

**MFS REPORT****Name****Year and term for exchange**

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**Country for the project**

Fiji

**Degree programme**

CENMI Civilingenjör inom Energi och Miljö

## Field studies in Fiji

### Before departure

Our project was first proposed by our contact person, Dr. Ramendra Prasad, the head of the Science Department at the University of Fiji. He explained that this project would be of interest to the Fijian Government, and we also thought that hydrogen in the maritime transport sector would be an interesting subject for us as it connects well to our program. We wanted to apply for Minor Field Studies because we saw it as an incredible experience to grow as engineers and as people, and a way of being fully submerged in another culture. English is one of the official languages in Fiji so we did not have to do any language preparations, and there were no obligatory vaccinations needed apart from the requirement of a full covid vaccination certificate. Unfortunately, undertaking an MFS in Fiji requires a research permit which in turn requires recommendation letters from multiple Fijian ministries. It is strongly recommended that the process of attaining a research permit is started well ahead of departure, preferably 4-6 months.

### Upon arrival

Our project was mostly theoretical in the form of a literature review in combination with interviews with local stakeholders and experts. As such, much of the project was already well underway upon arrival. Thanks to the characteristics of our project, we had plenty of time to get settled in Nadi before we undertook the field study. This is highly recommended as it helped us to get a better understanding of the country itself and how things are done. For example, we were introduced to the concept of "Island Time" for good and bad.

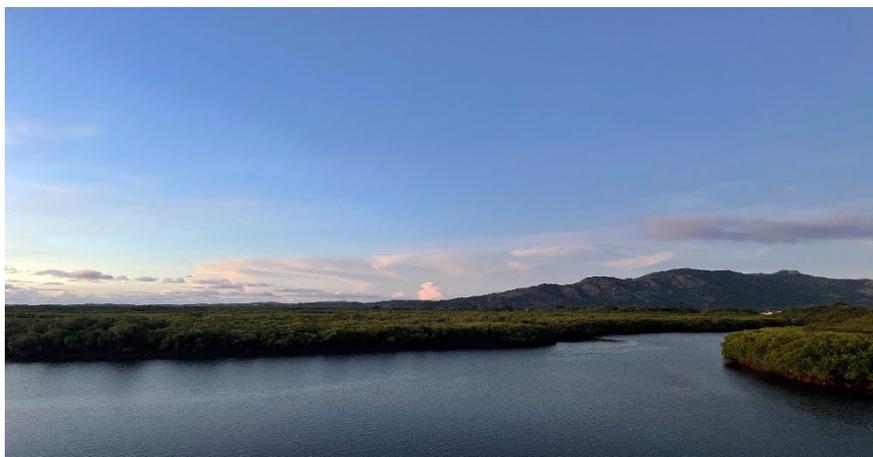
### Financials

Fiji is a famous luxurious paradise island for Australians and New Zealanders. Hence, it is expensive even in relation to Sweden. Mostly, luxuries such as tourist activities and restaurant visits are on par with Swedish prices. However, buying local food and living in non-tourist areas will help keep everyday costs down to a reasonable level and it is fully possible to live comfortably on 5000-7000 SEK per month. We were lucky to have great local contacts that helped us tremendously by lending us their car, boat, pool, and vacation house, which allowed us to experience Fiji without breaking our budgets. Fijians are generally incredibly generous and will offer you food, a ride, or valuable advice. Other than befriending locals to show you around, it is advisable to use public transport as much as possible and to stay away from tourist hot spots.

### Accommodation

We shared our accommodation with 2 other MFS students from KTH. While our contact university could help us find accommodation, we found it ourselves on Facebook. A tip is to join a local expat Facebook group for advice and accommodation offers. The 4 of us rented a 3-bedroom apartment in a well-off neighborhood in Nadi and paid less per person than what we pay for our student apartments back in Sweden. The apartment was in good condition and the host family offered us much more than accommodation. They offered us a social network, an insight into the culture and local cuisine, and

friendship. It can be tricky to orientate in a new city and a new culture, and having strong local contacts that are willing to assist you is invaluable.



### **Project**

Our project was called “Hydrogen fuel in the domestic maritime transport sector of Fiji – A Feasibility Study”. As the title suggests, the purpose was to investigate the feasibility of an implementation of green hydrogen as a fuel in the domestic maritime transport sector of Fiji. This was done through a literature review, a simple mathematical analysis, and, crucially, interviews with stakeholders and experts. Most of the work was independently conducted from our accommodation, the university, or different cafés in Nadi. The interviews were mostly conducted in the capital, Suva, during a shorter period. We are very grateful for our contact person who helped us with everything from the logistics of setting up interviews to the academic review of our thesis, much like a thesis supervisor. Unfortunately, there was a general lack of published information in Fiji and a total lack of information specific to our area of study. Hence, we experienced a strong local interest in our findings and we will send the finished thesis to all our interviewees and relevant ministries together with a short policy brief.



### **Country**

Fiji is home to amazingly friendly people who will always offer you a smile and a ‘Bula!’, which means life and is widely used as a greeting phrase. Our experience was almost entirely positive, we felt safe and comfortable at all times. It is noteworthy that Fiji has quite a few stray dogs that can, at times, be aggressive. Religiously, Fiji is a mix of Christians, Hindus, and Muslims. Linguistically, most people speak English and either Fiji Hindi or Fijian. We didn’t experience much of a culture shock, however, the heat required some getting used to.



### **Leisure and social activities**

In our spare time, we mostly travelled and tried to experience as much of the country as possible. For example, we went on day trips with our local friends to other islands and we tried different restaurants around Nadi. You can also hike in the mountains, swim in waterfalls, learn to dive (with Bull Sharks!), watch some world-class rugby, or surf Fiji’s famous surf breaks. Once, we rented a car and drove around the main island of Fiji, Viti Levu. It was fun to see the different sides of Fiji, from small coastal villages to highland agricultural communities to the “big” international capital city of Suva. It was easy to get to know local people if you put some effort into it – we were, for example, invited to play volleyball every afternoon in our neighborhood. Join an expat group on Facebook and you will find international friends as well.



### **Sustainability**

Fiji is an oil-dependent country – for both transport and energy production. It was hard to live sustainably, as even much of the food we ate was imported from abroad. There was a functioning public transport system, but one was nevertheless oftentimes dependent on taxis. There was no public recycling system either. Our project focused on reducing the oil dependency, which was high on Fiji’s agenda for both economic and sustainability reasons. As one of the most vulnerable countries when it comes to climate change, facing both extreme weather and raising sea levels, Fijian ministries and the general public have strong climate awareness and a willingness to adapt to climate mitigation measures.

**Other recommendations and observations**

Try to travel to another Pacific Island Nation while in the area! The entire region has a fascinating history, and the people are lovely. We went to Tonga and had the best time. Also, try to accept the concept of “Island Time” as early as possible as it is as unavoidable as it can be frustrating.