



# KIRIBATI

## Country Pathway

Sustainable Tourism Enhancement in the Pacific (STEP)

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Pacific



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# ACRONYMS

<b>3R</b>	Reduce, reuse, recycle
<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>CE</b>	Circular Economy
<b>CBTE</b>	Community-Based Tourism Enterprise
<b>EEZ</b>	Exclusive Economic Zone
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>GGGI</b>	Global Green Growth Institute
<b>KPPRP</b>	Kiribati Public Procurement Reform Program
<b>KIER</b>	Kiribati Integrated Energy Roadmap
<b>KSTDPF</b>	Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Development Policy Framework
<b>KSTP</b>	Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Policy
<b>KV20</b>	Kiribati 20-Year Vision 2016-2036
<b>MSME</b>	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise
<b>NDC</b>	Nationally Determined Contribution
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>NTO</b>	National Tourism Organisation
<b>PATA</b>	Pacific Asia Travel Association
<b>PIC</b>	Pacific Island Country
<b>PSC</b>	Policy Support Component
<b>PSTI</b>	Pacific Sustainable Tourism Indicators
<b>PSTPF</b>	Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework
<b>PSTS</b>	Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards
<b>SCP</b>	Sustainable Consumption and Production
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Enterprise
<b>SPREP</b>	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
<b>SPTO</b>	Pacific Tourism Organisation
<b>SRWMA</b>	Samoa Recycling and Waste Management Association
<b>STEP</b>	Sustainable Tourism Enhancement in the Pacific
<b>SUP</b>	Single-use Plastics
<b>TAK</b>	Tourism Authority of Kiribati



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Kiribati is at a crucial juncture in its sustainable tourism journey, guided by the Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Policy and the National Sustainable Tourism Framework 2024–2034. These frameworks establish ambitious goals for a resilient, environmentally responsible tourism sector through the Mauri Mark tourism standards programme. However, significant challenges remain. Limited awareness and capacity regarding circular economy (CE) and sustainable consumption and production (SCP), fragmented governance, value-chain bottlenecks, and high operational costs threaten sustained progress. Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs) are particularly affected by these barriers, which reduce their ability to participate fully in Kiribati's tourism economy.

The Sustainable Tourism Enhancement in the Pacific (STEP) Project, implemented as part of the EU SWITCH-Asia Pacific Policy Support Component, offers a strategic framework to advance sustainable tourism practices tailored specifically for Pacific Island nations, including Kiribati. Building on the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework (PSTPF) and the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards (PSTS), the STEP initiative places a strong focus on Circular Economy (CE) and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) approaches.

The STEP initiative seeks to examine and address how resource use – energy, water, and materials – affects and is affected by every stage of the tourism supply chain, from sourcing and procurement to service delivery and waste management. By focusing on these linkages, the project aims to reduce negative environmental degradation and promote more efficient, circular resource flows within the sector. The integration of 'Reduce, reuse, recycle' (3R) and CE principles is recognised as essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), advancing the 2050 Strategies for the Blue Pacific Continent, and contributing to the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS).

The Kiribati Country Pathway seeks to advance CE and SCP in the tourism sector by addressing the following questions:

- How are Circular Economy (CE) and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) principles currently reflected in Kiribati's national tourism policies, standards, and actions, and what opportunities exist to strengthen, mainstream, and consolidate them in both design and implementation mechanisms?
- How can Kiribati's national tourism standards be improved or developed to complement, align with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard and support effective implementation of CE and SCP practices where gaps or new needs arise?

The analysis and consultations undertaken as part of this project revealed that, although basic policies on waste management and compliance are in place, the Mauri Mark standard has yet to fully integrate SCP and CE principles. Critical barriers that prevent the industry from implementing better practices include a lack of guidance on green procurement, resource tracking, carbon reduction, structured recycling, and circular practices.

To close these gaps, action is needed on several fronts. The Mauri Mark standard can potentially be expanded to incorporate clear criteria for SCP and CE, covering aspects like sustainable sourcing, energy and water management, reduced carbon footprint, and resource circularity. Strong incentives and support, ranging from certification and green finance to technical training and toolkits for operators, particularly MSMEs and communities, will be essential.

Meaningful progress will require integrated, cross-sectoral collaboration and regional alignment with frameworks like the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard. Based on wide stakeholder consultation, four priority interventions have been identified:

1. Support to embed CE and SCP principles in the national tourism policy and other relevant policy frameworks, ensuring institutional capacity and policy alignment
2. Update the Mauri Mark standard to reflect global and regional best practices and embed CE/SCP criteria
3. Build sustainable tourism supply chains by adopting green procurement and fostering local supplier hubs
4. Promote climate-resilient accommodation through guidelines that combine traditional and ecological building techniques

The four proposed interventions are well aligned with the core objectives and action areas of the Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Policy. Support for mainstreaming CE and SCP principles directly supports the KSTP's goals of policy coherence and institutional improvement, ensuring that circular economy and sustainable consumption and production are embedded across government and industry practices.

Updating the Mauri Mark standard is in line with Goal 4.1 of the KSTP, which calls for strengthening sustainability criteria in business accreditation. Building sustainable tourism supply chains by adopting green procurement and fostering local supplier hubs is directly supported by the policy's Goal 5.2, which encourages the development of local MSMEs and community enterprises, supports agritourism and handicrafts, and seeks to reduce reliance on imports. This intervention enhances local economic benefits and supports circularity by keeping value within Kiribati.

Promoting climate-resilient accommodation through guidelines that merge traditional and ecological construction aligns with both Goal 1 (natural environment conservation) and Goal 6 (green private sector investment). By supporting resource-efficient, locally rooted building practices, this intervention strengthens climate resilience, reduces environmental vulnerability, and highlights Kiribati's cultural identity, which are key ambitions articulated in the national policy.

Collectively, these interventions operationalise the KSTP's vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism sector.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Tourism Context

Kiribati, a sovereign island nation in the Pacific Ocean, comprises 33 atolls and reef islands spanning an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 3.55 million km<sup>2</sup>. The country's population of over 136,000 people (SPC 2025) is concentrated primarily in South and North Tarawa (nearly 60% of the total population) and Kiritimati Island (6,500 residents), with the remaining inhabitants dispersed across 20 other islands (World Bank Group, 2025).

Kiribati is one of the world's most remote nations, spread across vast areas of the Pacific. International access is limited, with only a few flights per week from Fiji and Hawaii. Its low-lying atolls, geographic isolation, and reliance on imported goods and services make it particularly vulnerable to external shocks. Rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events pose existential threats to the islands, jeopardising tourism infrastructure, freshwater security, and overall sustainability.

With a GDP of approximately USD 279 million, Kiribati has one of the smallest economies in the world (World Bank Group, 2025). The public sector dominates economic activity, with government spending contributing significantly to GDP. The fishing industry serves as the primary source of export revenue, generating income through foreign licensing agreements. Agriculture and small-scale farming play a role in subsistence livelihoods, but commercial agricultural production is limited due to poor soil conditions (Government of Kiribati, 2021).

Tourism plays a modest but growing role in Kiribati's economy. In 2023, the country received 8,224 visitors, with the majority arriving from Pacific nations, Australia, and the USA (Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), 2023). The USA has emerged as the top source market, primarily driven by the popularity of fly-fishing tourism in Kiritimati (Private Sector Development Initiative (PSDI), 2021).

The tourism sector employs approximately 1,785 people (5.5% of total employment) (SPTO, 2023). Tourism businesses are predominantly small-scale, locally owned, and community-based, offering a unique opportunity to develop a sustainable and culturally authentic tourism industry. The sector remains constrained by limited infrastructure, weak connectivity, and high operational costs (PSDI, 2021:1).

Launched in 2024, the Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Policy (KSTP) outlines the government's vision for a sustainable tourism sector that protects natural environments, preserves cultural heritage, and promotes inclusive economic growth. The policy aligns with national and regional frameworks, including the Kiribati 20-Year Vision (KV20) and the Kiribati Development Plan 2020–2023 (SPTO, 2024).

The KSTP sets out seven sustainable tourism goals and key actions. The policy incorporates circular economy (CE) and sustainable consumption and production (SCP) principles throughout its seven strategic goals, with particular emphasis on Goal 1 (Conserve the Natural Environment) and Goal 6 (Drive Green and Sustainable Private Sector Investment). Several opportunities to strengthen the application of CE And SCP principles and practices through the KTSP can be highlighted:

- **Infrastructure & Investment:** The policy recognises current shortfalls (e.g. recycling for glass and paper, waste collection consistency), and points out that infrastructure investments, especially in outer islands and for complex waste streams, are needed for truly circular systems.
- **Technical and Financial Support for Businesses:** Support for MSMEs to access and implement eco-design, waste reduction, and renewable energy is crucial, along with inclusion of streamlined advisory networks, microfinance, and subsidies for green upgrades.
- **Product Standards and Certification:** Expanding the Mauri Mark to cover all tourism-related enterprises and increase the weight of sustainability in ratings could drive SCP further.
- **Closing Material Loops:** The policy's promotion of local value chains (agritourism, handicrafts) is in line with circular economy thinking and could be further extended to mandatory local sourcing quotas,

support for repair and reuse enterprises, and incentives for closed-loop systems (e.g. composting waste for local agriculture).

- Policy Integration and Cross-sector Collaboration: More explicit integration of SCP/circularity into all government tourism, private sector, and community plans, rather than as optional or supplementary, would strengthen efficacy.

## 1.2. Regional Tourism Policy Context

### 1.2.1. Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework

The Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework (PSTPF), developed by the Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) and endorsed by Pacific Tourism Ministers in 2021, provides the strategic foundation for sustainable tourism across the region. The Framework, by advocating for circular economy models, resource efficiency, and waste reduction, guides tourism development in line with the Pacific's unique values, cultures, and ecosystems, and emphasises reducing environmental impact, empowering local communities, and promoting regenerative practices. These goals directly support the Sustainable Development Goals – including SDG 12 – by promoting sustainable consumption and production.

By endorsing circular economy principles, resource efficiency, and waste reduction, the Framework provides a clear pathway for Pacific nations to transition from linear tourism models to regenerative systems that keep resources in use, minimise waste, and restore natural ecosystems (Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), 2021).

### 1.2.2. The Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards

The Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards (PSTS) operationalise these ambitions by setting practical, GSTC-aligned benchmarks that require tourism businesses and governments to integrate sustainability and resource efficiency into their operations. Key elements include fostering circular business models, promoting sustainable procurement, supporting community-led initiatives, and enhancing resource efficiency, all of which are central tenets of sustainable CE and SCP. Through these standards, Pacific nations can transition their tourism sector to reduce its environmental footprint but also to strengthen climate resilience, protect biodiversity, and retain greater economic value within local communities. Together, the PSTPF and PSTS create a cohesive and actionable framework that supports Pacific nations to transform their tourism sector to become the driver of environmental stewardship, inclusive socio-economic development, and long-term sustainability (SPTO, 2023).

## 1.3. Barriers to Sector Transition

Kiribati faces critical environmental and infrastructure challenges that threaten its long-term sustainability and tourism development. The country's fragile ecosystems – coral reefs, lagoons, and atolls – are at risk from overuse, pollution, and unregulated tourism development. Sustainable and circular tourism implementation remains constrained by numerous systemic challenges:

### Market Limitations and Competition

- Kiribati's tourism appeal is niche (eco-tourism, fishing, culture, WWII history), but it faces strong competition from better-known and better-serviced Pacific destinations like Fiji, Samoa, and the Cook Islands, creating financial and market barriers that deter MSMEs from adopting sustainability practices with unclear short-term returns.

### Economic and Institutional Barriers

- The tourism sector competes with other priorities for limited government resources.
- Investment in tourism infrastructure is constrained by the country's small economy and limited access to finance.
- Regulatory frameworks for environmental protection, land use, and tourism standards are often under-resourced or weakly enforced.



- Tourism businesses depend on imported goods, limiting economic resilience and preventing the sector from maximising local benefits through sustainable procurement and production strategies.

### Human Resource and Capacity Constraints

- There is a shortage of trained hospitality and tourism professionals. Many tourism-related jobs are filled by untrained or semi-trained staff, affecting service quality.
- Limited local capacity for tourism planning, marketing, and regulation makes it difficult to develop and enforce sustainable practices.

### Waste and Water Infrastructure

- Waste management is a major issue, with 9.7 tonnes of plastic waste generated daily, limited landfill space, and inadequate recycling facilities, leading to pollution that diminishes the country’s appeal (Green Growth Knowledge Partnership, 2025).
- Water scarcity is exacerbated by saltwater intrusion and poor sanitation infrastructure, increasing health risks for both residents and visitors (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2006).

### Renewable Energy

- The country’s heavy reliance on imported fossil fuels results in high energy costs, and while government policy promotes renewable energy, adoption in tourism remains minimal (Government of Kiribati, 2016).



Figure 1 . Kiribati tourism sector barriers and pre-conditions

## 1.4. The STEP Project

### 1.4.1. Project Overview

The Sustainable Tourism Enhancement in the Pacific (STEP) Project, implemented as part of the EU SWITCH-Asia Pacific Policy Support Component, offers a strategic framework to advance sustainable tourism practices tailored specifically for Pacific Island nations, including Kiribati. Building on the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework (PSTPF) and the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards (PSTS), the STEP initiative places a strong focus on CE And SCP. Box 1 further explains the concepts of CE/SCP and their significance for the tourism sector in the Pacific.

The policy context for the STEP Project is shaped by the outcomes of the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) (Pacific Island Countries) Consultation Meeting on the Pre-Zero Draft of the New Declaration on 3R and Circular Economy in Asia-Pacific (2024–2034), held in Apia, Samoa in May 2024. This landmark regional consultation, co-organised by UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA and SPREP, brought together representatives from 20 Pacific countries to address the unique challenges faced by SIDS in advancing sustainable material use, waste management, and circular economy practices. The meeting emphasised the urgent need for integrated

3R and CE strategies, aligned with SPREP's regional frameworks, to achieve resource-efficient, resilient, and low-carbon societies (United Nations Centre for Regional Development 2025).

The STEP project focuses on the following questions:

- How are circular economy (CE) and sustainable consumption and production (SCP) principles currently reflected in national tourism policies, standards, and actions, and what opportunities exist to strengthen, mainstream, and consolidate them in both design and implementation mechanisms?
- How can national tourism standards (PSTS) be improved or developed to complement, align with, and support effective implementation of CE and SCP practices where gaps or new needs arise?

The project consists of two main components a Pacific regional roadmap and country pathways for Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa and Vanuatu.

### **1.4.2. Pacific Sustainable Tourism Regional Roadmap**

The regional roadmap contains nine recommended interventions to help Pacific Island Countries (PICs) implement the PSTS and integrate CE/SCP principles into their tourism sectors. The roadmap reflects the collective ambition of Pacific nations to become global leaders in sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism. The SPTO serves as the central facilitator, fostering cross-sector collaboration, promoting research and innovation, and strengthening partnerships among Pacific nations, the tourism industry, and local communities.

### **1.4.3. Country Pathways for Demonstration Countries**

The second component consists of customised pathways for four demonstration countries: Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, and Vanuatu. Each Country Pathway features a unique blend of regional and country-specific actions, shaped by the priorities identified during national consultations.

For Kiribati, the main objective is to develop practical, targeted actions that support the transition to sustainable tourism and the adoption of CE/SCP practices at the national level.

The STEP Project methodology was adapted to Kiribati's context through a five-phase process.

#### **Phase 1: Scoping Assessment**

- Desktop research, regional surveys, and direct consultation with Kiribati's tourism stakeholders
- Review of national tourism strategies, policies, and sustainability frameworks relevant to Kiribati
- Collation of baseline data on the adoption and application of sustainable tourism standards in the country
- Validation of findings and incorporation of Kiribati's specific context into the assessment

#### **Phase 2: In-Country Consultation**

- Focused consultations were held in Kiribati to:
  - Assess the status of tourism standards and sustainable tourism practices in Kiribati and Identify critical impact areas within Kiribati's tourism system
  - Co-design a customised national pathway that integrates CE/SCP principles and aligns with the PSTPF and PSTS

#### **Phase 3: Regional Validation Workshop**

- Representatives from Kiribati joined over 50 participants from 10 Pacific Island countries at the Regional Validation Workshop (23–24 April 2025, Suva, Fiji).
- The workshop validated proposed PSTS focus areas and regional priorities, assessed progress, identified common challenges, and began shaping the Regional Roadmap through stakeholder feedback.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Full Workshop Agenda and Report are available at: <https://www.switch-asia.eu/event/regional-validation-workshop-sustainable-tourism-enhancement-in-the-pacific-step>

#### **Phase 4: Development of the Regional Roadmap**

Findings from scoping, consultations, and the validation workshop were synthesised to develop a Regional Roadmap that provides a staged, practical framework for PSTPF and PSTS implementation and identifies institutional and industry capacity gaps to guide technical assistance

Priority actions for SPTO and partners were established to systematically support sustainable tourism development in Kiribati as well as to highlight investment opportunities to support Kiribati's transition to sustainable tourism.

#### **Phase 5: Development of National Pathways**

Country-specific interventions and priorities identified during in-country consultations were refined through regional validation and detailed in the Kiribati Country Pathway report.<sup>2</sup> This pathway outlines customised actions, aligning with national priorities and supporting the practical integration of PSTS, SCP, and CE principles into Kiribati's tourism system. Further detail on the methodology, consultations, and the evolution of project design and thinking for Kiribati is provided in a companion Background Report.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The four Country Pathway Reports (Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa and Vanuatu) are available at: <https://www.switch-asia.eu/our-work/multi-country/supporting-sustainable-tourism-through-scp-policy-development-and-implementation-in-the-pacific/>

<sup>3</sup> The STEP Project Background Report is available at: <https://www.switch-asia.eu/our-work/multi-country/supporting-sustainable-tourism-through-scp-policy-development-and-implementation-in-the-pacific/>

## Box 1: Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and Circular Economy: A Foundation for Resilient Pacific Tourism

Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) is a cornerstone of the Pacific tourism sector's strategy to achieve long-term resilience, equity, and sustainability. Closely interlinked with Circular Economy (CE) principles, SCP promotes the efficient use of resources, reduction of waste, and regeneration of natural systems. Together, SCP and CE offer a practical framework to help Pacific tourism respond to climate, environmental, and economic challenges, while delivering meaningful benefits for communities, ecosystems, and local enterprises.

### 1. Enhancing Resource Efficiency and Reducing Environmental Impact

- **Resource Optimisation:** SCP and CE approaches support the efficient use of energy, water, and materials throughout the tourism value chain. They help reduce operational costs while lowering pressures on island ecosystems. Solar microgrids, rainwater harvesting, and eco-efficiency upgrades are gaining traction as viable solutions.
- **Waste Reduction and Material Circulation:** Circular strategies such as efficiencies in production and use (waste prevention), reuse, composting, recycling, and local remanufacturing help reduce solid waste and reliance on landfills, directly supporting climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation.
- **Climate Resilience:** Tourism systems that integrate renewable energy, local procurement, and low-carbon design contribute to greenhouse gas reductions and enhance adaptive capacity against climate shocks. Minimisation of materials use and waste prevention also result in minimisation of greenhouse gas emissions.

### 2. Supporting Economic Viability and Local Livelihoods

- **Economic Diversification:** SCP fosters circular business models that create new revenue streams, such as eco-tourism and local product development, making the sector less vulnerable to external shocks.
- **Local Sourcing and Value Retention:** Prioritising local supply chains strengthens domestic economies, increases resilience, and reduces dependency on imports. Circular procurement supports small producers, artisans, and service providers across the Pacific.
- **Operational Savings:** Reduced energy, water, and material inputs translate into cost savings, improving competitiveness and sustainability.

### 3. Empowering Communities and Promoting Inclusive Development

- **Community-led Innovation:** SCP and CE encourage communities to design, manage, and benefit from tourism activities, ensuring inclusive participation and more equitable benefit-sharing.
- **Cultural Regeneration:** Circular tourism supports cultural resilience by strengthening traditional knowledge, crafts, and place-based storytelling that form the backbone of authentic Pacific tourism experiences.
- **Skills Development and Capacity Building:** Training programmes linked to SCP and CE improve workforce skills in areas such as waste management, eco-design, energy systems, and digital tools, building long-term resilience in the tourism sector.

### 4. Strengthening Policy and Institutional Frameworks

- **Alignment with Regional and Global Commitments:** SCP and CE are embedded in the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework and the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards; both aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and global best practice.
- **Cross-Sectoral Integration:** Circular approaches link tourism with sectors such as agriculture, energy, waste management, and infrastructure, promoting joined-up governance and integrated planning.
- **Monitoring and Learning Systems:** SCP and CE frameworks incorporate indicators and performance tracking, enabling continuous improvement, evidence-based planning, and replication of successful models across the Pacific.

By embedding SCP and Circular Economy principles at all levels – from destination planning to enterprise operations – the Pacific tourism sector can accelerate its transition toward low-impact, high-value models that support resilient communities and protect the region's unique natural and cultural heritage. Terms and definitions used in this report are included in Appendix A.

## 2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

### 2.1. National Tourism Policy

#### 2.1.1. Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Development Policy Framework

Tourism development is guided by national strategies that support high-yield, sustainable tourism growth, as detailed in the Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Development Policy Framework (KSTDPF), the Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Policy (KSTP), and the TAK Strategic Plan 2024–2026 (Together, these plans set out priorities for sustainable growth, community involvement, and environmental protection Tourism Authority of Kiribati (TAK), 2023; Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), 2024).

The Kiribati Tourism Act 2018 establishes the legal framework for promoting tourism in Kiribati, focusing on the enhancement of natural, scenic, cultural, historical, and recreational attractions. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Tourism Authority of Kiribati (TAK) in developing and regulating the tourism industry, including licensing of accommodation providers, tour operators, and guides, as well as enforcement of standards for safety, environmental management, and cultural sensitivity (Republic of Kiribati, 2018).

#### 2.1.2. Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Policy

Launched in 2024, the Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Policy (KSTP) sets out seven sustainable tourism goals and key actions. The policy incorporates and promotes circular economy and SCP ideals throughout its seven strategic goals, with particular emphasis under Goal 1 (Conserve the Natural Environment) and Goal 6 (Drive Green and Sustainable Private Sector Investment):

##### 1. Waste Management and Resource Efficiency (Goal 1.2, 1.3)

- Policy 1.2: The policy addresses the importance of preventing, reducing, and sustainably managing waste from tourism. Key measures include:
  - Maintaining a ban on single-use plastics (enacted 2022).
  - Encouraging the recycling of PET bottles and cans through programmes like Kaoki Mange, with incentives for recycling where facilities exist. However, challenges remain for glass, paper, and in outer islands lacking infrastructure.
  - Promoting composting of organic waste at tourism businesses.
- Policy 1.3: Stresses the need for sustainable water use, with infrastructure investments (e.g. rainwater harvesting, desalination) and business incentives for efficient resource use.

##### 2. Encouraging Green Technology and Circular Solutions (Goal 6.1)

- Policy 6.1: Calls for greater information dissemination, technical support, and incentives to help tourism businesses adopt 'green' technologies, such as renewable energy, biogas, and water filtration systems, all central to circular economy practices.
- The policy highlights a lack of awareness and access to green technology and professional services as key barriers to circular and SCP implementation.

##### 3. Sustainable Product Development and Local Value Chains (Goal 5.2)

- Policy 5.2: Focuses on enabling MSME and community enterprise development in tourism, particularly those that build authentic, local supply chains (e.g. agritourism, handicrafts), supporting circularity by keeping benefits within Kiribati and minimising imports.
- It encourages 'farm to table' and 'reef to fork' initiatives and recognises the importance of access to finance and technical support for sustainable enterprises.



#### 4. Mauri Mark Standards (Goal 4.1)

- The Mauri Mark programme includes sustainability criteria for accommodation providers and other tourism businesses, incentivising them to adopt practices that are energy- and resource-efficient, waste-minimising, and green initiatives.

#### 5. Visitor Awareness and Education (Goal 1.4, 1.5)

- The policy emphasises education for visitors and host communities about biodiversity and responsible consumption, including 'dos and don'ts' to minimise environmental footprint.

#### 6. Data Monitoring & Indicators

- Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Indicators include:
  - Percentage of establishments using renewable energy and water-saving practices
  - Adoption of waste reduction practices and resource conservation
  - Measurement of economic and social benefits, which could be expanded to include material circularity metrics

## 2.2. Other Relevant National Policies

Government policy plays a central role in shaping and enhancing circular initiatives within Kiribati's tourism industry, as presented in Table 1. Through a combination of national strategies, regulatory frameworks, and targeted initiatives, the government and development partners aim to ensure tourism growth aligns with sustainability goals and protection of fragile ecosystems (TAK, 2023; SPTO, 2024).

### Sustainable Development

Under the Environment Act 1999, all significant tourism developments must undergo Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), ensuring potential environmental risks are identified and mitigated before projects commence, particularly in sensitive coastal and marine areas (Republic of Kiribati, 1999).

### Energy

Kiribati depends heavily on imported fossil fuels for electricity and transport. Frequent outages force businesses to rely on diesel generators, increasing both costs and carbon emissions (TAK, 2021). Kiribati's Revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commits the country to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 48.8% and fossil fuel consumption by 45% in South Tarawa and 60% on Kiritimati Island by 2025, primarily through renewable energy investments (Government of Kiribati, 2017; Government of Kiribati, 2009).

Progress in renewable energy and resource efficiency has accelerated significantly since 2021, underpinned by Kiribati's National Energy Policy, the Kiribati Integrated Energy Roadmap 2017–2025, and NDCs. Kiribati Integrated Energy Roadmap (KIER) outlines the country's medium-term strategy for scaling up renewable energy and energy efficiency across all sectors, focusing on solar PV, wind, and coconut oil as alternative fuels (Government of Kiribati, 2017).

Solar energy adoption and rainwater harvesting systems continue to expand with ongoing support from donor-funded projects from the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, and bilateral partners (Asian Development Bank 2025).

While the KV20 strategy promotes renewable energy, uptake in tourism remains low. Solar energy is available on outer islands but is hampered by limited maintenance support, while hotels in Tarawa have little incentive to switch from grid electricity (TAK, 2021).

Waste Management

Kiribati faces severe challenges with limited landfill space, inadequate waste infrastructure, and low collection rates – only 25% of waste is collected – resulting in illegal dumping and significant marine pollution. This situation threatens public health and undermines the country’s tourism appeal. Efforts such as the Kaoki Mange Project, Materials Recovery Facility, and Green Bag Programme have improved some waste recovery, yet landfills remain donor-dependent and financially unsustainable. Despite these initiatives plastic waste remains a major problem, with nearly 10 tonnes generated daily and recycling options especially limited on outer islands.

Most tourism supplies – about 90% – are imported, yielding little benefit for local producers and maintaining high costs, as there are no clear procurement strategies or guidelines to integrate local businesses into tourism supply chains.

The Ministry of Environment, Lands, and Agricultural Development (MELAD) leads waste management and enforces new regulations, including bans on non-biodegradable plastics, through the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy (2020–2030), setting standards for tourism operators and aiming for better waste minimisation, recycling, and disposal with support from regional agencies like SPREP and SPTO.

Kiribati is also actively participating in regional initiatives like Cleaner Pacific 2025, a comprehensive regional waste and pollution management strategy that provides strategic frameworks for municipal solid waste, marine litter, and disaster waste management across 21 Pacific Island countries. This regional collaboration offers opportunities for knowledge sharing, best practice dissemination, and coordinated approaches to waste management challenges (UN, 2025).

In 2023, 120 government and private sector staff were trained in sustainable procurement through the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI). The Kiribati Public Procurement Reform Programme (KPPRP) aims to integrate environmental, social, and economic considerations into public procurement (TAK, 2023).

Water

Poor sanitation infrastructure has resulted in polluted nearshore waters, affecting marine life, fisheries, and the tourism experience. Many accommodations rely on septic tanks, but proper disposal is inconsistent, and regulatory oversight is limited (TAK, 2021).

Water supply is a major constraint, with poor water quality contributing to health risks. Tourism is a high-water-use sector, increasing competition for limited resources and driving up costs for both businesses and residents (TAK, 2021).

Policies encourage the adoption of water-efficient technologies and improved sanitation infrastructure in tourism facilities. Operators are incentivised to install rainwater harvesting systems and wastewater treatment solutions, reducing the sector’s pressure on limited freshwater resources and minimising pollution (Government of Kiribati, 2008; Government of Kiribati, 2010).

Government policy also supports the establishment and management of protected areas, such as the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA), and promotes sustainable fishing practices and the development of eco-tourism products leveraging Kiribati’s biodiversity (TAK, 2023).

Table 1. Kiribati National Policy Context

Category	Relevant Legislation and Policies	Purpose
Water	National Water Resources Policy (2008).	Provides a framework for sustainable water supply and management
	National Sanitation Policy (2010)	Focuses on improving sanitation facilities and protecting water quality

Category	Relevant Legislation and Policies	Purpose
Waste	Environment Act (2021)	Establishes regulations for waste management, pollution control, and environmental protection.
	Integrated Environment Policy (2013)	Incorporates waste management strategies to address chemical and waste issues.
	Kiribati Waste Management Resource Recovery Strategy (KWMRRS 2020-2029)	The ultimate objective of the Strategy is to strengthen national capacity to ensure a safe and healthy environment targeting plastic waste, end of life vehicles, asbestos, used oil, e-waste, recyclables, disaster waste, organic waste, wastewater, laboratory chemical waste and used tire at the national level.
Infrastructure	Building Act (2006)	Regulates construction practices to ensure safety and environmental sustainability
	National Building Code of Kiribati (2012) – <i>under review</i>	<p>Sets standards for building design and construction, promoting resilience and environmental considerations. Building Code &amp; Sustainability Reporting</p> <p>Construction projects exceeding AUD 200,000 must submit a Sustainability Report detailing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste management</li> <li>• Water conservation</li> <li>• Power usage and efficiency</li> </ul>
Energy	National Energy Policy (2009)	Aims to minimise adverse environmental impacts of energy production and consumption, promoting renewable energy.
	Kiribati Integrated Energy Roadmap (2017–2025)	Outlines strategies for sustainable energy development and environmental protection.
Agriculture	Kiribati Agriculture Strategy (KAS) 2020–2030	Promotes sustainable food production, improve nutrition, and increase household income
Climate Change	Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Act 2019	Integrates disaster risk management and climate change adaptation efforts. aiming to enhance resilience against climate-related risks
	Kiribati Climate Change Policy (KCCP) 2018:	Emphasises actions to address immediate and long-term adaptation needs, ensuring the nation's existence despite increasing climate change impacts
National Quality Standards	National Quality Policy (2017-2023)	This policy outlines Kiribati's commitment to aligning its products and services with regional and international standards. It emphasises the development of a robust Quality Infrastructure System (QIS) to enhance product quality, boost export growth, and improve citizen well-being.
	National Quality Infrastructure System (QIS)	Under the National Quality Policy, the QIS encompasses seven functions: metrology, standardisation, accreditation, inspection, testing, certification, and quality promotion. This system is designed to raise the quality and safety levels of both locally manufactured and imported products and services.

Category	Relevant Legislation and Policies	Purpose
<b>Import Regulations</b>	Customs Act 2005:	This Act governs the importation of goods into Kiribati, detailing the procedures, prohibitions, restrictions, and duties applicable to imported items. It ensures that all imports comply with national laws and standards to protect the country's interests.
<b>Public Procurement</b>	Public Procurement Act 2019	Emphasises principles such as value for money, integrity, and fair competition in government procurement activities.

## 2.3. Tourism Governance and Industry Structures

### 2.3.1. Tourism Governance

The tourism sector in Kiribati is overseen by the Ministry of Information, Communications, Transport and Tourism Development (MICTTD), which is responsible for setting national tourism policy, coordinating development strategies, and ensuring alignment with broader government objectives such as sustainability, cultural preservation, and economic development (Ministry of Information, Communications, Transport and Tourism Development (MICTTD), 2020).

The Kiribati Tourism Authority (TAK) operates as the main government agency dedicated to the promotion and marketing of Kiribati as a destination. The legal mandate and functions of TAK are set out in the Kiribati Tourism Act 2018, which includes promoting natural and cultural attractions, ensuring compliance with standards, licensing businesses, and providing training and guidance to tourism operators (Republic of Kiribati, 2018).

The governance model emphasises collaboration between government, local island councils, community groups, and the private sector. Community-based tourism initiatives are encouraged to ensure that benefits reach residents and that development is culturally appropriate.

International organisations such as the Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) and donor agencies play a supporting role in capacity building, infrastructure development, and technical assistance (SPTO, 2023; Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), 2023).

### 2.3.2. Industry Structure

The tourism industry in Kiribati is small and primarily consists of locally owned guesthouses, small hotels, eco-lodges, and fishing lodges, especially on Kiritimati (Christmas Island). The sector is dominated by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), with limited presence of large-scale or international operators (TAK, 2023). Accommodation ranges from basic guesthouses to modest hotels, with most facilities concentrated in South Tarawa and Kiritimati. A handful of local businesses offer fishing charters, cultural tours, birdwatching excursions, and WWII history tours. Inter-island travel is provided by small domestic airlines and government-run or private ferries, though services are often unreliable (TAK, 2023).

There is no formal national tourism industry association, but TAK works closely with local operators and councils to promote standards, training, and product development (TAK, 2023). Partnerships with regional tourism bodies, such as SPTO, help with marketing, training, and advocacy (SPTO, 2023).

### 2.3.3. Civil Society and Non-Governmental Partners

International conservation organisations, including Conservation International and WWF, collaborate with local communities and government agencies on marine conservation initiatives, eco-tourism development, and sustainable livelihood programmes, emphasising community ownership and environmental stewardship (PATA, 2023).

### 2.3.4. Development Agency and NGO Involvement

Donor funding consistently targets several key areas critical to Kiribati's sustainable development objectives. Sustainable tourism development and marketing receive significant attention, alongside environmental impact assessment capacity and protected area management systems. Climate change adaptation and resilience measures, particularly for coastal and marine environments, represent another major focus area. Community-based and eco-tourism initiatives receive dedicated support, as do capacity building programmes for tourism operators and government agencies. Waste management and resource recovery strategies also attract donor investment as essential infrastructure for sustainable tourism growth (PATA, 2023).

### Multilateral and Regional Development Partners

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) serves as a key partner in supporting sustainable tourism initiatives, biodiversity conservation projects, and climate adaptation measures throughout Kiribati. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides critical technical assistance and funding for environmental management initiatives, particularly marine conservation, waste management systems, and eco-tourism development (PATA, 2023). The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) coordinates environmental protection and climate change adaptation support, while the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) provides specialised assistance in tourism marketing, product development, and capacity building (SPREP, 2023).

### Bilateral Development Cooperation

The Australian Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and New Zealand's aid programme provide funding and technical assistance for tourism development, environmental management, and capacity building. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) supports climate adaptation, water resource management, and disaster preparedness initiatives that benefit tourism and the environment (PATA, 2023).

### Financial Mechanisms and International Finance

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a major source of funding for large-scale environmental projects, often implemented with UN agencies and focused on biodiversity conservation, climate adaptation, and sustainable resource management. The World Bank and Asian Development Bank periodically finance infrastructure development, environmental protection measures, and climate resilience projects that generate benefits for the tourism sector (PATA, 2023).

## 2.4. National Tourism Standards Program

### 2.4.1. Legislative Foundation

Established by the Kiribati Tourism Act 2018, the Mauri Mark Accreditation Programme is Kiribati's national quality accreditation system for tourism businesses. Managed by TAK, it assesses accommodation and tourism operators based on safety, service quality, and sustainability standards. The Programme is being expanded to include restaurants, bars, tourism leisure crafts, and dive operators (TAK, 2023).

### 2.4.2. Programme Objectives

TAK has identified six key objectives for the Mauri Mark Accreditation Programme:

1. Gain international recognition from a reputable accreditation body
2. Expand the Programme to include more tourism businesses
3. Provide support for businesses to help them improve their ratings
4. Enhance visitor satisfaction by ensuring businesses meet high standards
5. Increase the number of certified individuals working in the tourism sector.



### 2.4.3. Implementation and Oversight

Tourism businesses undergo an annual assessment based on predetermined criteria, with a rating assigned based on their performance. Accommodation providers are classified into two categories:

- Category 1: Hotels, resorts, guesthouses, motels, and self-contained apartments
- Category 2: Island bungalows, homestays, and Airbnb.

Each property is evaluated across seven key areas:

1. Business operations
2. Fire safety procedures
3. Health and hygiene standards
4. Safety and maintenance
5. Facilities and in-room amenities
6. Environmental sustainability practices
7. Guest support services

### 2.4.4. Strengths and Limitations

During the consultation Industry and government stakeholder consultation identified several issues with the Programme including:

- Limited staff capacity at TAK for thorough assessment and compliance monitoring
- Lack of alignment with international or regional standards
- No structured monitoring system for sustainability performance
- Limited awareness among businesses about the benefits of accreditation

To strengthen the Mauri Mark Standard, TAK is introducing enhanced requirements in quality, sustainability, and safety standards, with a focus on waste management, water conservation, energy efficiency, and community protection. TAK is working with the Ministry of Environment, Lands, and Agricultural Development (MELAD) and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy (MISE) to expand the accreditation programme and support environmental inspectors in monitoring tourism developments (TAK, 2023).

### 2.4.5. Alignment with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards

While the Mauri Mark Standard includes basic sustainability measures, it does not fully align with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard (PSTS). Key gaps include:

- Biodiversity conservation and ecosystem protection
- Sustainable supply chains and local sourcing
- Circular economy and resource efficiency
- Community engagement and cultural sustainability
- Sustainability performance monitoring

The comparison between the Mauri Mark Accommodation Standard and the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard (PSTS) reveals critical shortfalls: while some foundational elements (waste management, legal compliance, some resource efficiency) are in place, the Mauri Mark does not systematically integrate SCP and CE principles. Key gaps include the absence of requirements or guidance on sustainable purchasing, resource tracking and reporting, circular procurement, and structured reuse, repair, or recycling initiatives.

A comparison of the Mauri Mark Accommodation Standard with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Industry Standard (PSTS – Industry) is presented in Table 2, identifying key gaps and urgent areas requiring attention to support alignment with national and regional tourism sustainability goals and SCP and CE Principles (SPTO, 2023).

**Table 2. Mauri Mark vs. Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard (Industry)**

PSTS Goal & Focus Area	Mauri Mark Alignment	Gaps Identified
Business Resilience	Present	Covers licensing and operations only – climate adaptation and mitigation not addressed.
Business Monitoring & Reporting	Not included	No performance tracking for energy, water, or resilience
Visitor Satisfaction	Partially included	Feedback forms provided, but not analysed or reported
Sustainable Purchasing	Not addressed	No mention of eco-friendly or local procurement
Legal Compliance	Present	Required licenses and basic compliance covered
Social Inclusion (Women, Youth, PWD)	Implicit only	No criteria for diversity or inclusive employment
Fair & Decent Work	Absent	No guidance on fair wages, job safety or labour rights
Community Participation	Absent	No community consultation or benefit-sharing mechanisms
Empowering Communities	Not addressed	No capacity-building or community-based tourism criteria
Community Feedback & Satisfaction	Guest-focused only	No resident sentiment or social impact monitoring
Cultural Heritage Protection	Minimal inclusion	Traditional performances optional; no formal cultural asset protection
Cultural Interpretation	Absent	No standards or training on interpretation of cultural/natural heritage
Intellectual Property Protection	Absent	No guidance on safeguarding traditional knowledge or expressions
Supporting Local Life & Culture	Implied in homestays	Not systemised across all accommodation types
Waste & Wastewater Management	Included	Requirements for segregation, treatment, and licensing. Some focus on resource efficiency.
Energy & Water Conservation	Limited (e.g. solar lights)	Some focus on resource efficiency.
Carbon Footprint Reduction	Not included	No mention of carbon reduction strategies
Ecosystem Protection	Partially addressed	Avoids disturbance in construction, but lacks broader biodiversity protection
Visitor Impact Management	Absent	No criteria or limits for visitor flows or activity zoning
Monitoring & Evaluation	Lacking	No system for tracking outcomes or continuous improvement
Circular Economy & SCP	Not integrated	No reference to resource efficiency. No references to reuse, repair, recycling, or circular procurement
Capacity Building & Training	Guest service and safety only	No sustainability, community, or cultural capacity-building

## 2.5. Unsustainable Consumption and Production

### 2.5.1. Sector Challenges

The following summary outlines the key challenges faced by tourism businesses and the broader sector to embed circular economy and sustainable consumption principles in business practices.

#### **Institutional and Regulatory Limitations**

- **Inefficiencies in Licensing and Regulation:** result from outdated legislation, slowing business development and innovation (Republic of Kiribati, 2018).
- **Lack of Incentives Framework:** There is no clear national policy or fiscal incentives to support green tourism investments, discouraging businesses from adopting sustainable technologies or practices.
- **Institutional Capacity:** Staff at the Tourism Authority of Kiribati (TAK) require additional training to effectively assess and promote sustainability among operators. Enhanced collaboration with other government agencies is also needed for holistic business assessment.
- **Monitoring:** No system exists to track progress on Kiribati's Sustainable Tourism Indicators as outlined in the Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Policy and to support aggregated data collection at regional level. Lack of baseline data makes it difficult to assess the impact of sustainable tourism initiatives.

#### **Private Sector and MSME Constraints**

- **Geographic Isolation:** Kiribati's dispersed population and remoteness result in high transportation costs and limited international flight options, restricting visitor arrivals and increasing the cost of doing business (MTCIC, 2021).
- **Limited Infrastructure and high service costs:** High costs for internet, electricity, and imported goods further challenge the viability of tourism enterprises (MTCIC, 2021).
- **Limited Access to Finance:** While the Development Bank of Kiribati (DBK) offers business loans, many MSMEs lack the financial literacy required to successfully apply, hindering investment in sustainable upgrades (MTCIC, 2021).
- **High Operational Costs:** Businesses contend with elevated costs due to heavy reliance on imported goods, energy, and persistent infrastructure gaps (MTCIC, 2021).
- **Skills Gaps:** Many tourism operators lack essential knowledge in financial management, marketing, and digital skills, limiting their competitiveness and ability to implement sustainability measures (MTCIC, 2021).
- **Technical Barriers:** Tourism businesses face difficulties accessing advisory services for solar energy, biogas, and water filtration systems. Importing such equipment is expensive and logistically challenging (TAK, 2021).
- **High Upfront Costs:** The significant initial investment required for green infrastructure, combined with limited financing options and low uptake of DBK's energy efficiency loans, deters businesses from transitioning to sustainable operations (MTCIC, 2021).

### 2.5.2. Sector Initiatives and Opportunities

Kiribati is steadily advancing its commitment to sustainable tourism and circular economy principles. The recently launched Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Policy (KSTP) provides a strategic framework for embedding sustainability across tourism policy and operations, closely aligned with the national KV20 vision and the Kiribati Development Plan (TAK, 2021). National strategies such as the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy (2020–2030) and active participation in regional initiatives like Cleaner Pacific 2025 have driven practical measures, including recycling programmes in hotels and guesthouses, bans on non-biodegradable plastics, and community-wide awareness campaigns targeting both residents and visitors (TAK, 2021; SPTO, 2023).

Capacity-building for tourism operators is a key focus, led by TAK in partnership with regional bodies such as SPTO and development partners. These programmes support the adoption of regional sustainability

standards, enhance financial and digital literacy, and promote best practices in waste, water, and energy management (SPTO, 2023).

Progress in renewable energy and resource efficiency is also evident, underpinned by Kiribati's National Energy Policy, the Kiribati Integrated Energy Roadmap, and ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) (TAK, 2021). Adopting solar energy and rainwater harvesting systems will be enabled with the support of donor-funded projects from the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, and bilateral partners. Advisory services and concessional financing for green investment are being expanded to help tourism SMEs transition to more sustainable operations (TAK, 2021).

Major infrastructure projects, implemented with development agency support, are transforming the enabling environment for sustainable tourism and economic growth in Kiribati:

- The World Bank-supported Kiritimati Island Infrastructure Project (USD 110 million, 2025–2031) is delivering climate-resilient transport links, road upgrades, and airport improvements to boost connectivity, access to services, and economic opportunities on Kiritimati Island (TAK, 2021).
- The South Tarawa Water Supply Project (USD 58 million), co-financed by the Asian Development Bank, Green Climate Fund, World Bank, and the Government of Kiribati, is expanding access to safe, climate-resilient water through solar-powered desalination and upgraded distribution networks (TAK, 2021).
- The Outer Islands Transport Infrastructure Investment Project (USD 42 million, funded by the World Bank and ADB) is enhancing maritime and inter-island transport safety, resilience, and access, supporting equitable development and improved visitor movement across the archipelago (TAK, 2021).
- The South Tarawa Renewable Energy Project, led by ADB and partners, is constructing a 7.5 MW solar photovoltaic plant and battery storage system, bringing reliable, low-carbon electricity to over 9,000 homes and businesses, including those in tourism (TAK, 2021).

Looking forward, the development of national tourism standards presents an opportunity to formalise performance thresholds for waste reduction, water and energy use, and responsible procurement. Establishing a centralised platform for sustainable procurement and circular economy partnerships – potentially in collaboration with SPREP and other regional agencies – could further accelerate innovation by connecting operators with local suppliers and green solutions (SPTO, 2023).

At the local level, strengthening the capacity of island councils and integrating sustainable tourism into subnational planning will be crucial for effective delivery. Coupled with targeted financing instruments for renewable energy and infrastructure upgrades, these reforms can unlock private sector investment and reduce environmental pressures (TAK, 2021).

## 3. GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY CONSULTATION

### 3.1. Summary of Consultation Outcomes

Consultation involved a two-tiered approach: first, through a structured survey of SPTO member countries; and second, through in-country, face-to-face discussions with national stakeholders. The consultation process focused on the following questions:

- How can Kiribati's national tourism standards be improved or developed to complement, align with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard and support effective implementation of CE and SCP practices where gaps or new needs arise?
- What opportunities exist to strengthen, mainstream, and consolidate them in both design and implementation mechanisms?

The STEP Project Baseline Survey (2024/25) evaluated how well Kiribati's Mauri Mark tourism standards align with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard (PSTS) and identified key areas for targeted improvement. The Survey Results are presented in Appendix C.

In country consultation involved discussions with broad range of government and donor representatives, and community and industry stakeholders on priority areas for intervention to support the transition of the sector towards CE and SCP practices. The full list of stakeholders consulted is provided in Appendix B. Their input directly informed the Country Pathway and Background Report and contributed to the development of the Regional Roadmap.

To successfully induce and support the implementation of SCP and CE practices in Kiribati's tourism sector, substantial enhancements are needed within the national standards and the broader enabling environment. The STEP Project Baseline Survey (2024/25) and recent in-country consultations highlighted the sectors priorities:

#### Policy Alignment and Standards

- Strengthen the alignment of national tourism standards with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard (PSTS)
- Integrate Te Mauri Mark Standards more deeply into community-based and cultural tourism initiatives
- Expand existing certification schemes to include explicit circular economy benchmarks and requirements
- Offer technical assistance for integrating rigorous environmental standards into national certification (like Te Mauri Mark)

#### Governance, Collaboration, and Monitoring

- Establish more formalised mechanisms and structured inter-agency collaboration for unified implementation and monitoring
- Develop and adopt shared monitoring and reporting tools across government, industry, and community stakeholders
- Implement formal, systematised processes for measuring and improving visitor satisfaction
- Create frameworks for balancing economic, environmental, and cultural sustainability in tourism projects

#### Guidance, Practical Support, and Resilience

- Provide practical guidance and support for sustainable purchasing, including sourcing eco-friendly materials despite local limitations
- Support business resilience through enhanced planning, risk management, and adaptation resources
- Expand training and capacity-building for climate resilience and sustainable tourism management



- Secure funding for green infrastructure and responsible tourism activities

## Community Engagement and Cultural Protection

- Facilitate greater stakeholder and community engagement in tourism planning and operations
- Advance protection of cultural intellectual property and better manage the impacts of tourism on local communities
- Promote community-based cultural tourism by providing technical resources and capacity-building support

## Circular Economy Actions

- Establish a 'Circular Economy Hub' for best practice sharing, training, and capacity building
- Develop and implement incentives for businesses to adopt circular economy models (minimising waste, fostering reuse/repair/recycling)
- Promote public-private partnerships to develop sustainable tourism projects aligned with CE and SCP principles

## Realistic, Country-Specific Implementation

- Focus SCP policy development and implementation on realistic, country-specific needs and capacities
- Deliver guidance and resources for responsible marketing and promotion of sustainable tourism

## 3.2. Priority Actions

Table 3 reflects the refined priority actions determined by TAK and the STEP project team following the analysis of the opportunities identified through the STEP Baseline Survey and in-country consultations presented above.

**Table 3. Kiribati Priority Actions following consultations**

Category	Action Items
<b>Destination Governance and Management</b>	Establish a Sustainable Tourism Committee as per the Policy Framework to support the development of the revised Mauri Mark accreditation system.
<b>Regulatory and Policy Frameworks</b>	Refine the Mauri Mark Accreditation System, including the Mauri Way and criteria, to align with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard Criteria. Confirm the relationship between the tourism licensing system and the Mauri Mark 2.0 System, utilising licensing as a tool to transition the sector to better practices. Implement sustainable procurement interventions in the hospitality sector's supply chain, building on previous projects like LECRD and GGGI.
<b>NTO Capacity Building</b>	Develop training materials and capacity-building programmes for industry stakeholders and students to support the rollout of the revised Mauri Mark 2.0.
<b>Sector Awareness</b>	Improve institutional coordination through awareness-raising and communications facilitated by a steering committee.
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	Enhance data collection systems to monitor and report on key performance indicators related to sustainable tourism.
<b>Traditional Building</b>	Formalise traditional building methods and materials.

## 4. KIRIBATI COUNTRY PATHWAY

### 4.1. Priority Interventions

Drawing on extensive consultations, baseline assessments, and input from a regional validation workshop, the Kiribati Country Pathway has been developed to deliver targeted interventions that address the sector's most pressing needs as identified in the Section 3. section.

Four interventions have been prioritised for Kiribati's Country Pathway. These interventions are described below and provide a pathway for advancing sustainable tourism (including CE and SCP) in Samoa, ensuring each action area is addressed with specific objectives, outcomes, and activities tailored to local needs and aligned with regional best practice.

#### ➔ **Embed CE and SCP principles into national tourism policies and other relevant policy frameworks.**

Advance national policy coordination and legal reform to embed CE and SCP principles across Kiribati's tourism governance framework. The intervention will support TAK to strengthen institutional capacity, align national policy instruments with the KSTP

#### ➔ **National Sustainable Tourism Standards Development**

Revise the Mauri Mark to guide tourism operators and ensure quality, safety, and sustainability across the sector.

#### ➔ **Sustainable Tourism Supply Chains and Aggregator Hubs**

Strengthening local supply chains and creating aggregator hubs to support small businesses, improve market access, and promote resource efficiency.

#### ➔ **Sustainable and Climate Resilient Tourism Accommodation Guidelines**

Develop guidelines to ensure that tourism accommodations are both environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate impacts.

#### ***Kiribati 1: Embed CE and SCP principles into national tourism policies and other related policy frameworks.***

##### **Objective**

To strengthen the institutional capacity of the Tourism Authority of Kiribati (TAK) to effectively define, elaborate, promote, implement, and support the inclusion of CE & SCP principles in tourism policy and other relevant national tourism policy frameworks.

##### **Outcomes**

- TAK staff possess enhanced knowledge and skills in SCP and CE, enabling effective leadership and support for sustainable tourism initiatives.
- SCP and CE principles are fully integrated into TAK's strategic planning, policies, and day-to-day operations.
- TAK establishes active partnerships across Government and with regional sustainability organisations, facilitating ongoing knowledge exchange and technical collaboration supporting CE and SCP implementation.
- Tourism businesses receive targeted technical support from TAK to adopt and scale sustainable practices and CE and SCP into operations.

## **Key Activities**

### **1. Internal Capacity Building**

- Design and deliver tailored training programmes for TAK staff on SCP, CE, and sustainable tourism management.
- Conduct regular skills assessments to identify further training needs and track progress.

### **2. Strategic Integration**

- Review and update TAK's strategic and operational plans to embed SCP and CE principles throughout all programmes and activities.
- Develop internal guidelines and checklists to ensure sustainability is considered in all decision-making processes.

### **3. Regional Partnerships and Knowledge Exchange**

- Establish formal partnerships with relevant national and regional agencies (e.g. SPTO, GGGI) for ongoing knowledge sharing, peer learning, and capacity building.
- Participate in regional workshops, forums, and peer exchanges to stay abreast of best practices and innovations.

### **4. Technical Support for Industry**

- Develop and deliver technical assistance programmes for tourism businesses on SCP and CE principles and their implementation (e.g. resource efficiency, waste minimisation, green/sustainable procurement, responsible consumption patterns).
- Create toolkits, templates, and case studies to guide businesses in adopting sustainable practices.

### **5. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement**

- Set up systems to monitor the integration and impact of SCP and CE within TAK's operations and the wider tourism sector.
- Regularly review and refine institutional processes based on feedback and emerging best practices.

## ***Kiribati 2: National Sustainable Tourism Standards Development***

### **Objective**

To review and revise the Mauri Mark industry standards for tourism in Kiribati, ensuring full alignment with the PSTS and the CE and SCP principles of sustainable consumption and production (SCP), thereby strengthening the national framework for sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism development.

### **Outcomes**

- The Mauri Mark industry standards are updated to fully reflect PSTS criteria and SCP principles, covering governance, economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions.
- The revised standards are practical, culturally appropriate, and widely adopted by tourism operators, including SMEs and community-based enterprises.
- Enhanced capacity among stakeholders (government, industry, communities) to implement, monitor, and continuously improve sustainable tourism practices.
- Improved data collection and monitoring systems to track progress against key sustainability indicators.
- Documented lessons and best practices to inform similar standard alignment processes in other Pacific Island countries.

## **Activities**

### **1. Establish a National Working Group**

- Form a cross-sectoral committee with representatives from government, industry, communities, and technical partners to guide the review process.

### **2. Conduct a Gap Analysis**

- Systematically compare the current Mauri Mark standards with PSTS criteria and SCP principles to identify areas of alignment, partial alignment, and gaps.

### **3. Stakeholder Consultations**

- Organise workshops and focus groups with tourism operators, SMEs, community representatives, and relevant ministries to gather input and ensure the standards are practical and inclusive.

### **4. Draft Revised Standards**

- Update the Mauri Mark standards based on gap analysis and stakeholder feedback, ensuring integration of PSTS and SCP requirements.

### **5. Capacity Building and Training**

- Develop information and training modules for industry stakeholders on the revised standards, SCP, and sustainable business practices.

### **6. Pilot Testing**

- Implement the revised standards with selected operators to test practicality and gather feedback for further refinement.

### **7. Develop Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

- Establish systems for ongoing data collection, reporting, and evaluation of compliance with the revised standards.

### **8. Awareness and Communications**

- Launch a communications strategy to promote the revised standards and their benefits to the wider tourism sector.

### **9. Regional Knowledge Sharing**

- Document the process, challenges, and lessons learned; share outcomes with regional partners and through SPTO platforms to support replication across the Pacific.

## ***Kiribati 3: Sustainable Tourism Supply Chains and Aggregator Hubs***

### **Objective**

To introduce and mainstream sustainable procurement practices in Kiribati's tourism sector, particularly within the hospitality supply chain, to advance CE and SCP principles, while strengthening local business participation and resource efficiency.

### **Outcomes**

- Sustainable procurement policies and practices are adopted by tourism and hospitality businesses, reducing environmental impact and promoting resource efficiency
- Increased integration of local community businesses and SMEs into sustainable supply chains, enhancing local economic benefits
- Enhanced capacity of tourism sector stakeholders to identify, source, and manage sustainable products and services

- Demonstrable progress in circular economy initiatives, such as reduced waste, improved energy efficiency, and uptake of sustainable products in the hospitality sector
- Scalable models and lessons learned to inform broader adoption of sustainable procurement in Kiribati and across the Pacific

## **Key Activities**

### **1. Supply Chain Assessment and Gap Analysis**

- Map the current hospitality supply chain and assess existing procurement practices to identify opportunities for sustainable interventions
- Review and build on previous work by LECRD and GGGI projects (e.g. energy-efficient lighting, cooling systems)

### **2. Develop Sustainable Procurement Guidelines**

- Draft and disseminate practical guidelines for sustainable procurement tailored to the tourism and hospitality sector, referencing circular economy and SCP best practices

### **3. Capacity Building and Training**

- Organise workshops and training sessions for procurement officers, hotel managers, and suppliers on sustainable procurement, circular economy, and SCP
- Provide targeted support for local community businesses and SMEs to help them meet sustainable procurement criteria

### **4. Pilot Sustainable Procurement Interventions**

- Implement pilot projects with selected hotels and suppliers to test sustainable procurement practices (e.g. local sourcing, eco-friendly products, waste reduction)
- Monitor and document outcomes, challenges, and benefits

### **5. Supplier Engagement and Community Integration**

- Facilitate forums and networking events to connect local producers and suppliers with tourism businesses
- Support local businesses in product development, certification, and marketing to meet hospitality sector needs

### **6. Monitoring, Reporting, and Knowledge Sharing**

- Establish systems to track procurement practices, resource use, and circular economy outcomes
- Share lessons learned and scalable models with national and regional stakeholders, including through SPTO platforms

## ***Kiribati 4: Sustainable and Climate Resilient Tourism Accommodation Guidelines***

### **Objective**

To encourage and formalise the use of traditional, sustainable building materials and construction methods in Kiribati's tourism infrastructure by developing guidelines, policies, and training that promote eco-friendly, culturally authentic structures.

### **Outcomes**

- Official green building guidelines for tourism infrastructure (e.g. bungalows) are developed and adopted, incorporating sustainable traditional building techniques and materials
- Increased use of eco-friendly, culturally appropriate construction methods in new and renovated tourism facilities



- Enhanced skills and capacity among local builders and businesses to apply traditional, sustainable building practices
- Greater recognition and preservation of Kiribati's architectural heritage within the tourism sector
- Scalable examples and lessons learned to inform similar initiatives in other Pacific Island countries

## **Key Activities**

### **1. Research and Documentation**

- Review and document traditional building methods and materials used in Kiribati, drawing on local knowledge and past practices
- Study Samoa's approach and other relevant Pacific models for formalising traditional, sustainable tourism infrastructure

### **2. Guideline Development**

- Develop formal building guidelines for bungalows and other tourism structures, integrating sustainable traditional methods and materials
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Ministry of Culture to ensure guidelines are practical, safe, and culturally appropriate

### **3. Policy Integration**

- Work with relevant government agencies to embed the guidelines within national tourism and construction policies
- Promote the guidelines as a standard for new tourism developments and renovations

### **4. Capacity Building and Training**

- Organise workshops and hands-on training for local builders, architects, and tourism businesses on applying traditional, sustainable building methods
- Provide technical support and resources to encourage adoption

### **5. Pilot Demonstration Projects**

- Construct demonstration bungalows or renovate existing structures using the new guidelines to showcase benefits and feasibility
- Monitor and document project outcomes for broader learning

### **6. Awareness and Promotion**

- Develop communication materials to highlight the cultural, environmental, and economic benefits of traditional, sustainable tourism infrastructure
- Share success stories and best practices with other Pacific Island countries through regional platforms

## **4.2. Alignment with the Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Policy**

The four proposed interventions are well aligned with the core objectives and action areas of the Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Policy (KSTP) as follows and as set out in Appendix G:

- Support for mainstreaming CE and SCP principles in national tourism policies and other relevant policies directly supports the KSTP's goals of policy coherence and institutional improvement, ensuring that circular economy and sustainable consumption and production are embedded across government and industry practices. This effort reflects the policy's emphasis on coordinated governance, cross-sector collaboration, and building institutional capacity for sustainability.
- Updating the Mauri Mark standard is in line with Goal 4.1 of the KSTP, which calls for strengthening sustainability criteria in business accreditation. Aligning the Mauri Mark with global and regional best practices and integrating SCP/CE requirements responds precisely to the policy's objective of incentivising sustainable, energy- and resource-efficient operations across the tourism sector.

- Building sustainable tourism supply chains by adopting green procurement and fostering local supplier hubs is directly supported by the policy's Goal 5.2, which encourages the development of local MSMEs and community enterprises, supports agritourism and handicrafts, and seeks to reduce reliance on imports. This intervention enhances local economic benefits and supports circularity by keeping value within Kiribati.
- Promoting climate-resilient accommodation through guidelines that merge traditional and ecological construction aligns with both Goal 1 (natural environment conservation) and Goal 6 (green private sector investment). By supporting resource-efficient, locally rooted building practices, this intervention strengthens climate resilience, reduces environmental impacts, and highlights Kiribati's cultural identity, which are key ambitions articulated in the national policy.

Collectively, these interventions operationalise the KSTP's vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism sector.

**Table 4. Kiribati Interventions: Focused and Pilot**

Intervention Name	Regional / National	Key Activities	SPTO	KIRIBATI
1. Mainstreaming Sustainable Tourism into National Policy	Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Vanuatu	Diagnostic review of current tourism policies and laws.		
		Stakeholder workshops to co-design updated policy goals and provisions.		
		Development of a legal/policy alignment toolkit for broader regional use.		
		Delivery of technical guidance and model policy clauses for integration into national frameworks.		
2. National Sustainable Tourism Standards Development	Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Vanuatu	Convene national working group of government, industry, and SME reps.		
		Facilitate a structured co-design process for new and existing standards with the sector.		
		Develop (or revise) draft standards and pilot implementation roadmap.		
		Promote take up through national training and financial incentives.		
		Produce guidelines to support roll out of SCP and Sustainable tourism practices across the region.		
3. Finalisation and implementation – Single Use Plastic Toolkit	Regional with Vanuatu pilot	Finalise and enhance toolkit content, including decision trees, supplier directories, and practical templates.		
		Integrate circular economy principles into toolkit training and materials.		
		Translate resources into national languages and adapt content for SMEs and CBTEs.		
		Distribute the toolkit through National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and conduct training sessions on implementation.		

Intervention Name	Regional / National	Key Activities	SPTO	KIRIBATI
		Support national consultations and workshops to adapt the SUP Standard for country-specific contexts.		
		Develop country-level implementation guidelines and sector-specific toolkits.		
		Facilitate SME and supplier engagement through awareness events, training, and technical support.		
4. Self-Assessment Tools – Government and Industry	Regional	Co-design user-friendly digital and printable assessment tools aligned with PSTS Destination and Industry Criteria.		
		Test the tool with pilot destinations to refine content and usability.		
		Provide workshops and online guidance.		
		Enable destinations to generate performance reports and action plans.		
		Allow anonymised comparison across destinations.		
5. Standards 'Starter Pack' and SCP Toolkit for CBTEs	Regional, with Fiji pilot	Develop a modular 'Starter Pack'.		
		Align the Starter Pack with PSTS and SCP principles.		
		Translate and tailor materials for diverse contexts.		
		Identify and support 3–5 pilot CBTEs.		
		Create a user-friendly CBTE toolkit.		
		Document case studies and lessons learned.		
		Integrate pathways to access green finance.		
		Deliver training sessions.		
		Make resources available via SPTO's Knowledge Hub.		
6. Pacific Sustainable Tourism Knowledge Exchange	Regional	Design and launch an interactive online platform.		
		Integrate peer-to-peer exchange features.		
		Develop training resources and guides.		
		Translate and adapt toolkits.		
		Deliver toolkits and training.		
		Maintain and update resources.		

Intervention Name	Regional / National	Key Activities	SPTO	KIRIBATI
7. Regional Dashboard for Measuring Tourism Sustainability	Regional, with Samoa pilot	Integrate destination-level SCP performance metrics.		
		Align metrics with PSTI and national systems.		
		Deliver training on data collection and interpretation.		
		Provide open-access elements.		
		Establish protocols for updates and enhancements.		
8. Public-Private Dialogue and Communication Platforms	Regional	Establish a Regional PPD Platform.		
		Convene Sustainable Tourism Leadership Forums.		
		Develop PPD toolkits and templates.		
		Design national communication strategies.		
		Produce communication resources.		
		Support local customisation.		
		Run awareness campaigns.		
		Facilitate industry engagement.		
		Monitor and update materials.		
9. Sustainable Tourism Supply Chains and Aggregator Hubs	Regional with Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Vanuatu pilots	Identify key products and services.		
		Support sustainable product development.		
		Develop a supplier portal and product register.		
		Organise Pacific Sustainable Tourism Expo.		
		Analyse demand and logistics.		
		Establish aggregator hubs.		
		Co-design cooperative models.		
		Develop quality control systems.		
10. Farm-to-Table Procurement and Traceability Schemes	Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu	Pilot procurement platforms.		
		Provide training on standards and agri-business.		
		Introduce crop planning agreements.		
		Promote value-added products.		

Intervention Name	Regional / National	Key Activities	SPTO	KIRIBATI
11. Procurement and Purchasing Policy Development	Regional	Design model procurement policies.		
		Conduct stakeholder workshops.		
		Pilot procurement systems.		
		Develop Green Events Guideline.		
12. Sustainable Finance Mechanism and Support for Tourism Enterprises	Regional, with Fiji pilot	Establish a regional small grant scheme.		
		Provide technical assistance.		
		Build financial institution capacity.		
		Aggregate financing needs.		
		Co-design long-term financing models.		
13. Sustainable and Climate Resilient Tourism Accommodation Guidelines	Regional, with Fiji, Kiribati Vanuatu pilots	Develop a 'green and resilient' building guide.		
		Facilitate policy consultations.		
		Provide guidance for regulatory adoption.		
14. Traditional and Sustainable Building Construction Techniques	Kiribati, Samoa, Vanuatu	Develop demonstration projects and guides.		
		Advocate for traditional material testing.		
		Link practices to vocational training.		
		Deliver modular training programmes.		
		Facilitate traditional material use.		
		Develop mobile and digital learning tools.		
		Run peer mentoring programmes.		
		Share lessons regionally.		

## 4.3. STEP Regional Interventions that will support Kiribati

### 4.3.1. Regional Interventions

Kiribati will benefit from the nine regional interventions and as noted above, will be the pilot country for test implementation of four of these activities: 1. Mainstreaming Sustainable Tourism into National Policy (Kiribati 1), National Sustainable Tourism Standards Development (Kiribati 2), Sustainable Tourism Supply Chains and Aggregator Hubs (Kiribati 3) and Sustainable and Climate Resilient Tourism Accommodation Guidelines (Kiribati 4).

The set of regional initiatives includes support for mainstreaming CE and SCP principles in national tourism policy, developing toolkits for single-use plastics, supporting community-based tourism, and advancing sustainable finance solutions. Although only the four to be piloted in Kiribati are detailed within this Country Pathway, these regional initiatives will provide Kiribati the essential resources and technical support.

Details and key activities for each intervention, and whether they are best implemented at national or regional levels, are summarised in Appendix E and F.

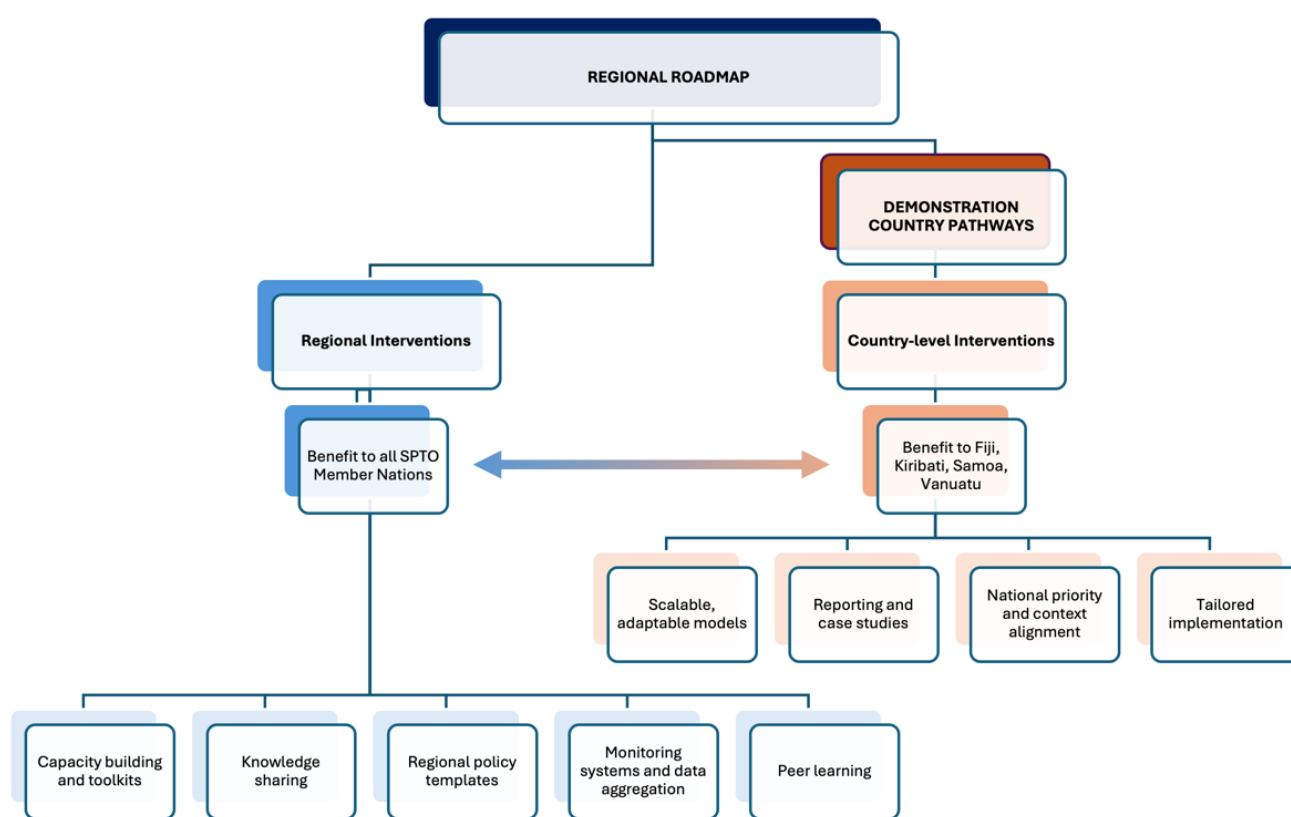
### 4.3.2. Relationship between the Regional Roadmap and the Country pathways

**Regional Roadmap:** Led by SPTO, regional interventions focus on building capacity, supplying toolkits, and strengthening knowledge platforms and finance mechanisms, ensuring all member countries – including Kiribati – can access regional policy frameworks, sustainability dashboards, and peer training opportunities.

**Country Pathways:** In-country interventions respond directly to local context and needs, piloted with targeted support and technical assistance. Successes and lessons from these pilots will help adapt, replicate, and scale solutions across the region as capacity develops.

**Lessons learned from Kiribati** and other demonstration countries will be shared through regular reporting and peer exchanges, enabling broader regional adoption and customisation of effective practices. This collaborative approach accelerates sustainable tourism and circular economy progress across the Pacific, as illustrated in Figure 2.

By combining tailored national actions with shared regional support, Kiribati's Country Pathway presents a clear, practical roadmap for transforming its tourism sector.



**Figure 2. Framework of benefits in implementing the Regional Roadmap and Country Pathways**



## 5. CONCLUSION

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The Kiribati Country Pathway offers a strategic and coordinated roadmap for advancing sustainable tourism, firmly embedding sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and circular economy (CE) principles within the sector. Developed through extensive consultation, technical analysis, and regional collaboration, the Pathway demonstrates Kiribati's commitment to meaningful, long-term transformation in the transition to sustainable development.

While Kiribati's national strategies embrace sustainability, the Pathway acknowledges ongoing challenges, such as limited institutional capacity, fragmented governance, gaps in data and monitoring, and barriers to finance and implementation, especially for MSMEs and community-based enterprises.

Kiribati will also be supported by the Regional Roadmap which directly addresses many of these obstacles with a suite of high-impact, scalable interventions designed to drive Pacific-wide change.

Achieving the interventions set out in the Kiribati Country Pathway will require ongoing collaboration among the Government of Kiribati, regional organisations, industry stakeholders, communities, and development partners. By working together, Kiribati can turn its ambitious vision into practical action, and build a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable tourism sector.

# APPENDICES

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## Appendix A. Key Terms and Concepts

### Tourism, Circular Economy & Sustainable Consumption and Production

#### Circular Economy

Circular Economy (CE) in the context of tourism refers to an economic model that moves away from the traditional 'take-make-dispose' approach and instead promotes the continual use and regeneration of resources to minimise waste, pollution, and environmental impact.

Applied to tourism, the circular economy involves:

- Designing out waste from tourism infrastructure, products, and services (e.g. through reusable materials, modular construction, zero-waste accommodation)
- Keeping materials and products in use by extending their life cycles through repair, reuse, recycling, and sharing (e.g. refillable amenities, second-life furnishings, rental equipment)
- Regenerating natural systems by restoring biodiversity, enhancing ecosystem services, and supporting local food production and renewable energy initiatives
- Creating closed-loop systems across tourism supply chains (e.g. farm-to-table food systems, water reuse, composting, and circular procurement practices).

In tourism, adopting circular economy principles supports resource efficiency, climate resilience, and local economic empowerment, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 12 and SDG 13). It contributes to building low-carbon, regenerative tourism destinations where growth enhances rather than depletes natural and cultural capital.

#### Sustainable Consumption and Production

Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) refers to the use of resources in a way that minimises environmental impacts, enhances social equity, and supports long-term economic viability across the tourism value chain.

In line with SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, SCP in tourism involves designing and managing tourism products, services, and operations that:

- Reduce waste and pollution, including energy and water consumption, single-use plastics, and greenhouse gas emissions
- Promote resource efficiency, circular economy practices, and sustainable sourcing (e.g. local food systems, low-impact infrastructure)
- Support fair and inclusive economic opportunities for local communities, including women, youth, and Indigenous groups
- Encourage responsible visitor behaviour that respects cultural values, biodiversity, and heritage sites.

SCP aims to decouple tourism growth from environmental degradation, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are shared equitably while preserving the natural and cultural assets that underpin the sector's long-term sustainability. It is foundational to building resilient, regenerative tourism systems in line with the SDGs.

## Appendix B. In-country Consultations – Stakeholders Meetings

Table 5. Stakeholders consulted during STEP mission January 2025

Date	Name of the person(s)/position/organisation
25/11/24 (Virtual)	<b>TOURISM AUTHORITY OF KIRIBATI (TAK)</b>
2/12/24 (In Country)	<b>TOURISM AUTHORITY OF KIRIBATI (TAK)</b>
3/12/24 (In Country)	<b>MINISTRY OF TOURISM, COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (MTCIC)</b> <u>Business Regulatory Centre (BRC)</u> <u>Business Promotion Centre-Quality (BPC)</u> <u>Investment</u> <u>Patent</u> <u>Kiribati Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI)</u>
3/12/24 (In Country)	<b>MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT (MICT)</b>
3/12/24 (In Country)	<b>MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY (MISE)</b> <u>Sustainable energy</u> <u>Quality</u> <u>Design</u> <u>Water Unit</u>
4/12/24 (In Country)	<b>OFFICE OF TE BERETITENTI (OB = Office of the President and Climate Change)</b>
4/12/24 (In Country)	<b>MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (MFED)</b> <u>National Statistics Office</u> <u>Climate Finance Division</u>
4/12/24 (In Country)	<b>MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS (MCIA)</b> <u>Culture</u> <u>Local Government Division</u>
4/12/24 (In Country)	<b>MINISTRY OF WOMEN, YOUTH, SPORTS AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (MWYSSA)</b> <u>Youth Unit</u> <u>Women's Unit</u> <u>People with Special Needs Unit</u>
5/12/24 (In Country)	<b>MINISTRY OF HEALTH &amp; MEDICAL SERVICES (MHMS)</b>
5/12/24 (In Country)	<b>MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, Lands and Agricultural Development (MELAD)</b> <u>Environment and Conservation Division (ECD)</u> <u>Lands Division</u> <u>Agriculture Division</u>
5/12/24 (In Country)	<b>Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development (MFMRD)</b> <u>Fisheries Coastal Division</u>

5/12/24 (In Country)	<b>Ministry of Employment and Human Resources (MEHR)</b> <u>Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT)</u> <u>Marine Training Centre Kiribati (MTC)</u>
6/12/24 (In Country)	<b>Tourism Operators &amp; Cottage Industries</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The George Hotel</li> <li>• Eniita Lodge</li> <li>• Utireirei Hotel</li> <li>• Dreamers</li> <li>• Fema Lodge</li> <li>• Lucky Future Lodge</li> <li>• Southview Mini Resort</li> <li>• Mayi Motel</li> <li>• TKT</li> <li>• Terau Travel Kiribati</li> <li>• LMTA-TEURI</li> <li>• KHL</li> <li>• NEMAT</li> <li>• TAK</li> </ul>
6/12/24 (In Country)	<b>KANGO, NGOs, CSOs Workshop</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nei Mom Uprising (NMU)</li> <li>• NMU</li> <li>• Teinainano Urban Council (TUC)</li> <li>• TUC</li> <li>• Tungaru Youth Action</li> <li>• Kiribati Association of Non-Government Associations (KANGO) –</li> <li>• KANGO</li> <li>• Karo Community Security Services Incl (KSSCI) South Tarawa –</li> <li>• KSSCI-BTC</li> <li>• Kiribati Local Government Association (KILGA)</li> <li>• Aia Maea Ainen Kiribati (AMAK)</li> <li>• Molly's Tours</li> <li>• I-Kiribati Tours -</li> </ul>
6/12/24 (In Country)	<b>TOURISM AUTHORITY OF KIRIBATI (TAK)</b>
17/12/24 (Virtual)	<b>TOURISM AUTHORITY OF KIRIBATI (TAK)</b>

## Appendix C. STEP Baseline Survey Findings

The STEP Project Baseline Survey (2024/25) reviewed tourism standards in 14 of the 20 SPTO member countries identifying key gaps and opportunities. Pacific nations were asked to assess the alignment of their current standards with PSTS and highlight priority areas for targeted support.

The STEP Project Baseline Survey for Kiribati provides a comprehensive assessment of the country's alignment with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard (PSTS) across governance, economic, social, cultural, and environmental domains. The survey identifies current practices, data collection efforts, and priority areas for further support to advance sustainable tourism and circular economy practices in Kiribati.

### **Destination Governance and Policy- Priorities for Support**

- Continued alignment of national standards with PSTS
- Enhanced inter-agency collaboration and formalised mechanisms for unified implementation
- Development of shared monitoring and reporting tools

### **Economic Criteria – Priorities for Support**

- Sustainable Purchasing – Guidance on sourcing sustainable materials is needed due to limited access to eco-friendly resources
- Visitor Satisfaction – Formalised systems for measuring satisfaction would improve service quality
- Business Resilience – Support for business planning and risk management is needed
- Stakeholder Involvement – More support for engaging local communities and stakeholders
- Marketing and Promotion – Guidance on responsible marketing strategies to raise awareness of sustainable tourism

### **Social Criteria – Priorities for Support**

- Guidance on integrating Te Mauri Mark Standards into community-based tourism
- Frameworks for responsible tourism balancing economic, environmental, and cultural sustainability

### **Cultural Criteria – Priorities for Support**

- Support for integrating cultural tourism into Te Mauri Mark Standards into
- Resources for community-based cultural tourism development

### **Environmental Criteria – Priorities for Support**

- Training and capacity-building for sustainable practices and climate resilience
- Technical support for integrating environmental standards into the Te Mauri Mark Standards
- Funding for green infrastructure and responsible tourism initiatives

### **Circular Economy and Sustainable Consumption and Production Enablement- Priorities for Support**

- Establishing a Circular Economy Hub for training and best practice sharing
- Expanding sustainable tourism certification (Te Mauri Mark) to include circular economy benchmarks
- Public-private partnerships to co-develop sustainable tourism projects
- Incentives for businesses to adopt circular economy principles (minimise waste, reuse, repair, refurbish, recycle)
- Policies for sustainable production and consumption

## Conclusions from the Survey

Kiribati demonstrates a strong policy foundation and active collaboration in sustainable tourism, but faces gaps in implementation, monitoring, and capacity, especially with respect to sustainable procurement, formal visitor satisfaction systems, community engagement, and circular economy practices. Targeted support in these areas, alongside technical, financial, and capacity-building assistance, will be critical for advancing the transition to sustainable tourism with mainstreamed CE and SCP principles, achieving resilient, inclusive tourism, with the support of and alignment with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard.



## Appendix D. Regional Validation and Findings

### *In-country Consultations – Summary of Findings*

Consultations conducted in Fiji, Samoa, Kiribati, and Vanuatu under the STEP Project identified a strong and unified commitment to advancing sustainable tourism SCP practices. Guided by the PSTPF and aligned national strategies, each country is working to embed sustainability in its tourism sector in ways that protect cultural heritage, support livelihoods, and build climate resilience.

While this intent is clear, all four countries face significant implementation constraints. Common challenges include limited institutional capacity, fragmented coordination across government agencies, and insufficient resources to translate sustainability goals into practice. NTOs are increasingly expected to shift from a promotional role to one focused on destination management and sustainability leadership, but many lack the staffing, funding, and technical skills required to fulfil this expanded mandate.

Key constraints also exist within the tourism industry. Many MSMEs have low awareness of CE/SCP practices and are not supported by incentives or guidance to make meaningful changes. Market access for sustainable products and services remains underdeveloped, with fragmented supply chains, limited verification systems, and low visibility for local producers.

Despite these barriers, each demonstration country has identified a set of priority actions to guide national progress. Common areas of focus include:

- Strengthening governance through inter-agency coordination and steering committees
- Expanding tourism standards to address the full scope of sustainability, particularly for community-based and agritourism initiatives
- Building institutional and industry capacity through training, data systems, and awareness strategies
- Supporting sustainable procurement and supply chains, especially in food systems and waste reduction
- Embedding sustainability considerations into planning, investment, and regulatory systems

These consultations highlight both the opportunity and the need for targeted support to enable these countries to move from intention to implementation. Investment in capacity building, incentives, infrastructure, and knowledge-sharing will be essential to realise their national visions and contribute to broader regional outcomes. The actions identified form a critical input into the Regional Roadmap and offer strong potential for replication across other Pacific Island Countries. Further details of the findings of the in-country consultation, supported by desk research, are provided in Background Report.

### *Overcoming Barriers to Sustainable Tourism*

The STEP Baseline Survey and demonstration country consultations highlight a consistent set of structural, institutional, and industry-level barriers that are impeding progress on the transition to more sustainable tourism and the implementation of the PSTS.

**Table 6. Key barriers to transition**

Barrier	Representative Issues
<b>Institutional Capacity and Governance Constraints</b>	NTOs are under-resourced, with limited staff, skills, and funding to lead sustainable tourism efforts. Governance responsibilities are fragmented across multiple ministries, resulting in poor coordination and lack of leadership. Existing tourism standards are narrow in scope and weakly aligned with PSTS.
<b>Limited Industry Awareness and Incentives</b>	MSMEs lack awareness of SCP and CE principles. Few financial or non-financial incentives exist to drive adoption. Training and guidance are limited, especially in remote areas.

Barrier	Representative Issues
<b>Weak Policy Integration and Monitoring Systems</b>	Sustainability is often embedded in policy but lacks enforcement and monitoring tools. Data collection on key indicators is minimal. Licensing and regulations often do not mandate sustainability.
<b>Market and Supply Chain Barriers</b>	Fragmented supply chains, low local production, and limited importer willingness hinder access to sustainable goods. No clear authority defines sustainable products. Local supplier aggregation is limited.
<b>Sectoral Fragmentation Across CE and SCP Initiatives</b>	Multiple uncoordinated actors lead to duplication. CE and SCP initiatives are disconnected and difficult to scale.
<b>Access to Finance</b>	MSMEs face persistent challenges accessing grants, loans, and concessional finance for sustainable upgrades.
<b>Knowledge and Skills Gaps</b>	Limited training programmes, minimal access to best practices, and weak peer-learning systems.
<b>Regional Coordination</b>	Knowledge-sharing is weak. Innovation tends to be concentrated in a few countries like Fiji and Vanuatu.
<b>Incentive Frameworks</b>	Policy levers such as tax relief or import concessions are rarely used to promote sustainable practices.
<b>Public–Private Collaboration</b>	Low trust and fragmented engagement between governments, NGOs, and businesses limit coordinated action.
<b>Recognition of Local Practices</b>	Traditional knowledge and successful local sustainability models are underutilised.
<b>Data and Monitoring</b>	Insufficient systems to track and evaluate environmental, social, and economic performance.

### Regional Validation Workshop – Outcomes

A key objective of the workshop was to validate the challenges and priority focus areas for advancing sustainable tourism, CE/SCP principles into national tourism strategies. Engaging stakeholders from government, the private sector, NGOs, and development partners, the workshop used interactive polling and breakout sessions to assess and refine six proposed focus areas. These included governance, capacity building, waste and resource efficiency, sustainable purchasing, agriculture-tourism linkages, and sustainable buildings. Cross-cutting issues such as supply chains and green finance were also discussed.

Participants ranked the focus areas at both the start and end of the workshop, revealing a strong preference for systemic and capacity-building approaches. Building on the validation exercise, and stakeholder insights gathered during the workshop, the thematic areas were further refined and analysed to capture the barriers, support needs, and opportunities identified. The six thematic areas were reframed and refined to five. Each represents a different aspect of systemic shift toward sustainable tourism in the Pacific and collectively they form the basis of both regional priorities and national implementation pathways.

## 1. Enabling Sector Transition

- Focuses on strengthening institutional systems, improving knowledge-sharing platforms, building SME and CBTE capacity, and embedding monitoring and evaluation
- Key initiatives support regional learning hubs, targeted grant schemes, and SCP communications strategies

## **2. National and Regional Policy Support**

- Targets regulatory and governance reform to mainstream SCP and sustainable tourism into policy frameworks
- Supports policy dialogue, industry standards, self-assessment tools, and public-private dialogue platforms

## **3. Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Practices**

- Aims to reduce plastic use and promote circular economy practices through toolkits, supply chain development, and sustainable procurement models
- Empowers SMEs and governments to adopt SUP-free alternatives and eco-friendly supply systems

## **4. Sustainable Buildings and Infrastructure**

- Advances climate-resilient and culturally grounded tourism infrastructure through traditional building methods and finance facilities
- Includes technical training, green infrastructure standards, and demonstration projects

## **5. Agriculture and Tourism Linkages**

- Promotes agritourism through structured procurement platforms, aggregator hubs, and traceability tools
- Strengthens local livelihoods and food security through enhanced agriculture-tourism integration

Further detail on the activities and outcomes of the Regional Validation Workshop is provided in Background Report and the Workshop Report.

## Appendix E. Interventions per Regional Roadmap

### Foundational Elements

#### **Intervention 1: Mainstreaming CE and SCP Principles in National Tourism Policy**

**Objective:** Facilitate and advance the national policy dialogue and policy formulation on Sustainable Tourism and SCP implementation. Support regional and national authorities to plan and implement policies that assist the development of sustainable tourism and SCP practices

**Outcome:** An improved policy enabling environment that favours the inclusion of standards and SCP in national policy formulation and implementation, aligned with the PSTPF (to the extent viable).

**Recommended Implementation:** Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Vanuatu

##### **Key Activities:**

- Diagnostic review of current tourism policies and laws.
- Stakeholder workshops to co-design updated policy goals and provisions.
- Development of a legal/policy alignment toolkit for broader regional use.
- Delivery of technical guidance and model policy clauses for integration into national frameworks.

#### **Intervention 2: National Sustainable Tourism Standards Development**

**Objective:** Establish national tourism industry standards aligned with the PSTS and SCP principles, through participatory processes involving SME operators.

**Outcome:** National tourism industry standards are developed or strengthened through inclusive, participatory processes that actively engage small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), ensuring the framework is practical, culturally relevant, and promotes improved environmental, social, and economic outcomes across the sector. The project also generates transferable insights, with key learnings captured in a toolkit to support replication and adaptation by other Pacific nations.

**Recommended Implementation:** Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Vanuatu

##### **Key Activities:**

- Convene national working group of government, industry, and SME reps.
- Facilitate a structured co-design process for new and existing standards with the sector
- Develop (or revise) draft standards and pilot implementation roadmap.
- Promote take up through national training and financial incentives
- Produce guidelines to support roll out of SCP and Sustainable tourism practices across the region.

#### **Intervention 3: Finalisation and Implementation of Single Use Plastic Toolkit**

**Objective:** To finalise, adapt, and facilitate the regional roll-out of the SPTO/SPREP Single-use Plastics (SUP) Toolkit and Standard, enabling widespread adoption by tourism operators across the Pacific. The project supports the integration of broader sustainability practices such as water reuse, energy efficiency, composting, and local food systems, particularly among SMEs and Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs).

**Outcome:** Tourism SMEs and destination stakeholders across the Pacific are equipped with practical, locally relevant tools to reduce single-use plastics and implement sustainable operating practices. The initiative leads to improved waste management, reduced environmental impact, and stronger alignment with regional sustainability standards and the PSTS).

**Recommended Implementation:** Regional with Vanuatu pilot

**Key Activities:**

- Finalise and enhance toolkit content, including decision trees, supplier directories, and practical templates.
- Integrate circular economy principles into toolkit training and materials.
- Translate resources into national languages and adapt content for SMEs and CBTEs.
- Distribute the toolkit through National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and conduct training sessions on implementation.
- Support national consultations and workshops to adapt the SUP Standard for country-specific contexts.
- Develop country-level implementation guidelines and sector-specific toolkits.
- Facilitate SME and supplier engagement through awareness events, training, and technical support.

**Intervention 4: Self-Assessment Tools for Government and Industry**

**Objective:** To develop a practical self-assessment tool tailored to National Tourism Organisations (NTOs), enabling them to evaluate and strengthen their alignment with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards (PSTS) for Destinations across the four key sustainability pillars.

**Outcome:** NTOs across the Pacific are equipped with a user-friendly, standards-based self-assessment tool that enhances their capacity to identify gaps, track progress, and implement improvements in line with PSTS for Destinations, fostering more accountable, strategic, and sustainable tourism governance.

**Recommended Implementation:** Regional

**Key Activities:**

- Tool Design: Co-design user-friendly digital and printable assessment tools aligned with a) PSTS Destination Criteria and SCP principles and b) PSTS Industry Criteria and SCP principles (the latter sitting within, or as a complementary starting point to, any national programme).
- Piloting and Feedback: Test the tool with pilot destinations to refine content and usability.
- Integration and Training: Provide workshops and online guidance to support NTOs and local government in using the tool as part of planning and review processes.
- Scorecards and Reports: Enable destinations to generate performance reports and action plans from self-assessment results.
- Regional Benchmarking: Allow anonymised comparison across destinations to identify strengths, gaps, and good practices.

**Intervention 5: Standards ‘Starter Pack’ and SCP Toolkit for Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs)**

**Objective:** To develop and roll out a practical and culturally relevant ‘Starter Pack’ that supports National Tourism Organisations (NTOs), tourism SMEs, and Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) in initiating and implementing national tourism standards aligned with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards (PSTS). The project also includes a co-developed SCP toolkit tailored specifically to CBTEs, enabling them to apply sustainable practices, enhance service quality, and build local capacity for long-term resilience.

**Outcome:** Tourism stakeholders – including NTOs, SMEs, and CBTEs – are equipped with accessible tools and guidance to begin or strengthen their engagement with sustainability standards and practices. The Starter Pack provides a structured approach for standard development and alignment with PSTS, while the CBTE-focused toolkit enhances local-level sustainability, operational capacity, and access to support. Together, these tools contribute to inclusive, scalable, and locally driven pathways for sustainable tourism across the Pacific.

**Recommended Implementation:** Regional with Fiji pilot

**Key Activities:**

- Develop a modular 'Starter Pack' including templates, step-by-step guides, checklists, and case studies to support countries in initiating or advancing national tourism standards.
- Align the Starter Pack with PSTS and SCP principles and adapt for accessibility by both public agencies and tourism operators, especially SMEs and CBTEs.
- Translate materials into local languages and tailor content for low-resource settings and diverse cultural contexts.
- Identify and support 3–5 pilot CBTEs in different Pacific settings to co-design and test a practical SCP toolkit.
- Create a user-friendly CBTE toolkit featuring operational checklists, examples of good practice, and basic training modules.
- Document case studies and lessons learned through the pilot process to inform regional adaptation.
- Integrate pathways to access green finance mechanisms tailored to CBTEs, including micro-grants and technical assistance (linked to broader finance support initiatives).
- Deliver regional and in-country training sessions for NTOs, CBTEs, and SMEs to facilitate adoption and use of both toolkits.
- Make both resources available via SPTO's Pacific Sustainable Tourism Knowledge Hub to support regional learning and long-term uptake.

**Intervention 6: Pacific Sustainable Tourism Knowledge Exchange**

**Objective:** To rationalise, enhance and expand existing SPTO resource platforms to support knowledge sharing on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) practices, enabling regional progress tracking, capacity building, and stakeholder collaboration across the Pacific. Existing platforms include a Knowledge Hub (managed by the Research and Statistics Team), the SPTO Training Portal (managed by the SPTO Marketing Team) which has online training modules from all SPTO divisions, and the (nascent) Pacific Sustainable Tourism Portal (managed by the Sustainable Tourism Team) which is intended to be a platform for sharing best practices, case studies, stories etc.

**Outcome:** National Authorities and Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism sector demonstrate increased awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) practices, leading to greater engagement in responsible business operations and sustainability initiatives.

**Recommended Implementation:** Regional

**Key Activities:**

- Knowledge Exchange: Design and launch an interactive exchange for toolkits, templates, training materials, and data dashboards.
- Peer-to-Peer Exchange: Integrate discussion boards, webinars, and regional case study libraries to promote peer learning and exchange.
- Training Resources: series of step-by-step guides and templates for priority implementation areas, including:
  - Tourism policy and legislative reform development
  - Tourism policy implementation and project management
  - MEAL toolkit
  - Guidance on designing tax incentives, import duty waivers, and enabling policies.
  - Industry standard development and revision
  - Public-private dialogue (PPD) structures
  - Community-Based Tourism Enterprise (CBTE) standards



- Incentive programmes
- Enforcement and compliance frameworks
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for cross-agency coordination
- 'Quick wins' and case study compendium
- Training Modules: Package toolkits with adaptable training materials and peer learning resources for use in national and regional capacity-building programmes.
- Localisation: Translate toolkits and other selected resources into local languages and adapt content to national contexts for accessibility and relevance.
- Dissemination and Uptake: Deliver toolkits and training through regional workshops, online platforms, and targeted in-country sessions.
- Resources to maintain and update.

## **Intervention 7: Regional Dashboard for Measuring Tourism Sustainability**

**Objective:** Integrating with *Project 1 Pacific Sustainable Tourism Knowledge Platform and Skill Development*, develop an interactive dashboard that visualises and tracks Pacific Island countries' progress on sustainable tourism and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) practices. Project should support data collection systems at national level and be consistent with the Pacific Tourism Statistics Strategy (PTSS) and Pacific Sustainable Tourism Indicators (PSTI).

**Outcome:** Policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and development partners gain timely, accessible insights into national and regional progress on sustainable tourism and SCP, enabling data-driven decision-making, accountability, and targeted support. Tracking metrics and over time/where applicable progressing against targets, become criteria to unlock other benefits (e.g. preferential marketing, financing, grants, technical assistance).

**Recommended Implementation:** Regional with Samoa pilot

### **Key Activities:**

- Dashboard Development: Integrate destination-level metrics for SCP performance, sustainability standards, and MEL indicators at national and regional level.
- Data Integration: Align metrics with PSTI; integrate with existing national data systems.
- Capacity Building: Deliver training to NTOs and relevant ministries on data collection, input, and interpretation.
- Industry Access and Advocacy: Provide open-access elements to enhance transparency and raise stakeholder awareness of regional progress.
- Continuous Improvement: Establish protocols for annual data updates and dashboard enhancement based on user feedback and policy changes.

## **Intervention 8: Public-Private Dialogue and Communication Platforms**

**Objective:** To strengthen regional and national dialogue, collaboration, and communication between public agencies, tourism operators, SMEs, and communities in support of sustainable tourism practices. The project aims to promote the adoption of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and alignment with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards (PSTS) through structured engagement mechanisms and tailored communication tools.

**Outcome:** Improved coordination and capacity across the tourism sector to communicate, advocate for, and implement sustainable tourism practices. National Tourism Organisations (NTOs), private sector leaders, and community-based operators are supported with clear messaging, tools, and platforms that build awareness, increase participation, and align actions with SCP and PSTS objectives.

**Recommended Implementation:** Regional

### Key Activities:

- Establish a Regional Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) Platform: Facilitate open, merit-based industry representation to ensure SMEs and private sector leaders are actively involved in regional tourism policy discussions.
- Convene Sustainable Tourism Leadership Forums: Host regional and national events to bring together governments, industry, development partners, and community representatives to share lessons and showcase leadership in SCP implementation.
- Develop PPD Toolkits and Templates: Provide practical guidance for countries to establish national-level dialogue structures, including terms of reference and facilitation tools.
- Design National Communication Strategies: Develop adaptable strategies and advocacy approaches tailored to tourism and non-tourism audiences.
- Produce Communication Resources: Create media toolkits, infographics, posters, and social media content on priority topics such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, and local sourcing.
- Support Local Customisation: Assist countries in adapting messages and materials to local contexts, including translation into national languages.
- Run Awareness Campaigns: Launch regional and country-level campaigns featuring case studies, practical tips, and industry showcases to promote SCP and PSTS uptake.
- Facilitate Industry Engagement: Organise webinars and workshops to improve tourism business capacity in sustainability communication and PSTS alignment.
- Feedback and Monitoring: Track the effectiveness of campaigns and platforms, and update materials based on industry and community input.
- Integration into Knowledge Exchange House all tools, case studies, and resources on the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Knowledge Exchange for ongoing access and learning.

### Enabling Mechanisms

#### **Intervention 9: Sustainable Tourism Supply Chains and Aggregator Hubs**

**Objective:** To strengthen local and regional supply chains by supporting the development of sustainable tourism products and establishing local aggregator hubs that connect small-scale producers with tourism markets. This project aims to reduce reliance on imports, enhance product accessibility and quality, and foster stronger linkages between agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism in line with Circular Economy (CE) principles.

**Outcome:** Tourism operators across the Pacific – particularly in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, and Vanuatu – gain improved access to locally produced, affordable, and sustainable products. Smallholder producers benefit from reliable market access through coordinated aggregation and logistics support, resulting in reduced supply gaps, increased incomes, and stronger integration of local businesses into tourism value chains.

**Recommended Implementation:** Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Vanuatu

### Key Activities:

- Supply Chain Mapping: Identify key products, materials, and services required by the tourism sector at the national level.
- Support for Sustainable Product Development: Identify local and regional producers of sustainable, biodegradable, or reusable alternatives to high-impact materials; provide technical assistance and co-funding to support innovation and market access.
- Supplier Portal and Product Register: Develop and maintain a national register and online portal showcasing verified sustainable suppliers, with regional aggregation to support cross-border procurement.
- Pacific Sustainable Tourism Expo: Organise a regional platform for micro and small tourism operators to showcase sustainable products, build visibility, and connect with potential buyers and partners.

- Demand and Aggregation Analysis: Analyse seasonal demand from tourism businesses to identify suitable locations and logistics for aggregation.
- Establishment of Aggregator Hubs: Set up community-based hubs to coordinate supply, manage logistics, and consolidate production among smallholder groups.
- Cooperative Models and Scaling Support: Co-design cooperative business models to scale smallholder engagement in tourism supply chains.
- Quality Assurance: Develop and implement quality control systems to meet tourism buyer expectations in terms of consistency, standards, and volume.

## **Intervention 10: Farm-to-Table Procurement and Traceability Schemes**

**Objective:** Establish structured procurement systems and traceability tools to connect local producers with hotels, resorts, and tourism operators.

**Outcome:** Local producers secure consistent tourism market access through transparent, traceable procurement systems, leading to stronger local supply chains, reduced reliance on imports, and increased demand for sustainably sourced products.

**Recommended Implementation:** Fiji and Vanuatu

### **Key Activities:**

- Pilot farm-to-hotel/resort procurement platforms with traceability tools (digital or manual).
- Provide training and mentoring on safety and hygiene standards, quality control, and agri-business development (e.g. food supply for the tourism sector).
- Introduce crop planning agreements between farmer cooperatives and large-scale buyers.
- Identify and promote value-added products and alternatives to reduce seasonal supply constraints.

## **Intervention 11: Procurement and Purchasing Policy Development**

**Objective:** Support the development and piloting of sustainable procurement policies for National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and the tourism sector, demonstrating how to phase out single-use plastics and other unsustainable materials through guidelines and actionable standards.

**Outcome:** Pilot countries establish and test practical, transparent procurement policies that reduce harmful material use in tourism operations, providing a replicable model and trusted guidance to inform broader national policy and industry adoption.

**Recommended Implementation:** Regional

### **Key Activities:**

- Design model procurement policies and templates for public and private sector adoption
- Conduct stakeholder consultation workshops with ministries and business associations.
- Pilot procurement systems in select destinations and monitor impact.
- Develop a Green Events Guideline: providing guidance for sustainable events for industry and Government.

## **Intervention 12: Sustainable Finance Mechanism and Support for Tourism Enterprises**

**Objective:** To establish a comprehensive financial support mechanism that enables private sector tourism operators and Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) to adopt and scale Circular Economy (CE) and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) practices. The project also aims to strengthen the investment-readiness of businesses and foster greater engagement from financial institutions and development partners in supporting sustainable tourism.

**Outcome:** Tourism enterprises across the Pacific – regardless of scale – have improved access to tailored financial support, enabling the implementation of CE and SCP-aligned practices. The mechanism supports enhanced resource efficiency, low-impact infrastructure development, and long-term business sustainability.

It also builds the financial literacy and investment readiness of tourism operators while engaging financial institutions in creating scalable, ongoing financing solutions.

**Recommended Implementation:** Regional, with Fiji pilot

**Key Activities:**

- Establish a regional small grant scheme offering competitive grants (e.g. USD 5,000–USD 20,000) to support MSME and NGOs undertake projects such as waste minimisation, renewable energy adoption, sustainable product development, and eco-efficient infrastructure.
- Provide technical assistance to businesses on business planning, compliance, and proposal development.
- Engage and build the capacity of financial institutions to understand sustainable tourism models and assess investment viability.
- Aggregate sector financing needs to make the case for broader institutional support through grants, loans, or concessional financing mechanisms.
- Explore and co-design long-term financing models tailored to the needs of SMEs, entrepreneurs, and CBTEs across the Pacific.

***Applied and Scalable Initiatives***

**Intervention 13: Sustainable and Climate Resilient Tourism Accommodation Guidelines**

**Objective:** Develop and institutionalise practical guidelines for sustainable, climate-resilient tourism accommodation, with a focus on low-carbon materials and energy-efficient construction, renovation, and refurbishment.

**Outcome:** Tourism accommodation providers adopt sustainability guidelines that improve building performance, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance climate resilience-contributing to greener infrastructure across the Pacific region.

**Recommended Implementation:** Regional, with Fiji, Kiribati and Vanuatu pilots

**Key Activities:**

- Develop a 'green and resilient' building guide for hotels and other accommodation in consultation with developers and other experts
- Facilitate policy consultations with ministries, developers, and other experts.
- Provide guidance materials for regulatory adoption and implementation.

**Intervention 14: Traditional and Sustainable Building Construction Techniques**

**Objective:** To promote the integration of sustainable, traditional, and climate-resilient building practices in tourism infrastructure by showcasing culturally rooted construction techniques and strengthening local capacity through hands-on training and skills development.

**Outcome:** Traditional building knowledge is revitalised and integrated into tourism development, supporting cultural preservation and environmental sustainability. Local builders, tourism operators, and community members gain practical skills in traditional, ecological, and low-impact construction methods, resulting in safer, climate-resilient, and culturally relevant tourism infrastructure across the Pacific.

**Recommended Implementation:** Regional, with Vanuatu pilot

**Key Activities:**

- Develop demonstration projects showcasing traditional and sustainable construction techniques and document best practices through technical guides.
- Advocate for the testing and assessment of traditional materials for future inclusion in national building codes.

- Link construction practices to vocational training and circular economy initiatives (e.g. bamboo supply chains, waste-to-resource innovations).
- Deliver modular training programmes for communities, builders, and officials on sustainable and climate-smart design, including solar orientation, off-grid systems, and energy storage.
- Facilitate training in the safe and approved use of traditional materials aligned with building standards.
- Develop mobile-accessible and digital learning platforms to expand training access.
- Co-deliver sessions with experts in traditional and ecological design and establish peer mentoring and skills exchange networks.
- Capture and share lessons learned across Pacific nations to support regional scaling.

## Appendix F. Intervention Activities at Regional Level and in Demonstration Countries

Table 7. Intervention activities at regional level and in demonstration countries

Intervention	Regional or National led	SPTO	Fiji	Kiribati	Samoa	Vanuatu
1. Mainstreaming CE and SCP Principles in National Tourism Policy	National					
2. National Sustainable Tourism Standards Development	National					
3. Finalisation and implementation – Single Use Plastic Toolkit	Regional					
4. Self-Assessment Tools – Government and Industry	Regional					
5. Standards ‘Starter Pack’ and SCP Toolkit for CBTEs	Regional					
6. Pacific Sustainable Tourism Knowledge Exchange	Regional					
7. Regional Dashboard for Measuring Tourism Sustainability	Regional					
8. Public-Private Dialogue and Communication Platforms	Regional					
9. Sustainable Tourism Supply Chains and Aggregator Hubs	National					
10. Farm-to-Table Procurement and Traceability Schemes	National					
11. Procurement and Purchasing Policy Development	Regional					
12. Sustainable Finance Mechanism and Support for Tourism Enterprises	Regional					
13. Sustainable and Climate Resilient Tourism Accommodation Guidelines	Regional					
14. Traditional and Sustainable Building Construction Techniques	National					



## Appendix G. Alignment of STEP Interventions and Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Development Policy Framework

Table 8. STEP Interventions – Alignment with Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Development Policy Framework

STEP Intervention	KSTDPF Goal 1: Protect Natural Environment	KSTDPF Goal 2: Preserve Cultural & Historical Heritage	KSTDPF Goal 3: Community & Social Well-being	KSTDPF Goal 4: Visitor Satisfaction, Health & Safety	KSTDPF Goal 5: Economic Prosperity	KSTDPF Goal 6: Green Entrepreneurship	KSTDPF Goal 7: Effective Leadership
1. Targeted support to embed CE and SCP principles into national tourism policies and other related policy frameworks.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. National Sustainable Tourism Standards Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Finalisation and Implementation – Single Use Plastic Toolkit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4. Self-Assessment Tools – Government and Industry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Standards ‘Starter Pack’ and SCP Toolkit for CBTEs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Pacific Sustainable Tourism Knowledge Exchange	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Regional Dashboard for Measuring Tourism Sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

STEP Intervention	KSTDPF Goal 1: Protect Natural Environment	KSTDPF Goal 2: Preserve Cultural & Historical Heritage	KSTDPF Goal 3: Community & Social Well-being	KSTDPF Goal 4: Visitor Satisfaction, Health & Safety	KSTDPF Goal 5: Economic Prosperity	KSTDPF Goal 6: Green Entrepreneurship	KSTDPF Goal 7: Effective Leadership
8. Public-Private Dialogue and Communication Platforms	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9. Sustainable Tourism Supply Chains and Aggregator Hubs	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
10. Farm-to-Table Procurement and Traceability Schemes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
11. Procurement and Purchasing Policy Development	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
12. Sustainable Finance Mechanism and Support for Tourism Enterprises					✓	✓	
13. Sustainable and Climate Resilient Tourism Accommodation Guidelines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
14. Traditional and Sustainable Building Construction Techniques	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

**Legend:** ✓ = Directly supports the KSTDPF goal

## Notes on Alignment

- National Sustainable Tourism Standards Development, Support for Mainstreaming CE and SCP into National Tourism Policies and other relevant policies and Sustainable Tourism Supply Chains and Aggregator Hubs are directly included in the Kiribati Country Pathway as priority interventions, reflecting the specific needs and priorities identified through national consultation and baseline assessment
- Sustainable and Climate Resilient Tourism Accommodation Guidelines are also a Kiribati priority, aligning with environmental protection, visitor safety, and green entrepreneurship goals
- Regionally led interventions such as the Single Use Plastic Toolkit, Knowledge Exchange, and Sustainable Finance Mechanisms provide cross-cutting support, reinforcing Kiribati's national framework and enabling system-wide change
- The table demonstrates that the STEP interventions collectively address all seven KSTDPF goals, ensuring that environmental, socio-cultural, economic, and governance aspects of sustainable tourism are advanced in Kiribati

This alignment ensures that the STEP Project not only supports Kiribati's national vision for sustainable tourism but also provides practical, actionable solutions that are consistent with the country's long-term policy objectives.

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