultural expressions
- Cultural livelihood practices supported (weaving, carving, fishing methods)
- Integration of traditional land, forest, water and marine knowledge systems into planning

3.6 Infrastructure and Cultural Design

Infrastructure and cultural design are critical to the success and sustainability of planned relocation because the physical environment directly shapes how culture is practised, relationships are maintained, and community life is organised. In *iTaukei* villages, village layout and house placement are not arbitrary; they reflect kinship structures, *mataqali* arrangements, leadership hierarchies, and social norms that guide daily interaction and mutual support. Ensuring that the new settlement layout aligns with these cultural patterns helps preserve social order, reinforces customary authority, and supports a sense of familiarity and belonging for relocated communities. Poorly designed layouts that ignore cultural logic can disrupt social cohesion, create tension, and undermine community wellbeing.

Providing adequate space for key communal and cultural areas such as the rara, church, community hall, or traditional *bure* is equally important, as these spaces are central to governance, worship, ceremonies, conflict resolution, and communal gatherings. Without them, communities may struggle to maintain collective decision-making and cultural rituals. Special-purpose spaces for women, men, and ceremonial activities must also be intentionally incorporated, as these spaces support gender roles, cultural responsibilities, and knowledge transmission. Overlooking such spaces may marginalise cultural practices and reduce participation in the community, particularly for women and elders.

Additionally, incorporating local building materials and craftsmanship preferences respects traditional knowledge, supports local livelihoods, and strengthens cultural identity while often enhancing climate responsiveness and sustainability. By embedding cultural considerations into infrastructure and design, planned relocation can create environments that not only provide physical safety but also nurture cultural continuity, dignity, and long-term resilience.

Key considerations:

Ensure that the physical relocation site supports cultural practices:

- Village layout and house placements
- Space for village green *(rara)*, church, community hall, or traditional *bure*
- Special-purpose spaces provided (women's spaces, men's spaces, ceremonial spaces)
- Incorporation of local building materials and craftsmanship preferences

3.7 Cultural Preservation and Continuity at the New Site

Cultural preservation at the new relocation site is essential to ensuring that relocation is not experienced as a cultural rupture, but as a process of continuity, renewal, and reconnection for *iTaukei* communities. Preservation and continuity are closely linked: preservation safeguards the cultural elements of the past, while continuity ensures that these elements remain actively practiced, adapted, and transmitted into the future.

Establishing a ceremonial connection to the new land is therefore a critical first step, as land in the *iTaukei* context is deeply intertwined with identity, ancestry, and spiritual wellbeing. Ceremonies conducted upon arrival formally acknowledge the relationship between the people and the land, seek acceptance and protection, and provide a cultural bridge between the old and new sites. Without such rituals, communities may feel unsettled, disconnected, or culturally insecure, increasing the risk of cultural discontinuity.

Blessing rituals led by both church leaders and *vanua* representatives further reinforce spiritual safety and social legitimacy, reflecting the coexistence of Christianity and customary belief systems within many *iTaukei* communities. The deliberate transfer of names, landmarks, symbols, and sacred items from the old site to the new settlement plays a vital role in preserving collective memory and identity, ensuring that cultural meaning is carried forward and not left behind. These practices anchor the new settlement within the historical and spiritual narrative of the community, strengthening continuity across generations.

Traditional landscaping practices such as planting *uto, ivi, vadra*, and maintaining *voivoi* areas further demonstrate the connection between preservation and continuity. These are not only physical or environmental actions, but also cultural acts that sustain traditional food systems, material culture, and ecological knowledge. By re-establishing these elements, communities transform the new site into a living cultural landscape where traditions continue to be practised, taught, and adapted over time.

Incorporating these considerations through a structured checklist ensures that both tangible cultural elements (such as plants, artifacts, and spaces) and intangible heritage (such as rituals, knowledge, and identity) are preserved and sustained. This integrated approach strengthens social cohesion, reinforces a sense of belonging, and supports long-term cultural resilience, ensuring that relocation becomes a process of cultural continuity rather than of loss.

Key considerations:

- Ceremony for establishing connection to the land is conducted and acknowledged by traditional leaders
- Blessing rituals by church and *vanua* leaders are undertaken to reinforce spiritual safety
- Names, landmarks, symbols, and sacred items are respectfully transferred from the old site to the new settlement
- Traditional landscaping (e.g., *ivi, vadra, voivoi* areas) is established to support cultural practices and ecological knowledge
- Tangible cultural elements (plants, artifacts, structures and spaces) and intangible heritage (rituals, knowledge, identity) are actively preserved and practised in the new site

The case of Tukuraki Village

In Tukuraki village, a week of heavy continuous rains during the ill-fated January 2012 caused a landslide which plunged through the community killing a family of four and burying more than 50 percent of the village area. The *Turaga-ni-koro* of 2023 remembered in 2023, how whilst still being a police officer in 2012, they dug out the bodies of the deceased family two days after they were buried.

"Mataqali, eratou sa mate tu na wekai keitou. Ratou sa siga rua e lomaniqele. Sa dada tu na yagodratou. Ia e tukuni meratou keliraki tale mai, me caka vei iratou na post-mortem me vakatakilai na vu ni nodratou mate" (personal communication with Turaga ni koro 2023)

[Mataqali, our relatives were dead. They have been buried for two days. Their bodies had softened. Yet we were told to exhume them so a post-mortem could be carried out to determine cause of death.]

"O iratou na wekai keitou. Na cava e sega ni ciqomi kina na neimami itukutuku ni keimami wekadratou? Ratou keli mai, ratou dolavi tale, me keimami rai tu. Oti ratou usani lesu ena body bag. A sega ni keimami rawa ni tagici iratou se qarava edua na kena reguregu".

[Those were our relatives. Why was our testament as living witnesses that they were dead not accepted? They were re-opened through post mortem on site with us watching. Then they were taken away in body bags. We were not allowed to observe funeral rituals or mourn them]

In spite of all that, the Tukuraki villagers were told to relocate the same day of the exhumation and post-mortem and told at 4pm to leave by 6pm. The villagers reluctantly and painfully herded out of their ancestral home. There were no rites or rituals, no cultural sensitivity to what the villagers were facing.

"Mataqali, kevaka mada ga a vakaraitaki vakavanua edua na ivesu yaqona se tabua, me kerei vei keimami, ke a bau rawarawa neimami ciqoma na lewa me keimami toki."

[If there had been at least some cultural consideration given to observance of a protocol to ask us traditionally, it would have lessened the pain in having to relocate].

"Keimami se mavoa tu ga qo. Keimami se bera ni tau."

[We are still traumatised today. We have not settled emotionally].

Culture-Gender- Relocation Nexus in iTaukei Villages, GIZ 2023

3.8 Monitoring and Safeguards

Monitoring and safeguards are essential to ensure that cultural considerations in planned relocation are not treated as one-off activities but are sustained over time as communities adjust to their new environment. Cultural impacts often emerge gradually, particularly after initial resettlement, and may not be immediately visible during implementation. Regularly assessing whether the community feels that its cultural values, practices, and identity are being preserved allows implementing agencies and traditional leaders to identify emerging concerns early and respond appropriately.

Community perceptions of cultural wellbeing are a key indicator of whether relocation has been culturally successful, accepted, and sustainable. Capturing cultural grievances through an accessible and culturally appropriate Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is particularly important, as issues such as cultural harm, disrespect, or exclusion are often underreported or expressed indirectly. Recognising these grievances as legitimate forms of impact affirms the importance of culture and provides pathways for culturally grounded resolution.

Monitoring changes in social cohesion, cultural practices, and participation in ceremonies, governance, and communal activities helps identify whether relocation is strengthening or weakening the social fabric of the community. Special attention must also be given to youth, as they are most vulnerable to cultural disconnection following relocation. Tracking whether young people are learning and practising cultural protocols in the new environment is critical for intergenerational continuity. Embedding these monitoring measures into a checklist ensures accountability, supports adaptive management, and helps safeguard cultural integrity throughout the relocation lifecycle.

Key considerations:

Cultural impacts must be tracked over time:

- Regular assessment of community satisfaction regarding the preservation and practice of cultural values
- Systematic capture and documentation of cultural grievances through the GRM, including issues of cultural harm, disrespect, or exclusion
- Ongoing monitoring of changes in social cohesion, cultural practices, and levels of participation in traditional and communal activities
- Support for and monitoring of youth engagement in learning and practising cultural protocols within the new settlement environment

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Relocation Unit (Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management, MRMDDM): Leads coordination and ensures cultural safeguards are embedded.
- Department of Climate Change (Ministry of Environment and Climate Change) ensures alignment with national relocation frameworks.
- Ministry of iTaukei Affairs: Provides cultural oversight and validation of processes.
- District Offices & Provincial Councils: Facilitate traditional protocols, consultations, and vanua engagements.
- Communities (Vanua Structure): Identify cultural priorities, guide ceremonies, and ensure knowledge transfer.
- NGOs & Partners (GIZ, SPC, UN agencies): Provide technical and social safeguards support.



5. APPLYING THE CULTURE FRAMEWORK AND CHECKLIST ACROSS RELOCATION PHASES

The Culture Framework and Checklist should be applied across all phases of planned relocation to ensure that cultural considerations are not treated as one-off activities, but as continuous safeguards that guide decision-making, implementation, and long-term wellbeing. Each phase addresses distinct cultural risks and responsibilities.

5.1 Pre-Relocation Phase

The pre-relocation phase is critical for establishing cultural understanding, trust, and consent before any decisions or physical changes occur. Cultural mapping should be undertaken to document social structures, leadership systems, sacred sites, cultural assets, traditional livelihoods, and knowledge systems connected to the old site.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes must be conducted in culturally appropriate ways, using traditional decision-making forums and allowing sufficient time for internal deliberation across clans, women, youth, and elders.

This phase also includes the identification and documentation of sacred sites, burial grounds, spirit sites, and culturally significant landscapes to ensure that they are protected or appropriately addressed. Clear protocols for leaving the old village, including rituals, ceremonies, and spiritual permission, must be identified and agreed upon.

Where relocation involves new land, formal consultation with customary landowners is essential to ensure legitimacy, respect for traditional authority, and prevention of future conflict.

Key considerations:

- Cultural mapping
- FPIC culturally appropriate consultations
- Identification of sacred sites
- Protocols for securing new village site and leaving the old village
- Consultation with landowners (both at current and new sites)

5.2 During Relocation Phase

The during-relocation phase focuses on protecting cultural integrity while physical movement and settlement are taking place. Ceremonies and rituals such as farewell rituals, entry permissions, blessings, and traditional acknowledgements should be conducted at appropriate stages to mark transition and maintain spiritual safety. Efforts must be made to maintain clan and *mataqali* settlement patterns in the new site to preserve kinship structures, leadership arrangements, and social cohesion. Cultural priorities including spaces for ceremonies, communal gatherings, gender-specific activities, and traditional livelihoods should be reflected in site planning and housing layouts. Strong cultural safety measures are required during this phase, including staff orientation on cultural protocols, respectful behaviour, language use, and avoidance of sacred or restricted spaces, to prevent unintentional harm or disrespect.

Key considerations:

- Ceremonies and rituals
- Maintaining clan settlement patterns
- Inclusion of cultural priorities in the site plan
- Cultural safety measures

5.3 Post-Relocation Phase

The post-relocation phase is essential for ensuring long-term cultural continuity, resilience, and community wellbeing. Cultural adaptation support may be needed to help communities adjust to new environments while maintaining identity, traditions, and social cohesion. Ongoing monitoring of cultural wellbeing should track community satisfaction, participation in cultural practices, inter-generational knowledge transfer, and any emerging cultural grievances. Support for the continuation of traditions and cultural education, particularly for youth, helps prevent cultural erosion and strengthens identity in the new setting. Finally, deliberate efforts should be made to strengthen new cultural connections to the land, including ceremonies to establish spiritual ties, naming of places, traditional landscaping, and recognition of new cultural landmarks, ensuring that the community can rebuild a sense of belonging and custodianship over time.

Key considerations:

- Cultural adaptation support
- Monitoring cultural wellbeing
- Continuation of traditions and cultural education
- Strengthening new cultural connections to the land

6. OUTPUTS OF THE CULTURE FRAMEWORK

The Guiding Framework and Checklist for Cultural Considerations in Planned Relocation in Fiji should produce practical, standardised outputs that can be consistently applied across relocation sites and phases, ensuring cultural considerations are integrated into all stages of planned relocation.

A standardised checklist provides field teams with a clear and uniform tool to assess cultural risks, requirements, and compliance, helping to ensure that cultural safeguards are not overlooked due to varying levels of experience or knowledge.

A cultural mapping report documents the community's cultural assets, social structures, sacred sites, traditional knowledge systems, and leadership pathways, providing a foundational reference that guides planning and prevents cultural harm.
A cultural protocols guideline translates these findings into practical procedures for engagement, consultation, ceremonies, and respectful conduct, helping external actors to navigate local customs correctly and avoid unintentional disrespect.

Documenting rituals, ceremonies, and sacred spaces ensures that these important cultural practises and spaces are not lost during relocation and provides clear guidance on how they should be observed at the new site.

Monitoring indicators for cultural resilience allow project teams and communities to track whether cultural identity, cohesion, and traditional practices are being maintained over time, enabling adaptive management and early intervention if issues arise.

Finally, integration of cultural requirements into project plans and budgets ensures that cultural safeguards are not treated as optional or ad hoc, but are resourced, planned, and accountable components of the relocation process. Collectively, these outputs strengthen cultural protection, community ownership, and long-term sustainability of planned relocation outcomes.

Outputs:

- A standardised checklist usable by field teams
- Cultural mapping report
- Cultural protocols guideline
- Documentation of rituals, ceremonies, and sacred spaces
- Monitoring indicators for cultural resilience
- Integration into relocation project plans and budgets

FIJI CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS CHECKLIST



FIJI CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS CHECKLIST

A practical tool to ensure cultural sensitivity, respect, and alignment with Fijian traditional protocols during project design, community engagement, and implementation.

A. Understanding the Cultural Context

A.1 Vanua System

- Have you identified the *vanua* (land, people, chiefs, environment, and spirituality) that will be affected?
- Are the relationships between *tokatoka, mataqali, yavusa, vanua* and village structures understood?
- Has the spiritual and ancestral significance of the land or sites been considered?
- Are the customary custodians (landowners and spiritual guardians) of the affected land formally engaged, and their authority respected throughout the relocation process?

A.2 Traditional Leadership

- Have the traditional leaders (Chiefs/*Turaga ni Vanua*) been briefed first, according to protocol?
- Has the *Turaga ni Koro* and Village Council been formally consulted?
- Are women's groups *(Soqosoqo Vakamarama)* and youth groups included?
- Are traditional leaders (*Turaga ni Vanua, Yavusa, Mataqali, and Tokatoka)* formally engaged and their roles respected in decision-making?

B. Protocols and Etiquette

B.1 Ceremonies/Rituals

- Has a *sevusevu* or appropriate ceremonial request for entry been conducted before any engagement or meetings?
- Was the ceremony carried out by someone who understands and follows local protocol (dress codes, correct language, presentation, seating order, and respect for hierarchy)?
- Was *yaqona* (or a culturally appropriate equivalent) prepared according to local custom?
- Have the ceremony's outcomes been recorded and acknowledged by traditional leaders as part of the formal consultation process?

B.2 Communication Protocols

- Is communication conducted using respectful phrasing in the local dialect where possible?
- Are meetings held at appropriate traditional times and venues (*bure*, community hall, chiefly house)?
- Has time been allocated for cultural pauses, reflection, and traditional discussion processes?

C. Gender, Youth & Inclusion (Culture-sensitive)

C.1 Gender Roles

- Are traditional gender roles respected while ensuring women's voices are actively included?
- Is space provided for separate men's and women's consultations when culturally appropriate?
- Are women's cultural responsibilities (e.g., *solevu*, weaving, food preparation, ceremonial organisation) supported through planning and infrastructure?

- Are women represented in decision-making forums and cultural leadership processes, including in traditional consultation settings?

C.2 Youth Participation

- Does the process acknowledge the role of youth in decision-making, labour, and cultural upkeep?
- Are youth leaders part of formal consultations?
- Are youth provided with opportunities to learn and practise cultural protocols, language, and traditional skills in the new site?
- Are youth-specific concerns (education, livelihoods, social spaces, mental wellbeing) incorporated into relocation planning and cultural activities?

C.3 Vulnerable Groups

- Are widows, single mothers, people with disabilities, elderly persons, and minority groups consulted respectfully?
- Are their cultural barriers and unique perspectives understood and addressed?
- Are culturally appropriate support systems in place for vulnerable groups, such as access to traditional leaders, women's groups, and community support networks?
- Are relocation arrangements (housing, land allocation, access to resources) designed to prevent further marginalisation or exclusion of vulnerable groups?

D. Land, Ancestry & Cultural Rights

D.1 Customary Land

- Has the landowning unit *(mataqali)* been formally identified through the *iTaukei* Lands & Fisheries Commission?
- Are land boundaries, sacred sites, or ancestral burial grounds mapped and respected?
- What rituals must be observed before leaving the old village?
- Are there customary permissions needed for entering or settling on new land?
- Are traditional landowners of the relocation site appropriately consulted and involved?
- Are traditional gifting or acknowledgment ceremonies required *(isevusevu, itatau)*?

D.2 Cultural Sites & Heritage

- Are traditional fishing grounds *(qoliqoli)* acknowledged?
- Has cultural heritage (stories, sites, identity elements) been documented and protected?
- Will any activity disrupt spiritual sites, water sources, or forests important to the *Vanua*?

E. Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

E.1 Free

- Were discussions free of coercion, pressure, or promises of incentives?
- Were community members able to express dissenting views without fear of retribution or exclusion?
- Were all community members allowed to participate without being intimidated by leaders or external actors?
- Was there evidence of independent community discussion (outside of official meetings)?
- Were women, youth, elders, and vulnerable groups able to speak freely and without being overshadowed?
- Were community members given the option to delay decisions if they felt rushed or unprepared?

- Were there any signs of manipulation, such as selective sharing of information or biased framing of options?
- Were community members informed that they can withdraw consent at any stage without penalty?
- Were external incentives (cash, goods, jobs) used in a way that did not influence the decision-making process?
- Were consultations held in neutral spaces to avoid influence from any particular party?

E.2 Prior

- Were communities consulted in advance of planning and decision-making timelines?
- Were communities informed early enough to participate meaningfully before decisions were made?
- Were consultation timelines aligned with customary decision-making processes and community calendars?
- Were communities given sufficient time for internal deliberation across clans, families, and leadership structures?
- Were consultation dates and venues scheduled in a way that allowed maximum participation (including women, youth, elders, and persons with disabilities)?
- Were traditional leaders and knowledge holders notified and engaged before external actors entered the community?
- Was there evidence that the community had adequate time to consider alternatives and provide feedback?
- Were follow-up consultations planned to confirm decisions and address emerging concerns before implementation?
- Were communities informed of the expected timeline and stages of relocation well in advance?
- Were communities given the opportunity to propose changes to the plan based on their cultural priorities?

E.3 Informed

- Are communities receiving accurate information in their local language?
- Do communities understand the environmental, social, cultural, economic, and spiritual impacts?
- Are traditional decision-making bodies *(Bose Vakoro / Bose ni Tikina / Matanitu Vanua)* engaged at each key stage of relocation?
- Were the relevant Turaga *(Vanua, Yavusa, Mataqali, Tokatoka)* identified and formally consulted?
- Is information provided in accessible formats for people with disabilities, low literacy, and those who cannot attend meetings?
- Are risks, trade-offs, and alternatives explained clearly, including implications of staying versus relocating?
- Are communities informed of their rights, grievance mechanisms, and how to access support services?
- Are records of information sessions and consultations documented, dated, and stored for verification?

E.4 Consent

- Has full consensus been reached through traditional processes, including chiefs, elders, women, and youth?
- Has consent been documented in writing and via traditional affirmation?
- Is there evidence that consent was reached through collective decision-making, not only by a few leaders?
- Were all relevant *vanua, yavusa, tokatoka*, families, and sub-groups within the community included in the consent process?

- Has consent been reaffirmed at key stages (site selection, design approval, pre-move, and post-move)?
- Have dissenting voices been recorded, and have their concerns been addressed or resolved?
- Were women's and youth perspectives formally captured and reflected in the decision?
- Were alternative options considered and discussed before consent was given?
- Were traditional protocols and pathways for giving consent (e.g., ceremonies/rituals, formal meetings) observed?
- Is there a clear record of who provided consent, when, and through which traditional forum?
- Has the community been informed of their right to revoke consent or request changes at any time?
- Has consent been confirmed in a culturally appropriate manner, such as through *itatau* or *isevusevu* rituals where applicable?

F. Traditional Knowledge & Decision Making

F.1 Respect for Traditional Knowledge

- Has traditional ecological knowledge been incorporated into the project design?
- Have elders and knowledge holders been consulted on environmental changes, resource management, and historical hazards?
- Are cultural knowledge systems (oral histories, legends, seasonal indicators) documented and used to guide relocation planning?
- Are mechanisms in place to protect sensitive cultural knowledge from misuse or exploitation, while still allowing it to inform decision-making?

F.2 Decision-making Structures

- Are decisions made in village meetings *(Bose Vakoro)* and tribal meetings *(Bose ni Vanua)*?
- Have you allowed sufficient time for internal traditional discussions and feedback?
- Are decision outcomes formally communicated back to the community through customary channels and meetings?
- Are decisions documented in a way that reflects traditional processes and authority (including the role of chiefs, elders, women, and youth)?

G. Conflict Sensitivity

G.1 Clan Dynamics

- Are there existing disputes or unresolved grievances between clans *(mataqali),* families *(tokatoka)*, or districts *(tikina)* that must be respected or navigated carefully?
- Does the proposed intervention risk favouring one group over another, either intentionally or unintentionally?
- Are customary land ownership and use rights clearly understood and agreed upon among all affected clans?
- Have all relevant *yavusa, mataqali* and *tokatoka* been identified and meaningfully consulted, including those not residing permanently in the village?
- Does the relocation site intersect with land claimed by multiple clans or neighbouring communities?

- Are leadership roles and representation balanced across clans, or dominated by one group?
- Could changes in settlement layout or housing allocation disrupt existing clan hierarchies or kinship arrangements?
- Are there historical alliances or sensitivities between clans that should influence consultation sequencing and decision-making pathways?
- Has the potential for inter-clan competition over resources (land, water, fishing grounds, livelihoods) been assessed?
- Are customary mechanisms for managing clan-level disputes (e.g. *veisorosorovi*) recognised and integrated into the grievance process?
- Could relocation alter the status or standing of certain clans within the wider vanua, and if so, how will this be managed?

G.2 Historical Grievances

- Are there past conflicts related to land, development, or resource use?
- Do these grievances have cultural or spiritual dimensions, such as unresolved issues linked to ancestral land, burial sites, or sacred places?
- Are historical grievances embedded in oral histories, clan narratives, or traditional knowledge that continue to shape present-day relationships?
- Have any past grievances been addressed through customary reconciliation processes (e.g. *veisorosorovi, veivakaturagataki*), or do they remain unresolved?

G.3 Communication & Neutrality

- Are facilitators neutral, culturally informed, and respected by all groups?
- Are communications conducted in appropriate local languages and dialects, and in forms that are easily understood by all community members?
- Is traditional knowledge (history, land boundaries, cultural narratives) being accurately conveyed and validated by recognised elders or knowledge holders?
- Are decisions being communicated and confirmed through customary decision-making pathways, rather than only through external or administrative processes?

H. Implementation Considerations

H.1 Community Participation

- Are community members involved in planning, designing, and implementing activities?
- Have cultural obligations (funerals, chiefly events, religious activities) been factored into timelines?
- Are community representatives selected through culturally appropriate processes and with legitimacy across clans?
- Are community members provided with opportunities to participate in culturally meaningful roles (ceremonies, leadership, labour, decision-making)?

H.2 Cultural Labour Expectations

- Has the role of men, women, and youth in the *solesolevaki* (collective community work) been acknowledged?
- Are project tasks culturally appropriate?
- Are labour expectations communicated clearly and agreed upon through traditional leadership structures?
- Are workloads and roles assigned in a way that respects cultural gender roles and avoids overburdening vulnerable groups (elderly, single mothers, persons with disabilities)?

H.3 Cultural Safety

- Are staff oriented on cultural behaviour, dress code, greetings, taboos, sacred spaces?
- Are staff aware of local customs for entering villages, meeting with chiefs, and engaging in formal ceremonies?
- Are staff trained to recognise and respect sacred or restricted areas (e.g., burial grounds, s*aivou, vale ni bose*) and avoid unintentional disrespect?
- Are communication approaches culturally appropriate, including respectful language, tone, and non-verbal cues?

H.4 Infrastructure and Cultural Design

Ensure that the physical relocation site supports cultural practices:

- Are house placements reflecting traditional settlement patterns (*tokatoka/mataqali* layout)?
- Is there space for village green *(rara)*, church, community hall, or traditional bure?
- Are special-purpose spaces provided (women's spaces, men's spaces, ceremonial spaces)?
- Are local building materials and craftsmanship preferences incorporated?

I. Monitoring, Learning & Accountability

I.1 Cultural Performance Indicators

- Are cultural preservation and integrity included as indicators in the MERL framework?
- Is community feedback included in periodic reviews?
- Is the community satisfied that cultural values are preserved?
- Are changes in cohesion, practices, or participation monitored?
- Are youth learning cultural protocols in the new environment?

I.2 Cultural Grievance Mechanism

- Is there a culturally appropriate avenue for raising concerns (through the village headman, women's representatives, youth representatives)?
- Are cultural grievances captured through the GRM (cultural harm, disrespect, exclusion)?
- Are feedback loops respectful of traditional hierarchies?

J. Documentation & Reporting

- Has cultural knowledge been recorded in a safe and respectful way?
- Are sensitive cultural details protected from misuse or external exposure?
- Are community approvals obtained before publication or external sharing?

Colour Palette & Icon Guide

Icon	Colour	Meaning
	Pacific Blue	Governance, leadership, FPIC
	Vanua Green	Land, spirituality, environment
	Purple	Cultural identity, knowledge, language
	Orange	Community cohesion, safety, inclusion
	Earth Brown	Rituals, ceremonies, sacred items
	Gold	Monitoring, accountability, safeguards
	Crimson Red	Oral traditions, chants, stories (ICH)
	Clay Orange	Traditional arts, crafts, performance (ICH)
	Forest Green	Traditional health systems (ICH)
	Deep Blue	Maritime culture, navigation (ICH)
	Indigo	Semiotics, motifs, symbolic systems (ICH)
	Dark Brown	Historical & archaeological heritage (ICH)

SECTION 1 — PRERELOCATION CHECKLIST

With Facilitator Prompts & Talanoa Questions

Estimated Timeframe: 1 – 8 years

A. Governance, FPIC & Leadership

Checklist Items

- Inquire if the Bosevanua is functional (whom do they defer to traditionally?)
- Traditional leaders consulted first (Turaga ni Vanua, Yavusa, Mataqali)
- Formal sevusevu conducted
- FPIC obtained through traditional processes
- Women, youth, vulnerable groups included
- Adequate time for internal deliberation
- Correct entry point for information confirmed
- Traditional leadership structures respected
- Separate sessions for men and women

NA NOQU KALOU NA NOQU VANUA

(literal – the land is divine. This highlights that the land is not just physical property but a sacred entity closely linked with spiritual life and community identity)

Facilitator Prompts

- "Before we begin, who are the right people to speak to first according to your vanua?"
- "What is the respectful way to bring this information into your community?"

Talanoa Questions

- *O cei me vakaliuci ena veivosaki baleta na veika vakavanua?*
- *Cava na iwalewale ni kena vakadewataki yani ena vakarokoroko na veitukutuku qo?*

B. Land, Environment & Spirituality

Checklist Items

- Sacred sites, burial grounds, spirit sites, yavu/koro makawa mapped
- Aerial photo / layout / LiDAR survey completed
- Village masterplan
- Rituals required before leaving old site identified
- Spiritual relationships to land/sea/winds documented
- Traditional landowners of new site consulted

- TEK used to understand environmental changes
- Traditional weather forecasting (draki) considered
- Medicinal plants for wai vakaviti identified
- History of relocation of the village (oral/written)
- Indicator of sautu at vanua/village level?

Facilitator Prompts

- "Let's walk the land together—what stories live here?"
- "Which places must be protected or acknowledged before any movement happens?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Datou mai tavali mada ena vanua – cava soti na italanoa era idivi ni vanua qo?*
- *Na vanua cava soti mera na maroroi taumada nibera na toki?*

Land, Layout & Cultural Orientation

Checklist Items

- New village layout reflects traditional patterns
- Chiefly households placed according to hierarchy
- Rara positioned appropriately
- Pathways, boundaries, communal spaces aligned
- TEK used for environmental risk assessment
- Teitei, qoli, resource spaces preserved
- Cultural spaces allocated early

Facilitator Prompts

- "Let's sketch the new village—what must stay the same?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Na vanua cava e dodonu me davo kina na rara?*

C. Cultural Identity, Knowledge & Language

Checklist Items

- Dialects, names, cultural expressions documented
- Tukuni, talanoa makawa, legends recorded
- Vucu, bole, yaqona chants documented
- Elders, healers, priests engaged
- Cultural livelihood skills assessed
- Kesakesa, vakatakarakara, vatuvola documented
- Tukutuku vakaivola preserved
- Revival of yavunivale names
- Cultural understanding of climate change explored
- Naming of new village before relocation

Facilitator Prompts

- "Who holds the stories that must travel with the community?"
- "Which names, dialects, or expressions must not be lost?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Na yaca cava soti e dodonu mera maroroi ena nomudou toki?*
- *Na itukutuku makawa cava e dodonu me maroroi vakavinaka?*

D. Community Cohesion & Inclusion

Checklist Items

- Clan/mataqali relationships understood
- Historical grievances identified and resolved
- Separate consultations for women, youth, elderly, disabled and children
- Cultural obligations included in timelines
- Qito vakaviti and youth activities considered
- Sere ni vakawelegone (including new compositions)
- Lifecycle rituals understood
- Strengthening relationships before relocation
- Vakaevei o ira na lewenivanua era vasu mai se o ira na mai tiko ena vuku ni veiwekani se veivosaki eso?

Facilitator Prompts

- "Let's map relationships—where are the strengths and where are the tensions?"
- "How do we ensure everyone feels included in this journey?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Tou dikeva ka tavulona mada na veimaliwai ena koro – eda na raica vakacava na veiqāqā kei na bolebole eso?*
- *Na sala cava e rawa mera yagani se okati kece mai kina ena ilakolako qo na lewenikoro?*

E. Rituals, Ceremonies & Sacred Objects

Checklist Items

- Rituals required before leaving old village identified
- Sacred objects protected and assigned custodians
- Handling restrictions respected
- Protocols for entering new land understood
- Veiqaravi vakavanua documented
- Veivakamenemenei practices considered
- Yaqona rituals confirming relocation
- Protocols for burial sites if discovered
- Na veivakasavasavataki

Facilitator Prompts

- "Which rituals must be done so the vanua is at peace with this movement?"
- "Who are the custodians of sacred items?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Na ivakarau vakavanua cava soti e dodonu me liu taumada me mayau rawa na vanua ni bera na toki?*
- *Ocei eratou maroroa tiko na iyau vakavanua ni koro/mataqali/yavusa?*



SECTION 2 — DURING RELOCATION CHECKLIST

With Facilitator Prompts & Talanoa Questions

Estimated timeframe: When Vulnerability Checklist is thoroughly satisfied/or sudden onset

A. Governance & Decision-Making

Checklist Items

- Decisions made through Bose Vakoro / Bose ni Vanua
- Facilitators culturally neutral
- Communication protocols respected
- Matanivanua guiding ceremonial interactions
- Community involved in timing and process

Facilitator Prompts

- "How do we ensure decisions remain rooted in vanua authority?"

Talanoa Questions

- *E tekivu evei ka yala evei na vakatulewā ni veiliutaki vakavanua?*

B. Land, Layout & Cultural Orientation

Checklist Items

- New village layout reflects traditional patterns
- Chiefly households placed according to hierarchy
- Rara positioned appropriately
- Pathways, boundaries, communal spaces aligned
- TEK used for environmental risk assessment
- Teitei, qoli, resource spaces preserved
- Cultural spaces allocated early

Facilitator Prompts

- "Let's sketch the new village—what must stay the same?"
- Talanoa Questions
- Na vanua cava e dodonu me koto ena rara?

C. Cultural Knowledge Transfer

Checklist Items

- Elders supported to teach cultural knowledge
- Youth involved in cultural labour
- Stories, chants, genealogies transferred
- Meke, tulituli, sivisivi, isulusulu supported
- Soko and ta waqa vakaviti preserved
- Which traditional knowledge would you need to let go of? (facilitator to note the required psycho-social support for this)
- Cultural Identity (totems)
- Adaptation/changing of traditional roles & responsibilities?

Facilitator Prompts

- "Which knowledge must be passed on immediately during the move?"

Talanoa Questions

- *O cei na Radau e dodonu me liutaka na kena vakadewataki na kilaka?*

D. Cultural Safety & Social Cohesion

Checklist Items

- Clan/mataqali groups kept together
- New tensions monitored
- Women's cultural roles supported
- Youth roles strengthened
- Solesolevaki maintained
- Support for those who do not wish to relocate (facilitator to note the psycho-social support that must accompany this aspect)
- Dispute resolution mechanism (not through the legal system)

Facilitator Prompts

- "How do we maintain unity during this stressful period?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Kevaka dua e sega ni via toki, na cava na iwali se veivuke me vagolei vua?*

E. Rituals of Entry & Settlement

Checklist Items

- New site blessed by church and vanua leaders
- Rituals performed to "open" the new land
- Sacred items safely installed
- New spiritual relationships acknowledged
- *iTovo vakayalo makawa* respected
- Appropriate activities that can strengthen and promote social cohesion

Facilitator Prompts

- "What rituals will welcome the community into the new land?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Na cava na itovo se ivakarau ni curu vou ki na vanua vou?*



SECTION 3 — POST-RELOCATION CHECKLIST

With Facilitator Prompts & Talanoa Questions

Estimated timeframe: phased over 10 years.

A. Governance & LongTerm Cultural Oversight

Checklist Items

- Cultural leaders part of settlement governance
- Traditional conflictresolution pathways functioning
- FPIC upheld for future decisions
- Cultural committees active
- Village setting reflects traditional roles
- Innovation & continuity

Facilitator Prompts

- "How do we embed vanua leadership into longterm governance?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Walewale gumatua cava me na maroroi dei kina na veiliutaki vakavanua?*

B. Land, Environment & Spiritual Continuity

Checklist Items

- Review PreAssessment Report for gaps
- Spiritual sites respected and maintained
- Environmental changes monitored with TEK
- New land relationships established
- Medicinal ecosystems accessible
- Cultural spaces maintained
- LiDAR[1] survey updated as needed

Facilitator Prompts

- "What spiritual relationships are forming with the new land?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Vakaevei na veika vakayalo baleta na vanua oni sa toki kina kei na nomuni sema kina?*

[1] LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) is a remote sensing method that uses pulsed laser light to measure variable distances to the Earth, creating precise, 3D models of surface characteristics. For **Topographic Mapping** it can create high-resolution digital elevation models (DEM) for flood modelling, village planning, and infrastructure management.

C. Cultural Education & Intergenerational Transfer

Checklist Items

- Cultural learning spaces established
- Schools integrate local history and identity
- Youth learning protocols, chants, genealogies
- Solisoli vakavanua passed on
- Specific Radau identified

Facilitator Prompts

- "How do we ensure children grow up knowing who they are?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Ena yadravi ka tutaki vakacava na nodra susugi ka tuberi cake na gone mera kilai ira tiko?*

D. Community Cohesion & Wellbeing

Checklist Items

- Emotional and cultural impacts monitored
- Safe talanoa spaces available
- Vulnerable groups supported
- Veivakamenemenei maintained

Facilitator Prompts

- "What emotional or cultural wounds need healing?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Na cava soti na mavoa era na tum era na walī se vakamayautaki?*

Ritual Continuity & Cultural Anchoring

Checklist Items

- Annual/seasonal rhythms continue
- New rituals/customs emerging
- Cultural symbols, totems, names preserved
- Kakana vakaviti part of community events
- Traditional healers supported

Facilitator Prompts

- "Which rituals anchor identity in the new place?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Na ivakarau vakavanua cava mera ivakadei ni tiko ena ikovukovu vou?*

F. Monitoring, Learning & Accountability

Checklist Items

- Cultural indicators in M&E framework
- Culturally appropriate grievance mechanism
- Annual cultural reviews with the Vanua
- Cultural spaces protected
- Tukutuku vakaivola updated and safeguarded

Facilitator Prompts

- "How will we know cultural wellbeing is improving?"

Talanoa Questions

- *Na ivakatakilakila cava meda namaka me vakaraitaka ni sa mayau vinaka na bula vakavanua?*

FACILITATOR CLOSING PROMPT & TALANOA QUESTIONS

For Concluding the Field Guide Consultation & Closing the Exercise

This component can be applied to the three phases but adapted according to context.

1. Facilitator Closing Prompt (Vakacavari ni Veitalanoa)

Purpose:

To respectfully close the consultation, affirm the voices of the vanua, and ensure that cultural, emotional, and relational matters are settled before departure.

Facilitator Prompt:

"Before we close our veitalanoa, let us reflect on what has been shared today. This is your vanua, your stories, your decisions. We want to ensure that everything said here honours your identity, your ancestors, and your future generations. If there is anything still in your hearts or minds, this is the right time to bring it forward."

2. Talanoa Questions for Reflection & Closure

These questions help surface final concerns, blessings, or unresolved matters.

A. On Cultural Integrity

- *E tiko tale e dua na itukutuku vakavanua e dodonu me rogoci ni bera nidatou tini?*
- *Na cava e bibi me kua ni yali ena nomuni toki ki na vanua vou?*

B. On Emotions & Wellbeing

- *Na cava na nomuni vakasama baleta na veika eda veitalanoa kina nikua?*
- *E dua e gadreva me vosa me vakaraitaki na veika e tu e lomana?*

C. On Decision-Making & FPIC

- *E vinaka vei kemuni na sala e cicivaki kina na veivosaki kei na vakatulewa?*
- *E dua tale na ka e gadrevi me vakamatatataki me rawa ni vakadeitaki na nomuni duavata?*

C. On Vanua Relationships

- *E rawa vakacava me maroroi tiko na veiwekani ni yavusa, mataqali, tokatoka ena toso oqo?*
- *E dua na ka e gadrevi me vakavinakataki ni bera ni toso ki liu?*

D. On Rituals & Spiritual Closure

- *Na veiqaravi vakavanua cava e dodonu me caka me sogo vinaka kina na noda veitalanoa nikua?*
- *E dua na vakasala mai vei ira na qase me baleta na kena sogo vakavanua?*

3. Protocols for Closing the Exercise (Tatau Vakavanua)

These steps ensure the consultation ends in a culturally safe and respectful manner.

A. Affirmation of the Vanua

- Acknowledge the Turaga ni Vanua, matanivanua, elders, and knowledge holders.
- Reaffirm that the voices of the vanua guide the process—not external agencies.

Facilitator Line:

"We close today by acknowledging that the vanua has spoken, and we honour your guidance."

B. Cultural Acknowledgement or MiniRitual (If Appropriate)

Depending on the village protocol, this may include:

- A short **masu** (prayer)
- A **vosa vakaturaga** from a chief or elder
- A **vakamamaca** or **vakasavasavataki** if required
- A **yaqona ni tatau** (if the community initiates it)

Note: The facilitator does **not** initiate rituals—only responds when invited.

C. Confirming Next Steps

- Summarise key agreements
- Clarify what will happen next and who will lead it
- Confirm how information will be returned to the community

Facilitator Line:

"These are your decisions. Our next step is to return your words to you in the way you prefer—clear, respectful, and aligned with your vanua."

D. Offering Space for Final Words

Invite final reflections from:

- Turaga ni Vanua
- Marama ni Koro
- Youth representatives
- Elders or healers

Talanoa Prompt:

"E dua tale na vosa ni vakavinavinaka se veivakasalataki mai vei kemuni?"

E. Formal Closure

Close with a culturally appropriate statement acknowledging the vanua, the ancestors, and the relational space created.

Facilitator Closing Line:

"Sa na mai cava tiko na noda veitalanoa ena vakarokoroko, ena veidokai, ka ena vuku ni vanua. Me vakalougatataki na nomuni toso, na nomuni kawa, kei na nomuni veiwekani kei na vanua vou."

4. Optional: Yaqona ni Tatau (If Led by the Community)

If the community chooses to close with yaqona:

- The facilitator waits for the matanivanua to lead
- The facilitator participates only when invited
- No speeches are made unless requested by the vanua

This maintains cultural integrity and respects chiefly protocol

5. Final Facilitator Reflection (Internal Use)

After leaving the village, facilitators should reflect on:

- Cultural signals observed
- Emotional tone of the community
- Any unresolved tensions
- Any rituals requested for the next visit
- Any followup required with the Turaga ni Vanua or matanivanua

This ensures continuity and respect across all future engagements.

NOTES



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