



SAMOA

Country Pathway

Sustainable Tourism Enhancement in the Pacific (STEP)

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Acknowledgements

This Country Pathway Report has been prepared in coordination with the Samoa Tourism Authority as part of the Sustainable Tourism Enhancement in the Pacific (STEP) project led by the Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), supported by the EU SWITCH-Asia Pacific Policy Support Component (PSC), through the technical support provided by Penny Spoelder and Becky Last, under the supervision of Loraine Gatlabayan and Dr Zinaida Fadeeva, Team Leader, SWITCH-Asia Pacific Policy Support Component.

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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CBTE	Community-Based Tourism Enterprise
CE	Circular Economy
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (United Kingdom)
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KSTDPF	Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Development Policy Framework
MCIL	Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour (Samoa)
MELAD	Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development (Kiribati)
MNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (Samoa)
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
MTCO	Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry (Kiribati)
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTO	National Tourism Organisation
PDS	Pathway for the Development of Samoa
PIC	Pacific Island Country
PSC	Policy Support Component (SWITCH-Asia)
PSTPF	Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework
PSTS	Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHHA	Samoa Hotels & Hospitality Association
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SPTO	Pacific Tourism Organisation (formerly South Pacific Tourism Organisation)
SRWMA	Samoa Recycling and Waste Management Association
STA	Samoa Tourism Authority
STAR	Samoa and Tokelau Association of Recyclers

STEP	Sustainable Tourism Enhancement in the Pacific
STSP	Samoa Tourism Sector Plan
SUP	Single-Use Plastic
SWOMP	Samoa Waste Oil Management Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Samoa's Tourism Sector Plan (2022–2027) and national development frameworks emphasise revitalising tourism with a focus on sustainability, resilience, and inclusive growth. Challenges to achieving sustainable tourism include limited financial resources and technical expertise for micro and small businesses, inconsistent enforcement of policies, low awareness of potential business advantages, workforce shortages, and limited capacity to improve infrastructure.

The Sustainable Tourism Enhancement in the Pacific (STEP) Project, under the EU SWITCH-Asia Pacific Policy Support Component, provides a practical roadmap for advancing sustainable tourism across Pacific Island nations, including Samoa. Designed around the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework and Standards, the STEP initiative emphasises Circular Economy and Sustainable Consumption and Production practices.

STEP targets every stage of the tourism supply chain – from procurement to service delivery and waste management – aiming to cut environmental impacts and enable more circular, efficient resource use. Integrating 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle) and circular economy (CE) principles is essential for achieving the SDGs, the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy, and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States.

The Samoa Country Pathway seeks to accelerate the uptake of CE and sustainable consumption and production (SCP) practices in the tourism sector by addressing two central questions:

- How are CE and SCP principles currently reflected in Samoa's Tourism Sector Plan and other policies, and what opportunities exist to mainstream and consolidate them across governance and implementation systems?
- How can national tourism standards for Samoa be aligned with the PSTS to support effective adoption of CE and SCP practices at scale?

The analysis and consultations undertaken as part of this project revealed that, while Samoa has a strong policy foundation through the Tourism Sector Plan, the consistent application of CE and SCP principles across the sector remains limited. Critical gaps include weak adoption of sustainable procurement, fragmented local supply chains, limited access to sustainable finance, insufficient infrastructure and uneven uptake of renewable energy and waste management practices by operators. Addressing these systemic challenges will require enforceable sustainability standards, stronger value chain linkages, access to customised green finance, practical toolkits for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and communities, and climate-resilient infrastructure.

To operationalise CE and SCP, embed sustainability in the tourism system, and accelerate progress towards Samoa's vision to be a more resilient, inclusive and green tourism destination, four priority interventions have been identified:

- **Targeted support to embed CE and SCP principles into national tourism policies and other related policy frameworks.**
Strengthens the capacity of the Samoa Tourism Authority (STA) and ensures that SCP and CE principles are embedded in all tourism policies and operations. This intervention will result in improved policy coherence, stronger leadership, and better integration of sustainability across government and industry.
- **National sustainable tourism standards development**
Revises and aligns national accommodation and business standards with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards (PSTS), ensuring that tourism businesses meet robust criteria for quality, safety, and sustainability. This will drive sector-wide improvements, support MSMEs, and provide a clear framework for monitoring progress.
- **Sustainable tourism supply chains and aggregator hubs**
Introduces sustainable procurement practices and establishes aggregator hubs to connect local producers with tourism businesses. This will reduce reliance on imports, boost local economic benefits,

and promote resource efficiency and circular economy practices within the sector.

- **Monitoring, data collection, and reporting**

Establishes robust systems for collecting and analysing sustainability data – such as waste, water, and energy use – to enable evidence-based decision-making, continuous improvement, and transparent reporting for both government and industry.

These interventions are well aligned with the goals and priorities of Samoa's Tourism Sector Plan and work together to embed CE and SCP principles across the entire tourism system. At the policy level, the pathway strengthens institutional coherence and ensures that sustainability is reflected in strategies, regulations, and monitoring systems. At the enterprise level, toolkits and standards will help MSMEs adopt circular practices, while supply chain hubs and procurement schemes will connect local producers to markets and reduce import dependence. Finance mechanisms will unlock investment in renewable energy and climate-smart innovation, and new accommodation guidelines will ensure that resilience is built into the sector's infrastructure.

Collectively, these interventions translate Samoa's objectives into practical action. They operationalise the Tourism Sector Plan.

Alongside country-specific actions, Samoa will benefit from nine regional interventions outlined in the STEP Regional Roadmap. These interventions include:

- Toolkits for reducing single-use plastics
- Self-assessment and reporting tools
- Starter packs for MSMEs and community tourism
- Platforms for knowledge exchange and public-private dialogue
- Sustainable finance mechanisms and climate-resilient building guidelines.

These interventions will provide Samoa's tourism sector with additional shared resources, technical assistance, and learning opportunities to accelerate progress.

The STEP Project's interventions are tightly aligned with the Samoa Tourism Sector Plan and national priorities. By combining targeted national actions with robust regional support, the STEP Project equips Samoa with practical solutions to overcome persistent barriers. Realising the full benefits of this pathway will require ongoing collaboration among government, industry, communities, and development partners. With sustained commitment, Samoa can transform its tourism sector into a model of sustainability, resilience, and inclusive growth for the Pacific.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Tourism context

Samoa is an independent nation situated to the north-east of Fiji just west of the international dateline. It consists of four inhabited islands and nine smaller islands and outcrops (DFAT 2025). The two main islands of Samoa are Savai'i and Upolu; the capital, Apia, is situated on Upolu. Samoa has a total population of just over 215,000 people, and both Upolu and Savai'i are home to 99% of Samoa's total population (PSDI 2024).

Samoa is highly exposed to the impact of climate change from cyclones, sea level rise, and extreme weather, which threaten tourism assets and community livelihoods (SPREP, 2022). Around 70% of Samoa's population and key infrastructure are located on low-lying coastal areas, with sea-levels projected to rise continually over the next few years, which will exacerbate coastal erosion, loss of land and property, and displacement of inhabitants of the islands (UNDP 2023).

Samoa is the fifth largest economy in the Pacific, with GDP of approximately USD 938 billion (Lowy Institute 2025). Tourism, agriculture and fishing are all major industries helping to drive the Samoan economy; tourism alone employs 15% of the total population.

The Samoa Tourism Sector Plan 2022–2027 (STSP) is providing the roadmap for revitalising and transforming Samoa's tourism sector. The vision is for Samoa to become a 'more resilient, inclusive and green tourism destination' with a context of sustainable development, resource efficiency, and climate adaptation. The key objectives and actions in the plan embed sustainable consumption and production (SCP) through product improvements, new product development, and capacity-building including environmental and social priorities. Key focus areas are:

- Sustainable tourism economy and growth
- Rebranding Samoa's image, emphasising culture, heritage, and a pristine environment
- Enhancing marketing, infrastructure, investment, and workforce development
- Building resilience to climate change, disasters, and health risks
- Targeting a new benchmark of 215,000 tourists per year.

Many of the priorities and strategies highlighted in the plan directly address resource efficiency and circular principles, such as support for renewable energy options for tourism operators, responsible waste management, sustainable infrastructure investments, and protection of natural assets. The plan also calls for broad adoption of evidence-based and data-driven decision-making, which supports the continuous improvement and the mainstreaming of CE/SCP concepts.

Furthermore, links to Samoa's commitments under UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 ('Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns') demonstrate direct alignment with international SCP goals.

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 guides tourism development in line with the Pacific's unique values, cultures, and ecosystems, and it 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. It advocates for circular economy models, resource efficiency, and waste reduction.

By advocating for 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 (SPTO, 2021).

1.2.2. Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards

The Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards (PSTS) seeks to put these ambitions into action by setting practical, GSTC-aligned benchmarks that support tourism businesses and governments which 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 consumption and production (SCP) and the circular economy (CE).By adopting these standards, the tourism sector is well positioned not only 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 aims to support Pacific nations transition toward making tourism a driver of environmental stewardship, inclusive socio-economic development, and long-term sustainability (SPTO, 2023).

1.3. Barriers to sector transition

Despite progress in adopting sustainable tourism practices, significant barriers persist in Samoa. Many operators, especially MSMEs and community-based enterprises, lack access to finance and technical expertise needed to adopt resource-efficient, low-impact business models (European Union, 2024). Policy and regulatory gaps persist, with inconsistent enforcement and uptake of sustainability measures across the sector (Government of Samoa, 2022).

Contributing factors include workforce shortages, as many experienced workers have shifted to overseas employment or left the sector during the pandemic, resulting in skills gaps and service quality issues (Asian Development Bank, 2023). Accommodation and infrastructure deficits remain, with many operators struggling to maintain or upgrade facilities because of limited investment capacity and ongoing financial constraints (Government of Samoa, 2022).

There is a recognised need for capacity-building and practical guidance to support the shift from policy to practice (SPTO, 2023). Capacity-building for tourism operators is a key focus, led by the Samoa Tourism Authority (STA) in partnership with regional bodies such as the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) 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 (SPREP, 2023).



Figure 1. Samoa 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 Samoa. 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 approaches. These efforts aim to drive transformative change in the tourism sector, which faces unique challenges due to geographic isolation, environmental vulnerability, and dependence on imported goods. 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 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 two questions:

- How are CE and 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 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, namely a Pacific regional roadmap, and country pathways for Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa and Vanuatu.

1. Pacific Sustainable Tourism Regional Roadmap

This component involves developing a regional action plan with 14 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.

2. Country Pathways for Demonstration Countries

The second component focuses on creating project-specific 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 Samoa, The STEP Project supports the objectives of the Samoa Tourism Sector Plan 2022– 2027 (STSP) by establishing a dedicated Country Pathway that offers a structured, step-by-step approach to implementing practical solutions tailored to advance sustainable tourism practices. STEP provides practical, targeted actions that support the transition to sustainable tourism and the adoption of CE/SCP practices at the national level.

1.4.2. Project methodology

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

Phase 1: Scoping assessment

- Conducting desktop research, regional surveys, and direct consultation with Samoa's tourism stakeholders
- Reviewing national tourism strategies, policies, and sustainability frameworks relevant to Samoa
- Collecting baseline data on the adoption and application of sustainable tourism standards in the country
- Validating findings and incorporating them into Samoa's specific context into the assessment

Phase 2: In-country consultation

- Focused consultations were held in Samoa (alongside Fiji, Kiribati, and Vanuatu) to:
 - Assess the status of tourism standards and sustainable tourism practices in Samoa
 - Identify critical impact areas within Samoa'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 Samoa joined over 50 participants from 10 Pacific Island countries at the Regional Validation Workshop (23–24 April 2025, Suva, Fiji).
- The workshop validated and proposed PSTS focus areas and regional priorities, assessed progress, identified common challenges, and began shaping the Regional Roadmap through stakeholder feedback.¹

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 in Samoa
- Identifies institutional and industry capacity gaps to guide technical assistance for Samoa
- Establishes priority actions for SPTO and partners to systematically support sustainable tourism development in Samoa
- Highlights investment opportunities to support Samoa'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 Samoa Country Pathway report.² This report outlines actions specific for Samoa, aligning with national priorities and supporting the practical integration of PSTS, SCP, and CE principles into Samoa's tourism system. Further detail on the methodology, consultations, and the evolution of project design and thinking for Samoa is provided in a companion Background Report.³

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

2 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/>

3 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 are 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. Pathway for the Development of Samoa 2021/22–2025/26

Samoa's National Development Strategy (SDS 2021–2025) and Samoa 2040 guide the country's socio-economic growth, with a particular emphasis on tourism revitalisation and diversification. The SDS articulates a set of national priorities aimed at fostering sustainable growth through tourism sector renewal, business innovation, and economic diversification. Its targeted outcomes include increasing social and economic benefits by promoting diversified attractions, enhancing marketing efforts, and improving service standards, especially in eco-tourism, cultural, and historical sites, while also ensuring a proactive recovery from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Samoa 2040 envisions a long-term future where tourism is positioned as a central engine of economic growth, with ambitious goals to significantly boost the country's GDP contribution by 2040. Together, these frameworks underpin Samoa's strategic approach to harnessing tourism as a vital component of its sustainable development agenda, aligning sector-specific initiatives with broader national objectives.

Samoa's national policy framework emphasises sustainability as a foundation for economic growth, climate resilience, and cultural preservation, with tourism positioned as a key sector for advancing these priorities. Tourism development is shaped by an integrated approach that aligns directly with the SDS 2021–2025, the National Environment and Development Sector Plan (NESP 2017–2026), and Samoa's international commitments under the Samoa Pathway, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Collectively, these strategies embed the principles of a circular economy and sustainable consumption and production (SCP) into national planning, policy, and investment.

2.1.2. Tourism Development Act 2012

The Tourism Development Act 2012 serves as the cornerstone of Samoa's tourism regulatory framework, providing for:

- Sustainable Development: Preservation of sector integrity and promotion of sustainable tourism development
- Planning and Regulation: Effective planning, regulation, and stakeholder involvement in tourism activities
- Licensing and Standards: Comprehensive licensing regime and enforcement of industry standards
- Environmental Protection: Minimisation of negative tourism impacts on the environment
- Authority Powers: Empowers the Samoa Tourism Authority (STA) to establish, approve, and enforce standards, ratings, and accreditation systems.

The regulatory system operates through the Samoa Tourism Authority (STA), which has been granted comprehensive powers to establish standards, monitor compliance, and coordinate sector development.

2.1.3. Samoa Tourism Sector Plan 2022–2027

The Samoa Tourism Sector Plan 2022–2027 (STSP) provides the roadmap for revitalising and transforming Samoa's tourism sector post-pandemic, aiming for sustainability, resilience, and growth explicitly through rebranding efforts that prioritise culture, heritage, and environmental protection. Key Focus Areas are:

- Sustainable tourism economy and growth
- Rebranding Samoa's image, emphasising culture, heritage, and pristine environment

- Enhancing marketing, infrastructure, investment, and workforce development
- Building resilience to climate change, disasters, and health risks
- Targeting a new benchmark of 215,000 tourists per year.

2.1.4. National Tourism Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

The National Tourism Climate Change Adaptation Strategy addresses climate-related tourism challenges and implements a key focus area of the STSP focusing on:

- Education and training for climate resilience
- Disaster preparedness, response, and recovery
- Energy efficiency initiatives.

Both plans identify opportunities to strengthen, mainstream, and consolidate sustainable tourism including CE and SCP principles and practices as follows:

- Stronger integration in standards: The plan highlights the need to develop and enforce standards for accommodations, services, and new products (e.g. eco-tourism, agri-tourism), presenting opportunities to embed CE/SCP requirements explicitly in sector standards.
- Expanded implementation mechanisms: Mainstreaming could be advanced by making sustainability, waste reduction, and resource efficiency mandatory criteria for product development funding, recovery assets, and sector incentives.
- Education and capacity building: The priority to increase linkages to overseas training and embed sustainability concepts in tourism education can further consolidate CE/SCP.
- Governance and monitoring: Improved sector monitoring, including the adoption of ICT-enabled reporting platforms, could enable the systematic tracking of sustainable tourism metrics, revealing gaps and opportunities for intervention.
- Collaboration and stakeholder engagement: The plan recognises the need for coordination among agencies and with private sector partners, offering space to consolidate CE/SCP through consistent practices and joint initiatives.

2.2. Other relevant national policies

Tourism policy is interlinked with multiple cross-sector strategies, and related policies are involved in the tourism sector. These policies are summarised in Table 1.

Environmental management and circular resource use: The Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy 2019–2023 and participation in regional commitments like Cleaner Pacific 2025 provide the framework for waste minimisation, recycling, and improved waste infrastructure. These policies are reinforced by bans on single-use plastics and ongoing awareness programmes targeting both businesses and communities.

Land and investment regulation: Land-use planning and licensing processes are provided with integrated sustainability safeguards, ensuring that new developments align with Samoa's Climate Change Policy and environmental guidelines.

Infrastructure development: Integrated national investment plans prioritise climate-resilient, low-emission infrastructure, enabling efficient resource use while enhancing transport, utilities, and communications for both residents and tourists.

Workforce development: Sector plans emphasise green skills training and education, particularly in hospitality, to build local capacity in SCP practices, renewable energy operation, and sustainable land and marine management.

Health, safety, and wellbeing: Public health, food safety, and climate adaptation measures are guided by the National Disaster Management Plan and sector-specific health regulations, with a focus on community resilience.

Cultural heritage and social sustainability: The preservation of Fa’a Samoa and community-based tourism is embedded in national cultural and tourism policies, reinforcing inclusive growth while protecting intangible heritage.

With development partner support, Samoa is implementing major structural projects that reinforce sustainability goals and include:

- Climate-Resilient Transport (Upolu and Savai’i): Supporting efficient, low-carbon mobility between communities, tourism hubs, and visitor entry points (STA, 2024)
- Water Sector Improvement Programme: Improving water security and sanitation at both community and industry levels (MNRE, 2023)
- Outer Islands Transport and Infrastructure Project: Strengthening inter-island connectivity to ensure equitable access for rural communities and sustainable tourism opportunities (STA, 2024)
- Renewable Energy Expansion: Accelerating Samoa’s transition to its renewable energy target by 2030 through wider adoption of solar PV, wind, and storage solutions (STA, 2024)

Practical implementation by the tourism sector

National strategies and policies have translated into clear actions for the tourism sector, including:

- Recycling and composting initiatives across hotels and guesthouses
- Widespread elimination of single-use plastics, creating direct entry points for circular value chains
- Promotion of renewable energy (solar PV systems, storage batteries, and hybrid systems) and local water solutions (rainwater harvesting)
- Access to donor-supported advisory services and concessional green financing for SMEs to adopt energy efficiency, resource recovery, and eco-certification standards

Looking forward, the development of national tourism standards presents an opportunity to formalise and strengthen benchmarks 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 Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and other regional agencies – could further accelerate innovation by connecting operators with local suppliers and green solutions that they find difficult to access (SPREP, 2023).

Table 1. Samoa National Policy Context

Policy Area	Key Policies/Frameworks	Description and Impact
Strategic Planning & Sector Coordination	Samoa Tourism Sector Plan (STSP) 2022–2027	Sets national vision and targets for sustainable tourism, resilience, and cultural branding; aligns tourism with broader national goals
	National Development Strategy	
Environmental Management	Environmental Guidelines & Minimum Standards	Enforces sustainable practices, climate resilience, and waste management in tourism operations; protects natural assets
	Climate Change Adaptation Initiatives	
	Resource & Waste Management Policies	

Policy Area	Key Policies/Frameworks	Description and Impact
Land & Investment Regulation	Tourism Development Act 2012 Land Use Planning & Zoning Regulations	Provides legal framework for licensing, investment facilitation, and sustainable land use; ensures tourism aligns with national priorities
Infrastructure Development	National and Sector Infrastructure Plans (Transport, Utilities, ICT)	Guides investment in roads, airports, utilities, and digital infrastructure to improve accessibility and visitor experience.
Workforce Development	National Tourism & Hospitality Qualifications (SQA) Capacity Building Initiatives	Addresses skills gaps, enhances service quality, and ensures workforce readiness through training and qualifications
Health & Safety	Public Health & Food Safety Standards Emergency Preparedness Guidelines	Ensures compliance with health, food safety, and emergency standards for visitor and community safety
Cultural Heritage & Community Engagement	Fa'a-Samoa Preservation Policies Community-Based Tourism Initiatives	Promotes cultural authenticity, community participation, and equitable benefit-sharing in tourism development

2.3. Tourism governance and industry structure

2.3.1. National tourism governance

Samoa's tourism sector is governed by a combination of government agencies, industry associations, specialised committees, and international partnerships, which collectively coordinate tourism development, marketing, sustainability, and regulation across the country.

The Samoa Tourism Authority (STA) is the lead government body responsible for tourism policy, product development, marketing/promotion, and sector regulation. In October 2023, the STA re-established a specialised Climate Change Unit, tasked with addressing climate-related challenges and implementing Programme Area 6 of the Samoa Tourism Sector Plan. This programme area prioritises education, training, disaster preparedness, and energy efficiency, guided by the National Tourism Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

The STA's mandate is supported by a range of multi-stakeholder committees that include both public- and private-sector representatives, ensuring that policy development and implementation are informed by industry perspectives.

Capacity building is a central focus of STA's partnerships. In collaboration with the SPREP and development partners, STA delivers training on sustainability and resilience. These programmes promote adoption of regional environmental standards, improve financial and digital literacy among operators, and support best practices in waste, water, and energy management (SPREP, 2023).

2.3.2. Industry structure

Samoa's tourism industry is composed primarily of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), alongside a smaller number of large resorts and international operators concentrated in Apia. MSMEs form the economic backbone of the sector and include family-run guesthouses, dive shops, transport providers, handicraft producers, and tour guides. These businesses are embedded in local communities and play an essential role in distributing tourism benefits to rural and outer island areas (PSDI, 2025b).

The accommodation sector is diverse and deeply reflective of Samoa's cultural identity. Samoa has approximately 150 accommodation providers, concentrated mainly on Upolu, with a strong presence on Savai'i (STA, 2025). Accommodation providers include:

- Boutique resorts and luxury hotels, including overwater bungalows blending international standards with Samoan hospitality
- Traditional beach fale: family-run, open-sided beachfront huts offering authentic, affordable experiences
- Farmstays and eco-focused properties promoting cultural exchange and sustainability (STA 2025)

Recent trends show increasing investment in the boutique and luxury sector, positioning Samoa toward higher-value, quality-driven tourism. At the same time, cruise tourism has emerged as a growth area, with 27 scheduled cruise ship visits in 2025 and the milestone of Samoa's first overnight cruise docking (STA, 2025).

Industry associations

Industry associations act as vital connectors among stakeholders, supporting policy dialogue, shared standards, and collective representation.

Samoa Hotels & Hospitality Association (SHHA): The largest and most influential industry body, SHHA represents accommodation providers. The association operates an e-booking platform to enhance market access and extends membership to supporting businesses such as attractions, handicraft suppliers, rental services, bars, and restaurants. SHHA is also a key policy partner, advocating for industry priorities in collaboration with STA.

Savai'i Samoa Tourism Association (SSTA): Established in 2010 as a non-government membership body, SSTA advocates for and represents the tourism businesses located on the island of Savai'i. Its role is particularly important in ensuring inclusive island-wide development, highlighting the distinct tourism opportunities and challenges of Samoa's second-largest island.

2.3.3. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

Non-government actors are integral to advancing circular economy principles within Samoa's tourism and waste sectors, providing a bridge between international programmes, local businesses, and communities. Waste management has become the most advanced area of circular economy adoption in Samoa, with NGO-led initiatives focusing on recovery, reuse, recycling, and resource efficiency.

Samoa Recycling and Waste Management Association (SRWMA): Founded in 2017, SRWMA is the leading non-government partner in implementing circular economy activities. The association supports recycling businesses, coordinates waste-management projects and promotes the '3Rs Plus Return' approach.

Samoa and Tokelau Association of Recyclers (STAR): Building on a cross-territory collaboration, STAR works across Samoa and Tokelau to reduce waste and promote sustainability through joint recycling and recovery solutions, further embedding regional cooperation in the circular economy transition.

2.3.4. Development partners

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The UNDP plays a central coordinating role in advancing Samoa's circular economy transition, particularly in waste management, policy development, and multi-stakeholder engagement. Key initiatives include:

- CERO Waste Project (Circular Economy for the Recovery of Waste): Designed to accelerate circular economy adoption, this programme promotes resource recovery and creates sustainable livelihood opportunities for Samoan communities.
- Circular economy policy development: UNDP is supporting the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) to develop a dedicated National Circular Economy Policy for Waste Management, providing a long-term framework for sustainable resource use.

- Public-private partnerships: Innovative collaborations, such as with CRDC Global, have introduced solutions for transforming plastic waste into construction materials, combining global expertise with local implementation capacity.

British High Commission / Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

The UK government is a significant funding partner supporting Samoa's shift to a circular economy, with a strong focus on tackling plastic waste. Its contributions include:

- Co-funding of the CERO Waste Project, supporting innovation and scaling of sustainable waste solutions
- Plastic waste management initiatives: Introduction and deployment of RESIN8 plastic upcycling technology, which transforms waste plastics into construction-grade materials

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

As the Pacific region's primary environmental body, SPREP provides technical expertise, policy advice, and programmatic implementation to strengthen Samoa's circular economy initiatives. Its engagement includes:

- Pacific Ocean Litter Project (POLP): Reducing marine plastic pollution through improved waste practices and alternatives to single-use plastics
- Samoa Waste Oil Management Programme (SWOMP): Addressing hazardous waste streams by establishing safe collection, treatment, and recycling pathways
- Policy guidance and training: Strengthening national capacity through regional knowledge exchange and best-practice models for sustainable consumption and production

Bilateral Aid Programmes: New Zealand, Australia, and Japan

Bilateral partners are critical in supporting practical, community-level adoption of circular economy principles through targeted technical and financial assistance. Examples include:

- Recycling infrastructure and community programmes: Investment in localised recycling facilities, community collection systems, and awareness campaigns
- Capacity building: Training and technical support for village-level enterprises and SMEs to develop value-added products from recovered resources
- Technology transfer and demonstration projects: Pilots in sustainable packaging, composting, and renewable energy integration aligned with CE and SCP objectives

2.4. National tourism standards programme

2.4.1. Legislative foundation

The Tourism Development Act 2012 establishes the legislative framework for the regulation of Samoa's tourism sector. It mandates STA to develop, implement, and enforce documented standards and rating systems for all forms of tourism accommodation in Samoa – including hotels, resorts, motels, guesthouses, beach fale, backpackers, and homestays.

Section 30 of the Act specifically empowers the STA to:

- approve and publish systems of ratings and documented standards for tourism operators
- grant business accreditation under these standards
- support the use of accredited ratings in both domestic and international marketing and promotion.

This legal foundation ensures that Samoa's tourism sector is guided by transparent, enforceable quality standards while supporting sustainable development and market credibility (Government of Samoa, 2012).

2.4.2. Accommodation standards

Samoa's Tourism Accommodation Standards seek to:

- Safeguard sector integrity and sustainability through effective planning, promotion, and regulation of tourism businesses
- Ensure orderly industry development by aligning regulatory systems with government policy priorities and industry aspirations
- Promote stakeholder collaboration by engaging both government and industry representatives in policy development and issue resolution
- Implement effective licensing and enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with established standards and legal requirements
- Recognise and support quality assurance systems, including ratings and accreditations, which strengthen Samoa's tourism brand credibility
- Maintain sustainability, safety, and service quality in tourism accommodation, helping to protect Samoa's environment, cultural heritage, and visitor experience (Government of Samoa, 2012)

2.4.3. Implementation and oversight

To implement these standards, all accommodation operators are required to sign a Standards Compliance Agreement and undergo annual inspections. Businesses are evaluated against six core assessment dimensions:

- Cleanliness and hygiene
- Safety and security
- Amenities and facilities
- Service quality
- Environmental practices
- Management systems

The STA Inspectorate enforces compliance, with powers to issue penalties, withdraw ratings, or publicly disclose non-compliance findings. Oversight is supported by two key governance mechanisms:

Samoa Accommodation Standards Committee: Provides policy direction and oversight by reviewing minimum requirements, monitoring implementation, and approving categorisations following annual inspections. The committee includes representatives from government and industry associations, ensuring inclusive governance.

Technical Committee: Comprising officials from the Fire and Emergency Services, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure, Samoa Water Authority, Electric Power Corporation, industry associations, and the STA, this committee is responsible for conducting inspections and assessments, ensuring business compliance with safety, health, infrastructure, and service standards.

2.4.4. Strengths and limitations

Samoa's tourism standards system provides an essential framework for ensuring basic service quality, safety compliance, and cleanliness across the accommodation sector. The standards apply to a range of categories, from hotels and resorts to guesthouses, beach fale, and homestays. While some environmental and sustainability elements have been incorporated, the current framework remains limited and requires significant strengthening to keep pace with international best practices.

International hotel groups such as Sheraton (Marriott International) and Tanoa have encouraged the adoption of circular economy and sustainable tourism practices in Samoa by applying global frameworks for energy efficiency, waste reduction, responsible procurement, and staff training. While these initiatives set higher sustainability standards and offer valuable best practice models, they can also create barriers for local

businesses due to certification requirements and centralised procurement and are sometimes difficult to tailor to Samoa's cultural and operational realities. To maximise benefits, adapting these global standards to local contexts is essential for inclusive sustainability in Samoa's hotel sector

The STA has acknowledged the need for a comprehensive review of the standards to enhance alignment with national sustainability goals, climate action priorities, and evolving visitor expectations. There is also strong potential to extend the standards to currently uncovered subsectors – particularly marine tourism, which represents a growing part of Samoa's tourism offering but remains outside the regulatory framework.

Key Limitations:

- **Resource and capacity gaps:** Small and community-based operators struggle to meet safety, accessibility, and environmental requirements due to limited finances and workforce.
- **Weak compliance and enforcement:** Annual inspections occur, but follow-up is inconsistent; standards are tied only to business license applications rather than annual renewals.
- **Environmental criteria gaps:** Limited monitoring of water, energy, and waste use; sustainability incentives remain fragmented.
- **Administrative challenges:** The Standards Committee is resource-intensive; more efficient risk-based and self-assessment approaches are needed.
- **Incomplete coverage:** Marine tourism and destination-level standards are absent, creating regulatory blind spots.
- **Low industry awareness:** Limited understanding of SCP practices and few incentives to adopt them hinder sector-wide change.
- **Market barriers:** Weak supply chain structures and lack of certification make access to sustainable products difficult.
- **Risks:** Some beach fales present safety and environmental concerns, highlighting the need for targeted training and waste management support.

2.4.5. Alignment with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards

The STEP Project Baseline Survey (2024/25) assessed Samoa's alignment with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard (PSTS) across key areas, identifying major gaps and opportunities for improvement. The survey identified that Samoa's tourism standards partly align with the PSTS but lack comprehensive measures for sustainability, especially in economic, social, and environmental areas. 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

Social and cultural standards are present but need strengthening, particularly as regards community participation, accessibility, safeguarding culture, and intellectual property.

The regulatory frameworks exist, but capacity for implementation, monitoring, and enforcement is limited.

A comparison of the Samoan Accommodation Standard with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Industry Standard (PSTS – Industry) is presented in, identifying key gaps and urgent areas requiring attention to support alignment with national and regional tourism sustainability goals and transition to CE and SCP practices.

Table 2. Samoa tourism accommodation Standard comparison with Pacific Sustainable Tourism Industry Standard

PSTS Goal & Focus Area	Samoa Standards	Gaps Identified
Business resilience	Present	Covers licensing and operations
Business monitoring & reporting	Not included	No performance tracking for energy, water, or resilience
Visitor Satisfaction	Partially included	Feedback forms provided, but not systematically 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	Strong inclusion	Requirements for segregation, treatment, and licensing
Energy & water conservation	Limited (e.g. solar lights)	No benchmarks, metering, or improvement targets
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 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

Transitioning Samoa's tourism sector towards sustainability involves navigating a range of economic, environmental, and institutional challenges. These issues affect tourism businesses and the broader sector as they work to adopt sustainable practices and support transition to CE and SCP practices (STA, 2024): Key challenges

Institutional and regulatory gaps

- Outdated legislation and absence of a comprehensive standards framework hinder innovation and sustainability investment (Government of Samoa, 2023; STA, 2024)
- Limited fiscal incentives, weak monitoring of sustainability indicators, and insufficient inter-agency collaboration constrain effective implementation (STA, 2024)
- The STA itself faces resource and capacity gaps to drive sustainability standards and oversight

Private Sector / MSME constraints

- MSMEs face high operational costs, reliance on imports, weak connectivity, and utility expenses that erode competitiveness (MCIL, 2023)
- Access to finance is limited, with many businesses unable to secure loans for green investment (MCIL, 2023)
- Skills shortages in management, marketing, and digital capability restrict adoption of sustainable practices (STA, 2024)
- Technical barriers and high costs of renewable energy, water treatment, and waste solutions reduce uptake despite available programmes

Environmental & resource challenges

- Waste and recycling systems remain underdeveloped, especially outside urban areas, with plastic pollution persisting despite bans (STA, 2024; SPREP, 2023)
- Water management is inconsistent, with dependence on septic systems and growing competition for scarce freshwater resources (STA, 2024)
- Samoa remains highly dependent on imported fossil fuels, with slow renewable uptake and persistent reliability issues forcing reliance on diesel generators (STA, 2024)

2.5.2. Existing initiatives and opportunities

There is an opportunity to leverage the broad multi-donor support for sustainable tourism, climate resilience, and environmental programmes in Samoa, coordinated through STA, government ministries, and regional platforms.

The development of the national policy framework and the national tourism standards framework presents an opportunity to institutionalise sustainability and CE/SCP benchmarks across the tourism sector. Embedding performance thresholds for energy, water, waste, and procurement that are aligned with regional frameworks could enhance both destination quality and market credibility. Strengthening government capacity and coordinating local tourism planning with national sustainability objectives will also be essential. Enhanced awareness and education for government and industry associations on CE and SCP can improve policy delivery and foster more inclusive sector growth. Complementary reforms in financing, such as green grants, concessional loans, and public-private co-investment mechanisms, are needed to unlock investment in renewable energy, climate-smart infrastructure, and nature-based tours.

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 Samoa'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 Samoa's 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.

Opportunities identified through the survey and consultation include:

- **Integrate CE and SCP into national standards:** Revise existing tourism standards to explicitly require sustainable resource use, waste minimisation, energy and water efficiency, and responsible sourcing, making these core compliance criteria for all operators.
- **Develop a tiered or modular standards system:** Allow for flexible entry points – for example, 'base,' 'intermediate,' and 'excellence' sustainability levels – to accommodate MSMEs while encouraging sector-wide progression.
- **Align and harmonise with Pacific Sustainable Tourism standard:** Map Samoa's standards against the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard, identifying overlaps and gaps. Adopt regional best practices, definitions, and metrics to ensure compatibility and ease cross-border learning and benchmarking.
- **Incentivise sustainable practices:** Introduce fiscal measures (e.g. tax credits), recognition schemes for 'green' operators, or preferential marketing for businesses meeting higher sustainability benchmarks.
- **Expand coverage to new sectors:** Extend standards beyond accommodation to include marine tourism, tour operators, attractions, and food and beverage providers – embedding CE/SCP requirements across all parts of the visitor economy.
- **Strengthen enforcement and compliance:** Move to ongoing compliance monitoring (linking standards with annual business license renewal) and require regular reporting on sustainability performance (waste, energy, water).
- **Build capacity and technical support:** Invest in continuous operator training, provide technical assistance on CE/SCP technologies, and fund community-based pilot projects that showcase practical benefits.
- **Leverage digital tools for monitoring:** Introduce easy-to-use digital reporting and data collection tools to track waste, resource use, and sustainability progress, enabling adaptive management.
- **Formalise traditional sustainability practices:** Codify and incentivise the use of Samoan cultural conservation practices, such as reusing organic waste, in the updated standards, creating authenticity and local advantage.

These findings provide the foundation for Samoa's Country Pathway and directly inform the four priority interventions detailed in Section 4. They underscore the need for a dual approach that simultaneously builds a robust standards framework and equips enterprises and communities with the capacity and incentives to implement CE and SCP in practice.

3.2. Priority Actions for Samoa

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

Table 3. Samoa Priority Actions following consultations

Category	Action Items
Destination Governance and Management	Strengthen the STA's understanding of sustainability and the importance of coordination with government agencies, NGOs, and industry. Review STA's organisational structure and resource allocation to support sustainable tourism policies and standards.
Regulatory and Policy Frameworks	Establish a revised standards framework to improve compliance, quality, and sustainability in the tourism sector, including financial and non-financial incentives. Review minimum standard criteria for accommodations and Beach Fales, integrating them into the annual business license renewal process.
NTO Capacity Building	Develop training programmes (online and face-to-face) to support industry understanding of standards and reporting requirements.
Sector Awareness	Create communication strategies and resources to assist STA in guiding the industry toward improved business practices associated with new standards.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Establish data collection and monitoring systems to track industry performance against key indicators like waste, water, and energy, potentially reinstating previous pilot studies.
Sustainable Purchasing and Procurement	Investigate options to support sustainable purchasing and imports with relevant government agencies, including excise duty concessions for energy-efficient products.
Plastics / Waste	Implement the POLP SUP Project focusing on green procurement and industry awareness programmes to manage waste effectively.
Other	Develop a tourism planning and business information hub providing details on building requirements, licensing, standards, grants, operating costs, and sustainable tourism practices. Establish a Sustainable Tourism Taskforce comprising various stakeholders to oversee the implementation of sustainability policies and strategies.

4. SAMOA COUNTRY PATHWAY

4.1. Priority Interventions

Samoa is charting a new course for its tourism sector, guided by a strong national commitment to sustainability and resilience. The Tourism Sector Plan articulates a national vision for Samoa to be a 'more resilient, inclusive and green tourism destination,' directly referencing sustainable development, resource efficiency, and climate adaptation. While significant progress has been made, key challenges remain. These include inconsistent sustainable practices adoption, limited access to sustainable finance, infrastructure gaps, and a need for stronger alignment between tourism operators, local suppliers, and national development objectives. The interventions outlined in this section respond directly to these gaps have been developed to deliver targeted interventions that address the sector's most pressing needs as identified in Section 3.

Priority Interventions for Samoa

Four interventions have been prioritised for Samoa'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.

➔ **Support for mainstreaming CE and SCP principles in national tourism and other relevant policies**

Strengthening NTO Capacity for policy development and national alignment

➔ **National Sustainable Tourism Standards Development**

Revising the Samoa Accommodation Standards 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

➔ **Regional Dashboard for Measuring Tourism Sustainability**

Developing a simple and effective method for tracking, comparing, and communicating key sustainability indicators, enabling evidence-based decision-making for industry and government

Samoa 1: Targeted support to embed CE and SCP principles into national tourism policies and other related policy frameworks

Priority Actions

- Establish a Sustainable Tourism Taskforce as per the Samoa Tourism Sector Plan to guide the integration of sustainability into national tourism policy and standards
- Develop and deliver training and capacity-building programmes for STA staff and key stakeholders to support the rollout of revised national tourism standards and advocate for sustainable tourism policy in government forums

Objective

- To strengthen the institutional capacity of the STA to effectively promote, implement, and support sustainable tourism practices – specifically SCP and CE strategies – across the tourism sector

Outcomes

- STA 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 STA's strategic planning, policies, and daily operations
- STA establishes active partnerships with regional sustainability organisations, facilitating ongoing knowledge exchange and technical collaboration
- Tourism businesses receive targeted technical support from STA to adopt and scale sustainable practices
- STA is recognised as a regional leader in sustainable tourism governance and innovation

Key Activities

1. Internal capacity building

- Design and deliver tailored training programmes for STA 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 STA'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 leading regional sustainability organisations (e.g. SPTO, SPREP) 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 implementation (e.g. resource efficiency, waste reduction, sustainable procurement)
- 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 STA's operations and the wider tourism sector
- Regularly review and refine institutional processes based on feedback and emerging best practices

Samoa 2: National standards development

Priority actions

- Establish a revised standards framework to improve compliance, quality, and sustainability in the tourism sector, including financial and non-financial incentives
- Review minimum standard criteria for accommodation and Beach Fales, integrating them into the annual business license renewal process
- Develop training programmes (online and face-to-face) to support industry understanding of standards and reporting requirements

Objective

To ensure Samoa's tourism sector operates under robust, practical, and widely adopted sustainability standards that drive quality, safety, and environmental and social responsibility

Outcomes

- A revised, context-appropriate standards framework is implemented sector-wide, reflecting Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards (PSTS) and national priorities.
- Compliance with sustainability standards is integrated into annual licensing and business operations for all accommodations, including Beach Fales.
- Industry operators, including MSMEs, are knowledgeable and compliant with new standards, contributing to improved sector performance and reputation.

Key activities

1. Convene a standards review committee and stakeholder consultation

- Form a multi-stakeholder committee led by the STA including representatives from the Samoa Hotels and Hospitality Association, Savaii Samoa Tourism Association, MNRE, Ministry of Health, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, and others,
- Conduct workshops and consultations to gather input from industry, government, and community stakeholders on standards revision and sector needs.

2. Draft and pilot revised standards and licensing criteria

- Review and align existing standards with PSTS and Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring relevance to Samoa's context
- Update minimum criteria for accommodations and Beach Fales, emphasising inclusivity, accessibility, safety, health, and sustainability
- Integrate compliance checks into the annual business license renewal process, as empowered by the Tourism Development Act 2012
- Pilot the revised standards with selected operators and refine based on feedback

3. Develop and deliver industry training programmes

- Design online and face-to-face training modules on the new standards, compliance requirements, and reporting procedures
- Collaborate with the Samoa Qualifications Authority (SQA) to align training with new national competency standards in tourism and hospitality
- Provide targeted support to MSMEs and community-based operators to ensure inclusive capacity-building

4. Monitor compliance and provide feedback

- Establish a monitoring and evaluation system to track compliance with standards, using regular inspections and self-assessment tools
- Provide constructive feedback and guidance to operators and recognise high performers through incentives
- Use monitoring data to inform ongoing standards improvement and sector policy development

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

Samoa 3: Sustainable tourism supply chains and aggregator hubs

Priority actions

Investigate options to support sustainable purchasing and imports with relevant government agencies, including excise duty concessions for energy-efficient products

Objective

To create an enabling policy and fiscal environment that encourages the import and use of energy-efficient products in Samoa's tourism and related sectors

Outcomes

- Increased uptake of sustainable products and technologies by tourism operators and other businesses
- Enhanced collaboration and coordination among government agencies for sustainable procurement
- Improved awareness and capacity among industry stakeholders to access and utilise available incentives

Key activities

1. Policy and incentive review

- Map existing policies, fiscal incentives, and duty exemptions (e.g. ERP rebates, special orders for solar/EV imports)
- Identify gaps and opportunities for expanding concessions to a wider range of energy-efficient products

2. Stakeholder engagement and coordination

- Convene a technical working group with Ministry of Finance, MNRE, and other relevant agencies
- Hold consultations with Customs, importers, and industry associations to understand barriers and opportunities

3. Develop recommendations and procedures

- Draft proposals for new or expanded excise duty concessions, rebates, or tax exemptions for sustainable imports
- Develop clear guidelines and application procedures for businesses to access these incentives (e.g. documentation, eligibility, reporting)

4. Capacity building and communication

- Deliver training for government officials and industry on sustainable procurement, application processes, and compliance
- Develop and disseminate communication materials (fact sheets, online guides) outlining available incentives and how to access them

5. Monitoring and evaluation

- Establish a system to track uptake of incentives, monitor import trends, and assess impact on sustainable purchasing
- Regularly review and refine policies based on feedback and market developments

Samoa 4 - Monitoring, data collection, and reporting

Priority actions

Establish data collection and monitoring systems to track industry performance against key sustainability indicators such as waste, water, and energy use, potentially reinstating and expanding previous pilot studies

Objective

To enable evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement in sustainable tourism through robust, sector-wide monitoring and reporting systems

Outcomes

- Reliable, up-to-date data on sustainability indicators is regularly collected, analysed, and shared with stakeholders
- The STA and industry use data insights to inform policy, update standards, and drive business improvements
- Enhanced transparency and accountability support Samoa's alignment with Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards and national development goals

Key activities

1. Design and implement data collection protocols and digital systems

- Develop standardised data collection templates and protocols for key sustainability indicators (waste generation, water consumption, energy use, visitor satisfaction, etc.)
- Select and implement appropriate digital tools or platforms for efficient data gathering and management
- Pilot the system with a representative sample of tourism businesses, including accommodations, Beach Fales, and tour operators

2. Train STA and industry in data collection and reporting

- Deliver targeted training for STA staff and industry operators on data collection methods, digital reporting tools, and the importance of accurate data for sector improvement
- Provide ongoing technical support and refresher workshops to ensure consistent data quality and participation

3. Analyse and report on key sustainability indicators

- Establish a regular reporting schedule (e.g. quarterly or biannually) for analysing collected data and generating sector-wide sustainability performance reports
- Benchmark Samoa's performance against regional standards and previous years to track progress and identify trends

4. Use findings to refine standards, policies, and support programmes

- Present findings to the STA, Sustainable Tourism Taskforce, and industry stakeholders to inform decision-making
- Use data insights to update sustainability standards, inform policy adjustments, and design targeted support or incentive programmes for operators
- Share best practices and lessons learned through knowledge exchange platforms and industry briefings

Table 4. Samoa Interventions: Focused and Pilot

Intervention Name	Regional / National	Key Activities	SPTO	SAMOA
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		
		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 Name	Regional / National	Key Activities	SPTO	SAMOA
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		
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		

Intervention Name	Regional / National	Key Activities	SPTO	SAMOA
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		
11. Procurement and purchasing policy development	Regional	Design model procurement policies		
		Conduct stakeholder workshops		
		Pilot procurement systems		
		Develop Green Events Guideline		

Intervention Name	Regional / National	Key Activities	SPTO	SAMOA
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		

4.2. STEP Regional Interventions that will support Samoa

4.2.1. Regional Interventions

Samoa will benefit from the nine regional interventions and as noted above, will be the pilot country for test implementation of three of these activities: 1. Mainstreaming Sustainable Tourism into National Policy (Samoa 1), National Sustainable Tourism Standards Development (Samoa 2), Sustainable Tourism Supply Chains and Aggregator Hubs (Samoa 3), Regional Dashboard for Measuring Tourism Sustainability (Samoa 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 three to be piloted in Fiji are detailed within this Country Pathway, these regional initiatives will provide Fiji with 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.

By combining tailored national actions with shared regional support, Samoa's Country Pathway presents a clear, practical roadmap for supporting its tourism sector and the Tourism Sector Plan Refer to Appendix G for summary of how the of interventions align with the Tourism Sector Plan.

4.2.2. 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 Samoa – 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 Samoa 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.

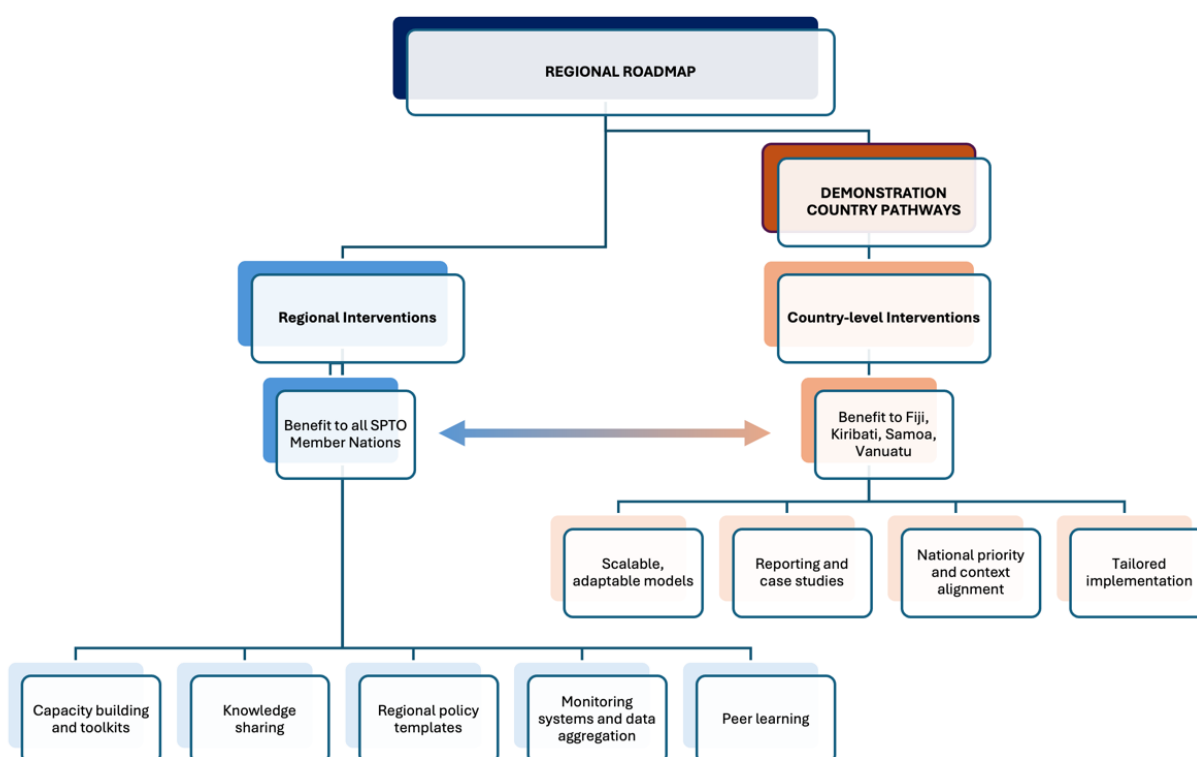


Figure 2. Framework of benefits in implementing the Regional Roadmap and Country Pathways

5. CONCLUSION

The Samoa Country Pathway establishes a clear way forward for advancing sustainable tourism and CE and SCP principles and practices through strengthened governance, robust standards, and practical, coordinated interventions. While Samoa has laid important policy foundations and fostered active collaboration among government, industry, and communities, the pathway highlights the need for targeted capacity building, enhanced monitoring systems, and stronger integration of sustainability principles (including CE and SCP) across all aspects of tourism development. By prioritising institutional strengthening, standards alignment, data-driven decision-making, and circular economy practices, Samoa is well positioned to achieve resilient, inclusive, and environmentally responsible tourism growth that supports national development goals and aligns with regional best practice.

APPENDICES

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 Met

Table 5. Stakeholders consulted during STEP mission to Samoa, February 2025

Date	Name of the person(s)/position/organisation	Contact
03/02/25 10:00am – 11:00am	Samoa Tourism Authority Lene Fau – A/CEO	STA A/CEO Sales & Marketing Manager, STA Research & Statistics Manager, STA Samoa Accommodation Standards Committee Policy & Sector Coordination Manager
03/02/25 11:00am – 12:00pm	Samoa Tourism Authority Focal points for STA Taskforces: Tourism Marketing Taskforce Tourism Training Taskforce	Planning & Management Planning & Development Division
03/02/25	SPREPP – POLP Project	
03/02/25	SPREPP Solid Waste Management Advisor	
03/02/25	Samoa Tourism Authority	Policy Co-ordination Unit
	Samoa Tourism Authority	Training
04/02/25	Samoa Government Stakeholders Meeting	Ministry of Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministry of Customs and Revenue Ministry of Finance
04/02/25	Private Sector Stakeholders Meeting Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc.	Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) Samoa Women's Association of Growers (SWAG)
05/02/25	UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme	
05/02/25	NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade	
05/02/25	Australia DFAT/Tautai	
05/02/25	PACER Plus	
05/02/25	Market Development Facility	
	Samoa Tourism Authority –Research and Statistics	

Date	Name of the person(s)/position/organisation	Contact
06/02/25	NGOs Group Session:	<u>Women in Business Development Inc.</u> Samoa and Tokelau Association of Recyclers Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organisations (SUNGO) Samoa Association of Manufacturers and Exporters (SAME)
06/02/2025	Samoa Tourism Authority – standards Committee	Electric Power Corporation Fire and Emergency Services Authority Ministry of Works, Transport & Infrastructure – Planning and Urban Management Agency Samoa Hotel & Hospitality Association
	Samoa Tourism Authority – Climate Change Strategy	
07/02/25	Tourism Training Taskforce	National University of Samoa Samoa Business Hub Samoa Qualifications Authority Ministry of Education and Culture Samoa Hospitality and Hotel Association Australian Pacific Training Coalition

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 results for Samoa are presented below.

The STEP Project Baseline Survey for Samoa provides a comprehensive assessment of the country's alignment with the 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 Samoa.

The survey reveals a sector in the early stages of sustainable transformation. The assessment indicates that while foundational elements exist, the industry faces significant capacity and implementation gaps that require comprehensive intervention strategies.

Destination Governance and Policy Priorities

The tourism standards framework shows only partial alignment with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard, indicating that existing regulatory mechanisms provide some foundation but require significant enhancement to support industry-wide sustainable practices. The survey results suggest that the current standards address basic operational requirements but lack the comprehensive approach necessary for meaningful sustainability integration. This substantial gap suggests that while awareness of sustainability concepts may exist, systematic implementation remains largely undeveloped across the sector.

Active collaboration exists between the Samoa Tourism Authority (STA) and key agencies, notably the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) and the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, to promote eco-friendly tourism, waste management, and climate adaptation. Cultural institutions and communities are engaged to ensure that tourism supports the preservation of Samoan heritage and traditions.

The gaps in policy framework implementation suggest that industry operators require support in understanding and implementing sustainability standards and regulations. The partial alignment indicates that capacity building efforts must address both technical implementation skills and policy compliance understanding.

The absence of comprehensive monitoring systems suggests that institutional capacity for sector-wide sustainability coordination remains underdeveloped. This indicates that supporting institutions, including government agencies and industry associations, require enhanced capacity to provide guidance, oversight, and support for sustainable tourism implementation.

Priorities for Support:

- Review of national standards to align with PSTS
- Development of industry self-assessment, monitoring and reporting tools for sustainability outcomes

Economic Priorities

The survey results indicate that there are gaps across fundamental business sustainability areas. Six out of eight key areas included in the PSTS are not included in standards, including business resilience planning, monitoring systems, visitor satisfaction frameworks, marketing standards, sustainable purchasing, and visitor information protocols.

The minimal data collection efforts, limited to basic visitor satisfaction surveys, indicate that the sector operates with limited evidence-based decision-making capacity. This gap in monitoring and evaluation capability suggests that the sector lacks the analytical tools necessary to assess their sustainability performance and make informed improvements.

Priorities for Support:

- Sustainable Purchasing: Guidance on sourcing sustainable materials and products, given limited access to eco-friendly resources
- Visitor Satisfaction: Formal systems for measuring and acting on visitor feedback to improve service quality
- Business Resilience: Support for business planning and risk management
- 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 Priorities

The STA recognises the need for improvement in the standards on PSTS social and community criteria, including social inclusion, decent work, accessibility, support for local businesses, community participation, empowerment, and monitoring community feedback.

Data collection in these areas is limited, with no systematic approach currently in place.

Priorities for Support:

- Guidance on integrating sustainable tourism standards into community-based tourism

Cultural Priorities

The survey results suggest that cultural priorities are addressed in the existing standard with heritage protection, visitor interpretation, and cultural promotion included as key considerations. These capabilities suggest that the sector possesses foundational skills for cultural sustainability that could serve as a platform for expanding sustainable practices. However, gaps in supporting local culture, community access, intellectual property protection, and impact management indicate that cultural sustainability approaches remain incomplete.

Priorities for Support:

- Support for integrating cultural tourism into sustainable tourism standards
- Resources for community-based cultural tourism development

Environmental Priorities

Environmental priorities show selective implementation, with current efforts concentrated in planning controls, energy conservation, and disaster preparedness. This focused approach suggests that some operators recognise environmental challenges but lack comprehensive environmental management capabilities. Critical gaps in nature conservation, visitor management, wildlife protection, pollution control, water management, waste management, and carbon footprint reduction indicate limited readiness for comprehensive environmental sustainability.

The absence of environmental data collection across all indicators reveals that the sector lacks the monitoring infrastructure necessary for evidence-based environmental management. This fundamental gap suggests that the sector is limited in their capacity to effectively assess their environmental impacts or track progress toward sustainability goals.

Priorities for Support

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

Circular Economy and Sustainable Consumption and Production

Opportunities for advancement:

- Establishing a Circular Economy Hub for training and best practice sharing
- Expanding sustainable tourism standards to include circular economy benchmarks
- Public-private partnerships to co-develop sustainable tourism projects
- Incentives for businesses to adopt circular economy models (reuse, repair, refurbish)
- Policies for sustainable production and consumption, including support for local and eco-friendly products and services.

Conclusions from the Survey

The survey results suggest the tourism sector in Samoa is in the early stages of sustainable transformation, with partial alignment to standards and selective implementation of environmental and cultural priorities. Critical needs include enhanced policy framework implementation, improved data collection and monitoring systems, capacity building for industry operators, and support for sustainable business practices such as sustainable purchasing, visitor satisfaction measurement, and community engagement.

Opportunities for advancement lie in developing industry self-assessment tools, expanding circular economy practices, and strengthening inter-agency collaboration to ensure unified and effective sustainable tourism development. Addressing these priorities through targeted interventions will be essential for Samoa to achieve resilient, inclusive, and environmentally responsible tourism growth aligned with regional standards and national development goals.

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
Institutional Capacity and Governance Constraints	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.
Limited Industry Awareness and Incentives	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.
Weak Policy Integration and Monitoring Systems	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.
Market and Supply Chain Barriers	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.
Sectoral Fragmentation Across CE and SCP Initiatives	Multiple uncoordinated actors lead to duplication. CE and SCP initiatives are disconnected and difficult to scale.
Access to Finance	MSMEs face persistent challenges accessing grants, loans, and concessional finance for sustainable upgrades.
Knowledge and Skills Gaps	Limited training programmes, minimal access to best practices, and weak peer-learning systems.
Regional Coordination	Knowledge-sharing is weak. Innovation tends to be concentrated in a few countries like Fiji and Vanuatu.
Incentive Frameworks	Policy levers such as tax relief or import concessions are rarely used to promote sustainable practices.
Public–Private Collaboration	Low trust and fragmented engagement between governments, NGOs, and businesses limit coordinated action.
Recognition of Local Practices	Traditional knowledge and successful local sustainability models are underutilised.
Data and Monitoring	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

- Focus 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 details 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 program)
- 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 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 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 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 results
- 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 CE and 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 Samoa Tourism Plan

Table 8. Alignment of STEP Interventions and Samoa Tourism Plan

STEP Intervention	STSP Goal 1: Protect natural environment	STSP Goal 2: Preserve cultural & historical heritage	STSP Goal 3: Community & social well- being	STSP Goal 4: Visitor satisfaction, health & safety	STSP Goal 5: Economic prosperity	STSP Goal 6: Green entrepreneurship	STSP Goal 7: effective leadership
Support for mainstreaming CE and SCP principles in national tourism policies and other relevant policies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
National sustainable tourism standards development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Finalisation and Implementation – Single-use plastic toolkit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Self-assessment tools – government and industry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Standards ‘Starter Pack’ and SCP Toolkit for CBTEs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pacific sustainable tourism knowledge exchange	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional dashboard for measuring tourism sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public–Private dialogue and communication platforms	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sustainable tourism supply chains and aggregator hubs	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Farm-to-Table procurement and traceability schemes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

STEP Intervention	STSP Goal 1: Protect natural environment	STSP Goal 2: Preserve cultural & historical heritage	STSP Goal 3: Community & social well- being	STSP Goal 4: Visitor satisfaction, health & safety	STSP Goal 5: Economic prosperity	STSP Goal 6: Green entrepreneurship	STSP Goal 7: effective leadership
Procurement and purchasing policy development	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Sustainable finance mechanism and support for tourism enterprises				✓	✓	✓	
Sustainable and climate resilient tourism accommodation guidelines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Traditional and sustainable building construction techniques	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

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