

Indigenous entrepreneurship on customary land in the Pacific: Measuring Sustainability



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Outline

- Sustainability of business on customary land: a model
- What makes for a successful business in the Pacific?
- Where to from here?
- Conclusion



Table 1: Indicators of sustainability in Pacific Island businesses on customary land

Economic indicators	
1. Establishment	Years of operation
2. Ownership and management	Percentage of indigenous owners and managers Extent to which decisions are made by indigenous owners
3. Employment	Local jobs created Salary and training Level of staff retention might determine job satisfaction
4. Capacity development	Training received by the landowners and the employees
5. Financial sustainability	Self-reported business performance: very good, ok, or weak
6. Multiplier effects	Linkages with local enterprises which benefit from the business



Socio-cultural indicators

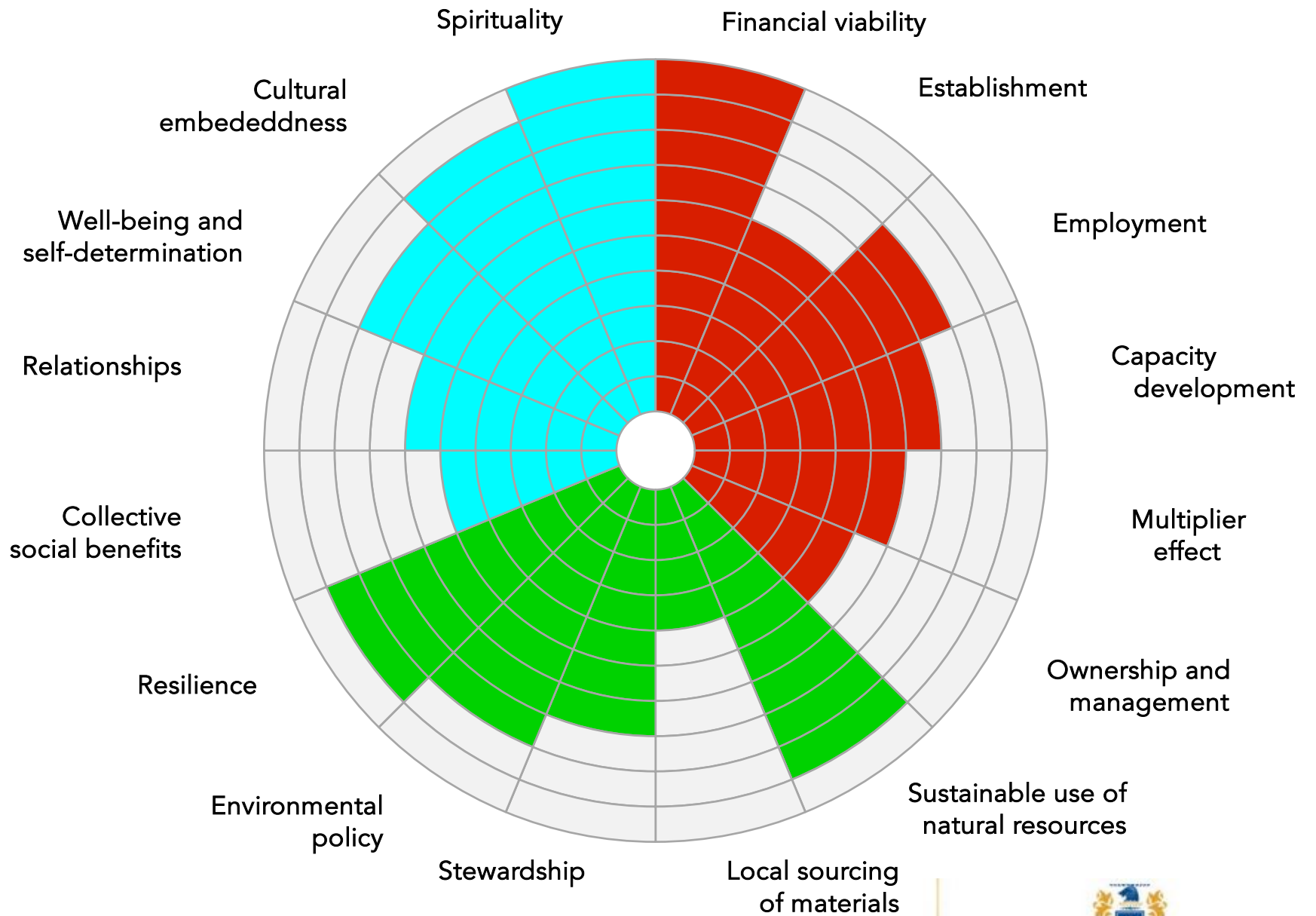
7. Collective social benefits	Commitment of the business to contribute to social or cultural groups, events, etc.
8. Spirituality	The business is informed by people's spiritual beliefs
9. Relationships	Relationships are based on the values of respect and reciprocity
10. Well-being and self-determination	The business contributes to local perceptions that indigenous development is possible. The business is true to the values of the <u>Vanua/enua/whenua</u> and wellbeing of the local community is a key consideration.
11. Cultural embeddedness	Business operations and practices respect local customs Cultural protocols are upheld



Environmental indicators

12. Sustainable use of resources	Land and other natural resources are used but not degraded Good waste management practices (reduce, reuse, recycle)
13. Local sourcing of materials	Utilising local materials minimises the carbon footprint
14. Stewardship	The business owners respect their role as guardians of the land, protecting it for future generations.
15. Environmental policy	The business has, and implements, a well-structured environmental policy across its operations, and/or abides with government regulations on the environment
16. Resilience	Ability to withstand disasters; might include diversification





What makes for successful business on customary land?

- **Support from leaders:** local forms of customary governance and decision-making important
- **Good relationships:** “It’s always about the relationships”; “We have developed it [the business] in such a way that there is no friction among the villagers...”
- **Collective benefits:** “Mum and Dad’s rule: we exist to support the village... I’m now understanding after years of working with my parents, what they wanted... It’s not really about material wealth, it’s about the wellbeing of the whole village”
- **Intermediary organisations:** often rely on support of NGOs, state extension services or intermediary businesses
- **Build diverse livelihood options:** not restrictive or exclusionary, rather scope for creative innovation and combinations


“You need to explain the benefits [of your proposed project]. If it will [negatively] affect the land, they’ll be against it....

Unless the benefits flow to the whole community, not just one individual or family, they’ll be against it”

Where to from here?

- Analysis of fieldwork data by PhD students
- Team to revisit & rework theoretical ideas and models
- Potentially: use of material to push back against the dominant views regarding customary land and economic development in the Pacific, constructing a counter-narrative...



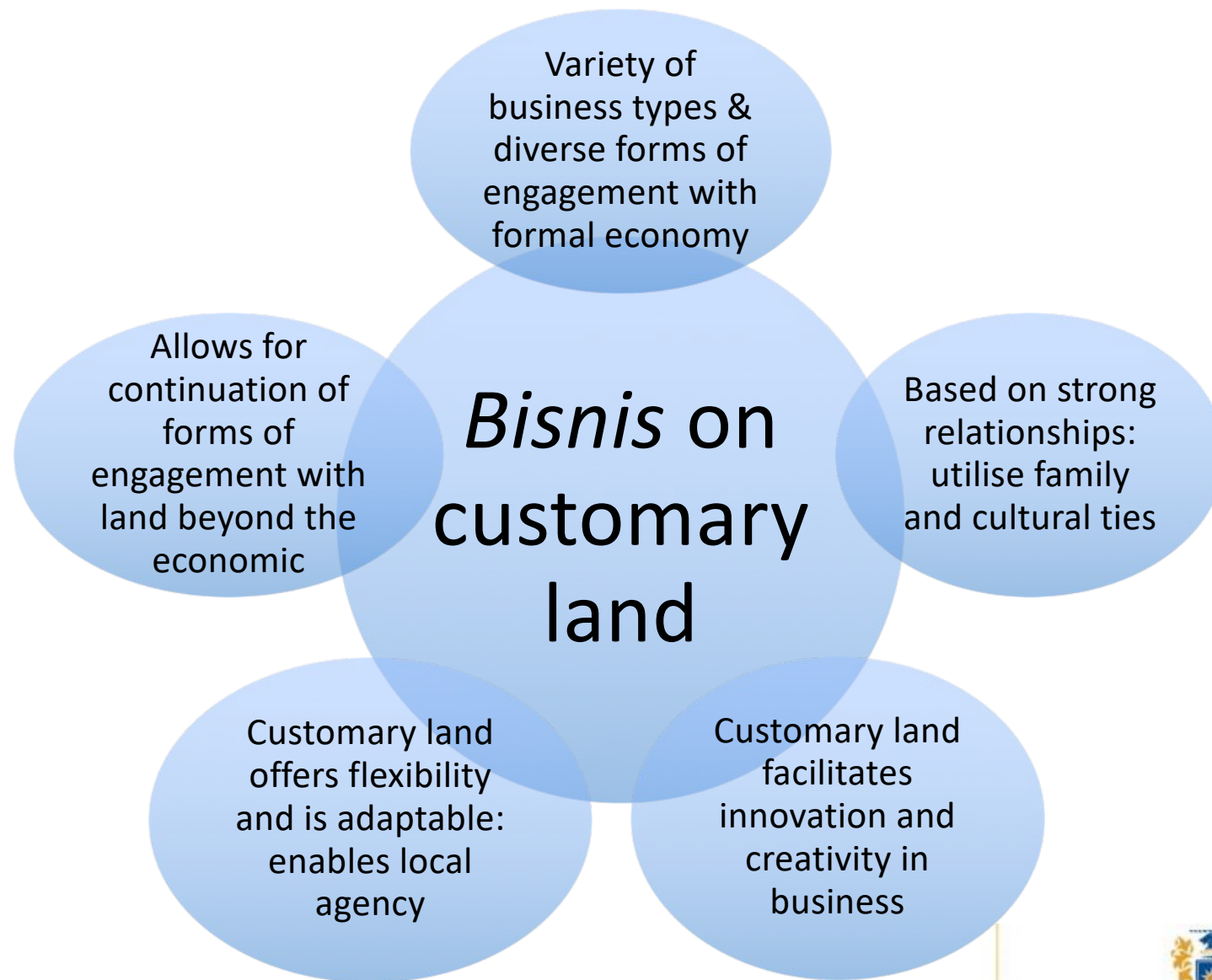


*‘...within the island Pacific
there is little sign that **culture**,
in whatever form, is seen as a
resource but much more that
it is seen as **a brake on
hopeful structures of
development**’*

(Curry et al., 2012b, p. 122).

We need to produce a counter-narrative...

Culture facilitates *bisnis* on customary land



Conclusion

Social and cultural aspects of business development on customary land are central to whether the business succeeds – not just economically, but in terms of being respected and appreciated by the wider family and community



*Customary land has a spirit and a heart – not just eyes and teeth.
(Fiu Elesara)*