



TECHNICAL NOTE

UNWTO Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Product Development in the Pacific Islands

Wednesday 31st March, 2021

(Hybrid)

Holiday Inn, Suva, Fiji

1. Background

The Pacific is a region covering one third of our planet's surface. Destinations within the region are diverse, in terms of their populations, ease of access, degree of tourism development, culture and language, etc. There is growing awareness across the region that tourism could play an increasingly important role in economic development. There is also an opportunity to preserve the environment and cultural resources: whilst pristine environments are not the exclusive domain of Pacific islands nations, their unique individual cultural heritage differentiates them from the global market. Tourism is seen as an opportunity to continue to provide sustainable economic growth even as natural resources reach their limit within economic contribution. Attending this workshop is the opportune chance to learn about sustainable tourism product development and engage with other government officials from Pacific Islands.

2. Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented socio-economic impacts, especially in the tourism sector. For many Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS), tourism is an important socioeconomic pillar. This implies long-term holistic thinking with regards to the challenges brought by the pandemic, and thus connects with the need to transition to a more sustainable tourism model.

Whilst Pacific Islands offer outstanding tourism resources, much work is still required to harness the full potential of sustainable tourism development. A UNWTO/APTEC study on Sustainable Tourism Product Development Opportunities in the Pacific Islands (to be launched in 2021) was undertaken in 2019 to identify at a high level practical, high priority steps (e.g. low cost vs. high return) that can be taken to further the Pacific's sustainable tourism product offerings. Although the study was carried out prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, its recommendations on sustainable tourism development are more relevant than ever: times of crisis offer opportunities to reflect on past experiences, and destinations are now at a pivotal period to rethink their destination management models and include the sustainable development of their tourism products and services in their national recovery plan.

Restarting tourism is a priority for many destinations, especially Small Island Destinations (SIDs) whose economy rely heavily on revenues generated by international tourism. With the current travel restrictions impeding the movement of international tourists, SIDs are compelled to find appropriate alternatives to stimulate the tourism demand in the short to medium term. Looking at the PICs' context, incentivize

domestic tourism may be a pertinent choice for some destinations but it is likely to be insufficient for others. However, key opportunities lie within the development of intra-regional tourism between PICs and between two other major outbound tourism markets for the PICs: Australia and New-Zealand. This implies strong collaboration and commitment from all PICs' tourism stakeholders from the public and private sectors: while challenges and opportunities will arise, these are often best addressed in times of crisis.

Finally, innovation and digital transformation are a common agenda for destinations worldwide. Fostering a successful tourism innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem is essential for countries to ensure the competitiveness and continued growth of their tourism sector. The digitalization of tourism opens up opportunities to use tourism data, adapt or fine tune destination marketing and branding, build a strong local, national or regional tourism stakeholders' network and/or improve the quality and outreach of capacity building strengthening the human resources throughout a country. PICs should grasp the chance to develop the innovation and digitalization of their tourism industry while staying true to their pledge to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

In view of the COVID-19 context and building on the opportunity offered by this upcoming study, UNWTO and APTEC endeavored to collaborate again to organize this hybrid UNWTO Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Product Development in the Pacific Islands, with the collaboration of the Pacific Tourism Organization and with the kind support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea.

3. Workshop Objective

The workshop is specifically designed to support tourism stakeholders in the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19 that has affected all countries around the globe, but particularly Small Island Destinations in the Pacific who strongly depend on tourism as their main means of subsistence. It aims at strengthening effective and responsive sustainable tourism product development at national and destination levels, at a critical moment when most countries are struggling to restart their tourism.

The objectives of the workshop are:

- To support and advance the development of sustainable tourism products in the Pacific Islands.

- To encourage the exchange of good practices in sustainable tourism development between Pacific Islands and pioneer countries.
- To promote and disseminate the findings of the UNWTO/APTEC Publication on Sustainable Tourism Product Development Opportunities in the Pacific Islands.

Moreover, the workshop strives to enable the Pacific Island Countries to share successful tourism good practices on sustainable tourism development. The ultimate aim is to strengthen the capacity of destinations at the regional, national, and destination levels.

4. Workshop Overview

The Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Product Development in the Pacific Islands will be a hybrid event, held online and in Suva, Fiji.

There are three sessions which will take place on 31st March 2021. Each session will focus on one of the following topics:

- Session 1: Sustainability and Tourism Product Development in the Pacific Islands;
- Session 2: Restarting Tourism: Harnessing the Potential of Intra-regional Tourism and Sustainable Product Development;
- Session 3: Innovation and Digital Transformation: New Opportunities in the Sustainable Tourism Development Era

Each session will have a presentation with an expert, followed by 3 country presentations addressing countries' specificities and highlighting best practices on each topic. A Q&A discussion will be held for all participants so that they can share their country's views and priorities on each topic. A conclusion will serve as a wrap up for each session.

5. Targeted audience of the workshop

Designed specifically for Pacific Island Countries, this event will be opened to all UNWTO Member States and Non-Member States from the Pacific, reaching up to 13 countries. The workshop will take place

physically in Fiji, allowing up to about 50 Fijian participants to attend, while up to 5 officials from the other Pacific Island countries will attend remotely.

6. Registration and Connection to workshop

Each Pacific Island Country is invited to nominate two senior level representatives to participate in the Workshop, as well as three other officials as observers. Please note that each participant will be requested to attend the full period of the workshop.

Please fill out the online registration form [here](#) no later than **24 March 2021**. After completing the registration, participants will receive an email with the details on how to access the Workshop in due course.

Any question on the workshop can be addressed to Ms. Marita Manley (marita@talanoa-consulting-fiji.com) and Ms. Alcinda Trawen (atrawen@unwto-ap.org); please add in Cc Ms. Orianne Derrier (oderrier@unwto.org) and Mr. Benjamin long (biong@unwto.org).