

Republic of Fiji



14th Asia Pacific Executive Training Program

*Tourism and Rural Development:
Building Opportunity for Sustainable Growth
and Job Creation*



Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport

Presenter: Mohammed Zahid Khan, Senior Tourism Officer



Agenda

- Introduction
- Challenges of Rural Tourism in Fiji
- Fijian Government Policies & Frameworks
- Fijian Government Programmes & Initiatives
- Successful Rural Tourism Areas in Fiji
- Reasons behind Success
- Developing Rural Tourism Areas in Fiji
- Benefits of Rural Tourism
- Recommendations

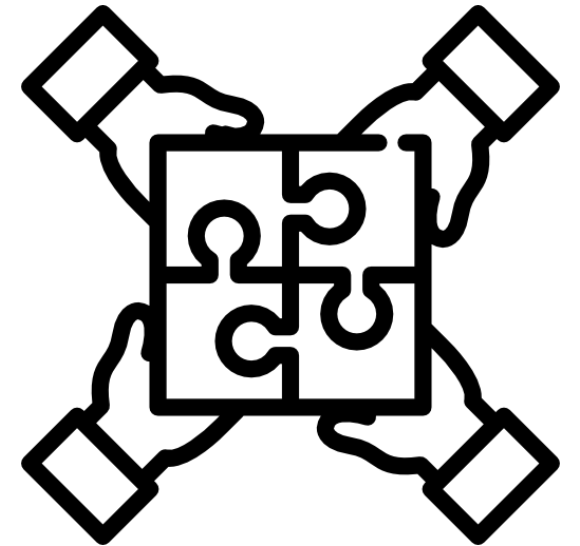
Introduction

TOURISM AS AN ECONOMIC SECTOR

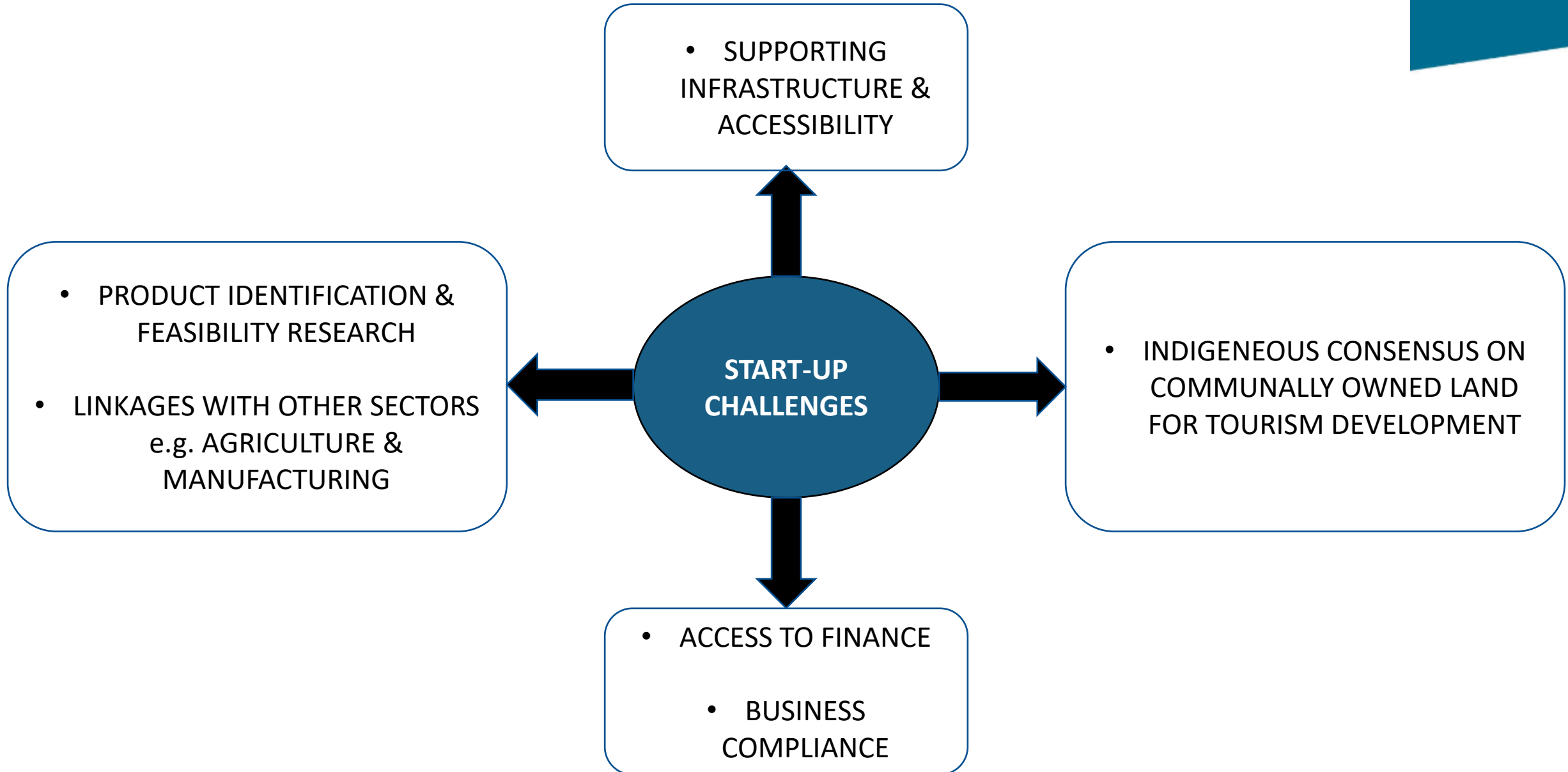
- Tourism has been the largest sector of the Fijian economy for the past three decades.
- A multi-dimensional tool to achieve our socio-economic ambitions.
- Contributed over FJ \$3 billion in 2019 to the economy in total earnings (IVS, 2019) and close to 40% of GDP.
- 894,389 total international visitors in 2019

RURAL TOURISM IN FIJI

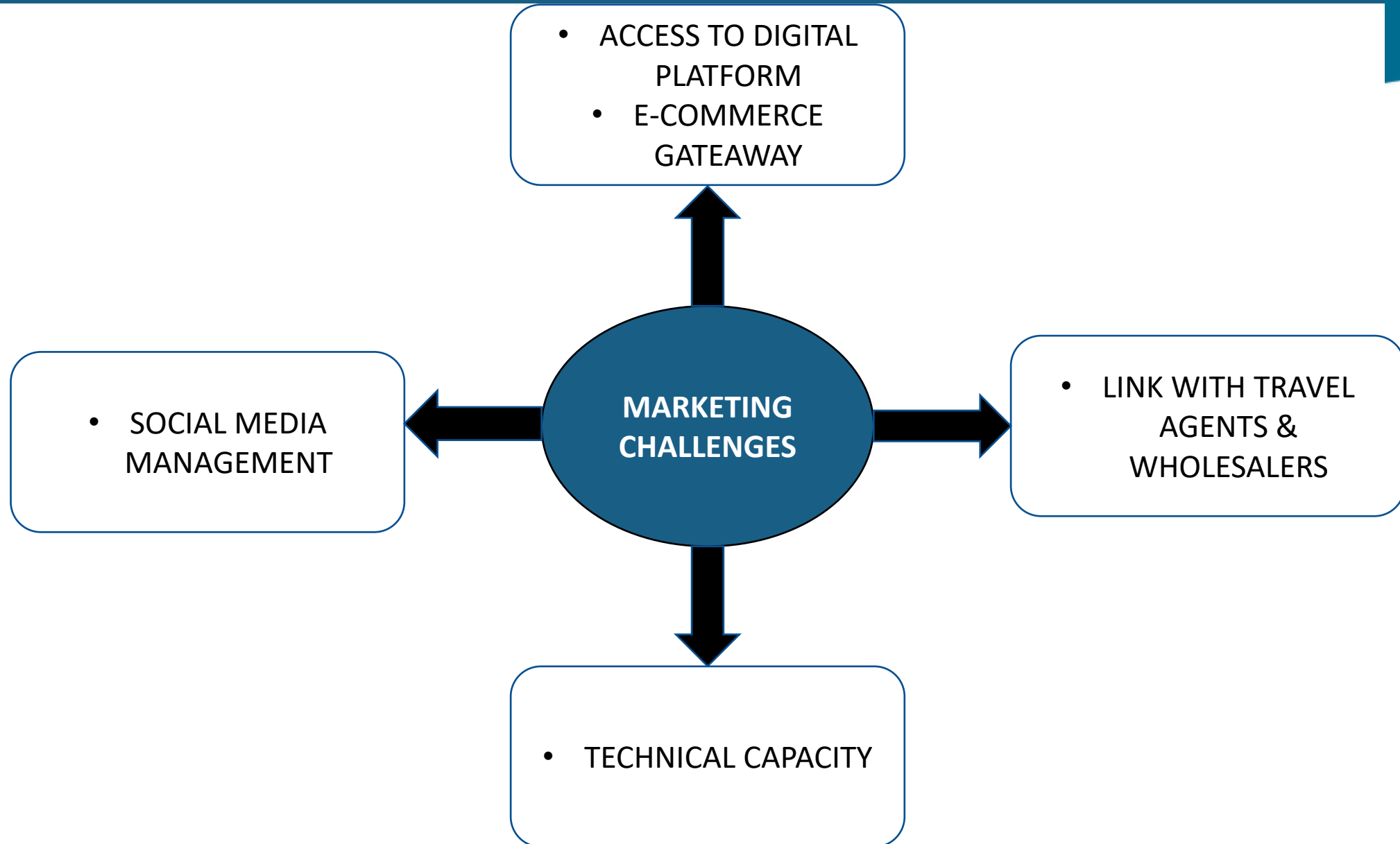
- Development phase (Incorporated in our National Development Plan and Fijian Tourism Plan 2021).
- Mostly composed in outer islands, maritime regions and inland .



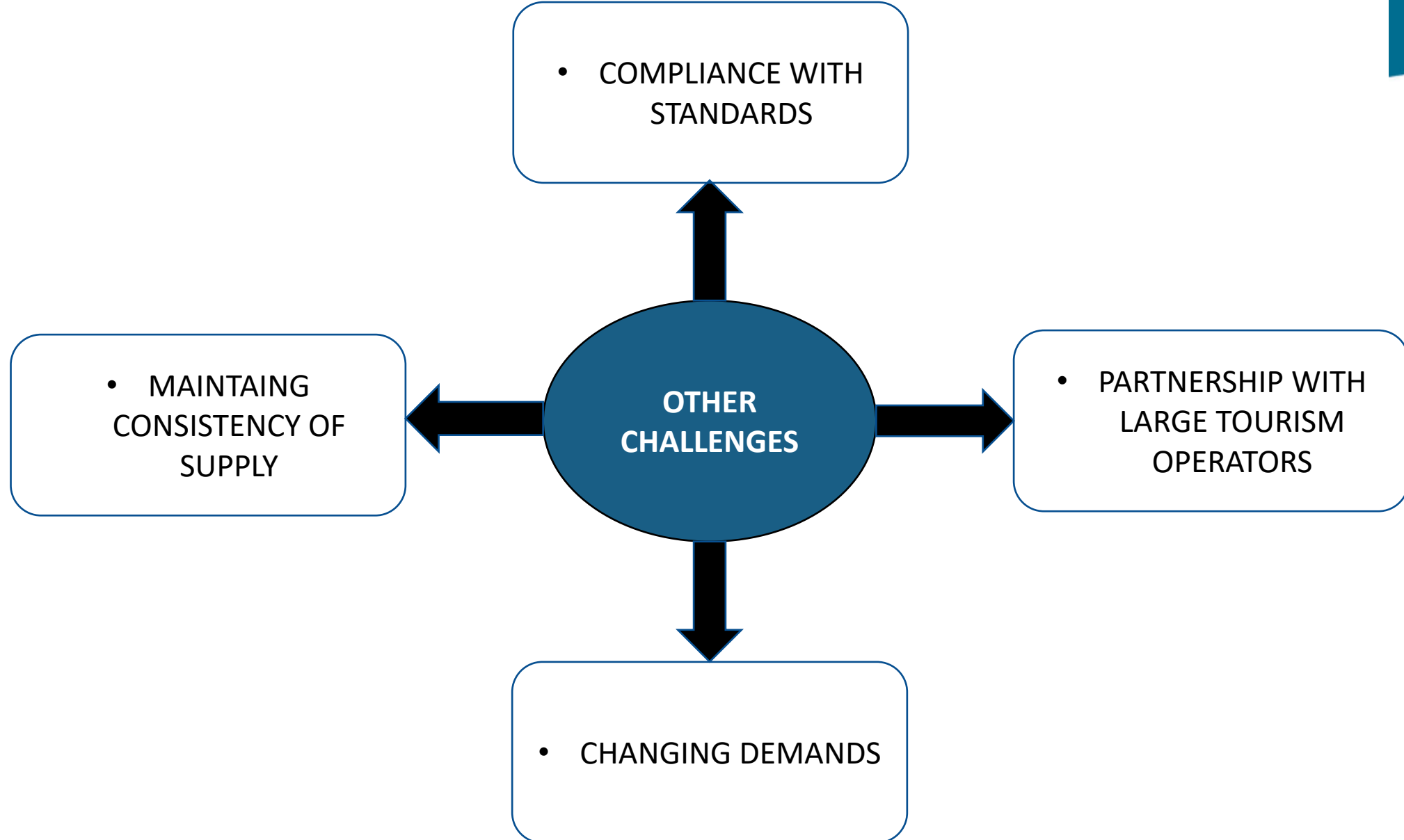
Challenges



Challenges Cont.



Challenges Cont.



Fijian Government Policies & Frameworks

BUSINESS REFORMS

- Removal of business license
- Eased registration processes

TAX REFORMS

- Removal of Service Turnover Tax (STT)
- Reduction and relaxation of Environment and Climate Adaptation Levy (ECAL) for business operators
- 150% Tax deduction on tourism properties hiring local artists



Source: Chris McLennan (Tourism Fiji)

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- Stronger rural economy

FIJIAN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN (FT 2021)

- Focus on tourism infrastructure and rural tourism

Fijian Government Programmes & Initiatives



**TOURISM AWARENESS AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

**BUSINESS MENTORING, TRAINING, CAPACITY
BUILDING & UP-RESKILLING**

ON-GOING EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

**FACILITIATING PARTNERSHIP WITH DONOR
AGENCIES AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS**

**CONCESSIONAL LOAN PACKAGES & INCOME
GENERATING PROJECTS**



Source: Chris McLennan (Tourism Fiji)

Successful Rural Tourism Areas in Fiji

- **Yasawa groups of islands**- archipelago in Fiji with over 20 islands (135 km²).
- Have involved in sustainable tourism ventures over the past 30 years (pioneers).
- Tourism Experiences offered: Boutique and homestay accommodation, cultural activities, village tours, water and land activities, manta ray experiences, etc.



Yasawa Island Aerial view
Source: Tourism Fiji Images



Budget Homestay Accommodation- Yasawa Islands
Source: Tourism Fiji Images



Pristine View- Yasawa Island Group
Source: Tourism Fiji Images

Successful Rural Tourism Areas in Fiji

- **Mamanuca groups of islands**- archipelago in Fiji with over 20 volcanic islands.
- Have dedicated to providing authentic Fijian hospitality on island settings.
- Tourism Experiences offered: Boutique island style accommodation, cultural activities, village tours, water and land activities.



Diving in Mamanuca
Source: Tokoriki Island Resort Image



Malamala Beach Club Aerial View
Source: Malamala Beach Club Images



Lush forests View- Mamanuca Island Group
Source: Tourism Fiji Images

Successful Rural Tourism Areas in Fiji

- **Levuka**- a town in the island of Ovalau (old capital of Fiji).
- Have involved in offering cultural/heritage tourism.
- Tourism Experiences offered: Homestay accommodation, historical sites, village tours, snorkeling and historic town walking tours.



Levuka Historical Port Town (UNESCO)
Source: Dep't of National Heritage Gallery



Rainforest Village
Source: Levuka Tourism Images



Homestay Accommodation
Source: Levuka Tourism Images

Reasons behind Success

YASAWA ISLAND GROUP	MAMANUCA ISLAND GROUP	LEVUKA TOWN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater percentage of local ownership and control over operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have maintained its greater stock of lush eco- forests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserving its authenticity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve sustainable tourism activities as part of tourism offerings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly involve locals in daily operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declaring attractions as a world heritage site
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong links with cruise companies to ensure accessibility to the island group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong links with cruise companies to ensure accessibility to the island 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism offerings pose less risk to the natural environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major focus on conservation of natural environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous identification of new tourism products and activities that are of low risk to the environment 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialize in boutique and budget accommodation rather than clustered resorts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major focus on conservation of natural environment 	

Developing Rural Tourism Areas in Fiji

- **Namosi Eco Retreat** – located on the main island of Viti Levu.
- Offers eco- tourism experiences in one of the interior provinces of Fiji including Village style accommodation, , village tours, horse riding, river rafting, Fijian cooking classes and etc.
- **Talanoa Treks Fiji** – located in the interior Ra province of Viti Levu.
- Offers tailor-made hiking tourism experiences to tourist to Fiji/s pristine forests, mountains, remote villages.



Village Style Accommodation
Source: Namosi Eco Retreat website



Talanoa Mountain Treks
Source: Talanoa Treks Website

Benefits of Rural Tourism

- Viable tool for achieving rural development in Fiji.
- Creates direct, indirect and induced employment opportunities for locals.
- Ensures triple bottom line effect in communities.
- Brings local communities to the forefront of tourism development in the nation- inclusive growth and recovery.
- Huge potential to complement current tourism product offerings of the nation.
- Encourages sustainable tourism development.
- Encourages innovation, entrepreneurship and sectoral linkages.
- Puts greater emphasis on environment, cultural and socio-economic conservation.



Recommendations

- Strong reflection of rural tourism development to be in the national agenda items.
- Extensive community engagement with rural communities that have potential for rural tourism development.
- Situational analysis research on local communities in Fiji to identify rural tourism priorities and assist accordingly.
- Securing donor funding and mapping with relevant rural tourism development goals.
- Continuous assistance to rural operators and communities to gain visibility in the international market.
- Incentivising local tourism businesses and easing on business start-up requirements.

Thank you



Source: Tourism Fiji Images