

New pilot program for Fiji Enterprise Engine

AS we await a final decision on the electricity tariff, planning is already well underway for the Fiji Enterprise Engine (FEE) 2026. For Fiji's micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), energy costs are one among many pressures shaping the business landscape.

What remains constant, however, is the need for deep capability - from strategic management to financial discipline - to navigate uncertainty and seize future opportunities.

The Fiji Enterprise Engine has become a key part of Fiji's enterprise ecosystem by helping grow that capability in a structured, impactful way.

Launched in 2019 under the Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation (FCE), FEE is the Pacific region's first private-sector-led business accelerator specifically tailored for MSMEs, delivered "by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs."

Each year, FEE selects a competitive cohort of roughly 15 ventures for its six-month program. Participants - typically established businesses with at least two years of operations - undertake intensive training and one-on-one mentoring in five thematic areas: accounting and finance, branding and marketing, human resources and industrial relations, strategic management, and business technology.

All coaching is delivered by experienced business owners, helping bridge theory and real-world application.

This rigorous, entrepreneur-driven approach produces results.

A landscape assessment by the Market Development Facility (MDF) and Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) found that between 2019 and 2023, FEE alumni boosted combined sales revenue by \$2.18 million and helped create at least 30 new jobs, generating nearly \$825,000 in additional income for individuals.

Alumni have also raised around \$1.36 million in grant and debt financing - milestones that reflect both stronger performance and greater investor confidence.

FEE's impact has also been recognised in monitoring reports showing alumni contributing millions in additional revenue and growth - outcomes that matter in a market where MSMEs account for a significant share of economic activity and employment.

These impacts have been made possible because FEE is truly a



Graduates of the 6th cohort of the Fiji Enterprise Engine with representatives from FCE, ILO, MDF, RBF, Capital Insurance Fiji and the Ministry of Trade. Picture: FCE/SUPPLIED

collaborative initiative.

From its pilot phase, FEE has been supported by partners including the Australian Government through the MDF, the Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Government ministries such as the Ministry of Trade, Cooperatives, SMEs and Communications. Additional partners such as the iTaukei Trust Fund Board and Capital Insurance have supported scholarships, enabling broader participation.

This partnership model - combining private-sector leadership with strategic support from development partners - has helped FEE secure both technical depth and financial sustainability. It has also fostered a growing alumni network, with 25 former participants now partnering with the program to mentor new cohorts, a first for a business development services provider in Fiji.

Looking toward 2026, FCE's position remains consistent: enterprise support should evolve with the needs of



businesses.

The FEE will continue its incubator program, strengthening foundational capabilities that enable enterprises to compete and grow.

At the same time, FEE will introduce a new Investment Ready accelerator pilot program, extending support further along the growth pathway for ventures prepared to step into investment conversations and scale beyond their current markets.

This expanded offering reflects continuous growth rather than replacement.

FEE's evolution flows naturally from what works: structured cohort learning, deep

mentorship, strong networks and clear, measurable outcomes.

The Investment Ready pilot builds on this base to respond to demand from firms seeking to attract capital and pursue broader opportunities.

Supporting this next phase is a new FEE team drawing on fresh expertise and local insight. As the team takes shape, watch this space - we'll be sharing updates on program details, engagement opportunities and how entrepreneurs can participate.

The two programs we will be advertising over time, which MSMEs can apply for are:

1. Business Incubator Programme: Graduate Business Start-up Grant Scheme

This incubator program commenced in 2024 as a partnership between FCE, the Tertiary Scholarship & Loan Service (TSL) and this forged a new partnership with the University of New South Wales. It is Fiji's first education sector business

incubator program supporting aspiring entrepreneurs that have an innovative, bankable and scalable business idea. The program provides a wide range of business development services including market research, business training, advisory services and mentoring, drafting, testing and finalising of business plans, product development, entrepreneurship attachments with allowance, start-up grant of \$5000 and linkages to other funding opportunities and the opportunity to start and operate a business.

2. Business Accelerator Programme: Investment Ready

This accelerator program commenced in 2019 providing business development services to potentially high impact micro and small businesses that wanted to expand. Since its inception, the program has supported many enterprises. For 2025-26 financial year, Investment Ready will be a pilot to

support businesses get ready for Government's Small Offers initiative. The Small Offers is enabled through the Business Funding Act (2025) that allows small businesses to raise \$2m in business equity annually.

Throughout this evolution, FCE remains committed to working with employers, policymakers and partners to ensure enterprise support remains relevant, credible and aligned with Fiji's long-term economic interests. The collective effort behind FEE - from partners to alumni - shows that when capability grows continuously, so does the opportunity for businesses to thrive and contribute to a more resilient and dynamic economy.

FIJI COMMERCE & EMPLOYERS FEDERATION

