

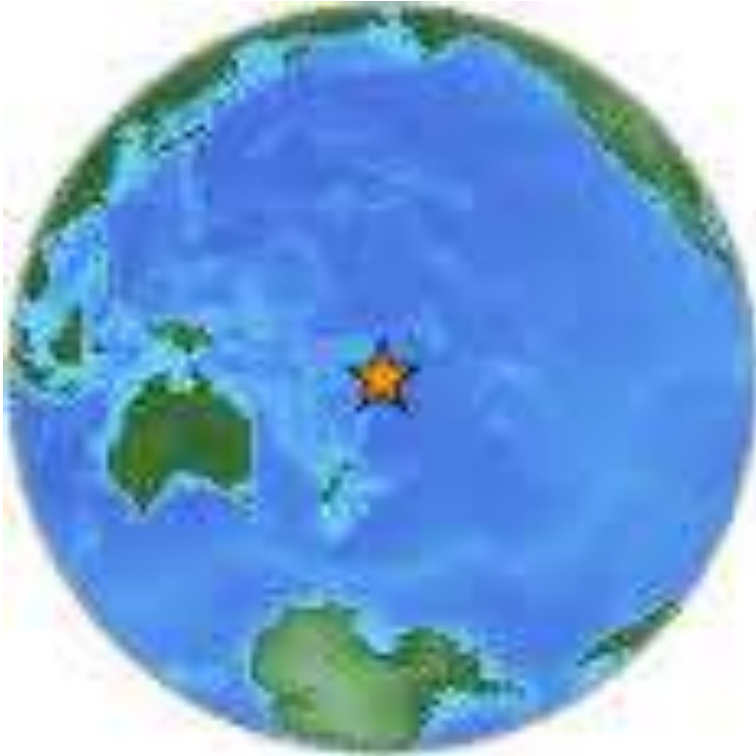


# **Role of Information and Communication Technology for Voter Education and Feedback**

*FEO's 545 Text platform in the 2014 General Elections  
Case Study - Fiji*

Presented by : Mohammed Saneem, *Supervisor of Elections*

# Fiji



Fiji is an island nation in Melanesia archipelago of more than 332 islands amounting to a total land area of about 18,376 square kilometres (7,095 sq mi).

Fiji consists of two major islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. From a population of almost 850,000, most people live on the largest island, Viti Levu, where the capital, Suva, is located.

Source: National Geographic  
<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/countries/fiji-islands-facts/>



## **Best Practice/Case Study**

- 545 Text Platform for Voter Information

## **Period of Implementation**

- Text Service: 28<sup>th</sup> June – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2014

## **Area Of Coverage**

- Up to 97 % of the population

# Objectives

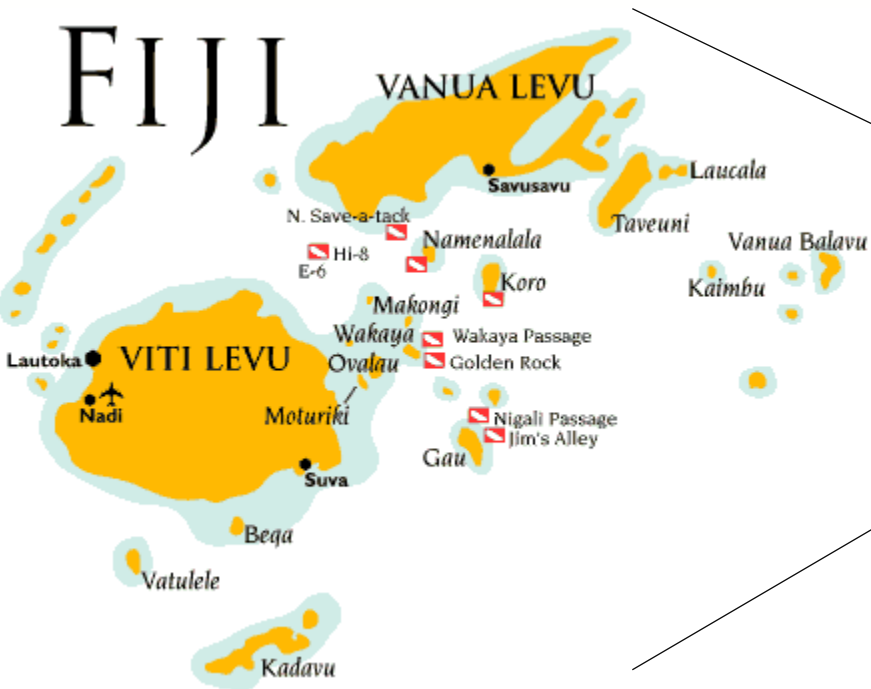
- Introduce the 545 Text Platform
- Explain its application
- Discuss its effectiveness
- Explore ways to enhance the Platform

# Background – 2014 General Election Unique features

- Electoral Laws finalized 28 March – Election 17 September
- One Day elections with prepoll
- Voters were assigned Polling Stations
- Not permitted to vote except where assigned
- Polling Stations to have maximum of 500 voters (multiple stations in a venue)
- Voters needed to know where they were assigned
- 2014 statistics – over 1.4m mobile phones in use

# Population Vs Mobile Users in Fiji

2014 Data



- Population of 869,458
- Vodafone (leading mobile operators) – over 600,000 active subscribers
- Digicel (2<sup>nd</sup> largest mobile operator) – over 160,000 active subscribers





## DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR POLLING VENUE IS?

Send a free TXT with your Voter ID card number to 545

*My Election, My Fiji*

Fijian Elections Office | For more information call 545



# 545 Text Platform Utilization

➤ Free SMS platform

| <b>Total No. of SMS on Election Day</b> | <b>Total No. of SMS from 28<sup>th</sup> June- 17<sup>th</sup> Sept</b> |
|---|---|
| 116,311                                 | 701,180   |

# Positive Experiences

- ✓ Provided an interactive platform for voters and FEO;
- ✓ Voter queries were dealt with in a timely manner
- ✓ Free of charge and accessible service to voters;
- ✓ Voters could always access the information in their phones; and
- ✓ Had power of penetration.



FIJIAN ELECTIONS OFFICE

I HAVEN'T REGISTERED TO VOTE, HOW CAN I REGISTER?

WHERE'S MY POLLING STATION?

WHEN IS ELECTION DAY?

HOW WILL THEY COUNT MY VOTE?

DO YOU HAVE ANY  
**Questions**  
ABOUT **Elections?**

**CALL 545**  
TOLL FREE LINE FROM ANY PHONE

# SWOT Analysis

## STRENGTHS

- Used an existing platform that required little to no training.
- Flexible platform allowed one person to check the details for multiple voters
- 24 hr availability
- Free of charge

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Enhance the platform for more services
- Build internet based applications to access younger generation of users
- Allow reporting mechanism directly on the platform to identify incorrect data

## WEAKNESSES

- Not available in areas without network
- Susceptible downtime due to network failure
- Data is hosted at network servers (low risk)

## THREATS

- Data is exposed due to hosting on external party servers
- Information is available to any person who has the EVR Number-risk of being misused.

# Use of other Information and Communication Technology

- Social Media
- YouTube
- Radio and Television Advertisements
- Talkback Shows
- Live Outside Broadcasts
- Everything under the sun 😊

# General Election 2014

- Conducted after a lapse of 8 years
- Organised by the FEO for the 50 new member parliament under the 2013 constitution
- Lowest number of invalid votes in Fiji History – 0.75%
- Demonstrates the strength of the new electoral system
- 84.6% Voter turnout on a voluntary voting system

# VINAKA VAKALEVU

