



THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND PACIFIC TOURISM: REGIONAL ROADMAP SUMMARY

Tourism is a cornerstone of Pacific economies, providing vital jobs, business opportunities, investment, and foreign exchange, especially for countries lacking large-scale extractive industries. Embracing circular tourism offers substantial benefits across the region: it reduces waste through better resource use, saves costs by favouring durable local products, and increases resilience by lowering vulnerability to supply chain disruptions. Circular approaches also strengthen local economies by fostering new jobs and enterprises around local sourcing and upcycling, all while enhancing the visitor experience by attracting travellers who increasingly value destinations that protect their environment and culture. The importance of shifting from a linear 'take, make, dispose' model toward a circular economy, where resources are kept in use for as long as possible, is recognised throughout the Pacific and can be included in countries' national and regional strategies.

The Sustainable Tourism Enhancement in the Pacific (STEP) Regional Roadmap presents a coordinated strategy to embed circular economy and sustainable consumption and production principles across the tourism sector in Pacific Island Countries. Developed through the STEP project under the EU SWITCH-Asia Pacific Policy Support Component (PSC), the Roadmap is the product of extensive consultation, technical research, and regional consensus-building. It sets out a clear ambition: to embed circular economy practices within the Pacific tourism sector by breaking down persistent barriers, aligning efforts across the region, piloting successful national models, and attracting investment to scale proven solutions.

Regional Ambition

The STEP Regional Roadmap aligns closely with regional priorities set out in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, Cleaner Pacific 2025 (and the forthcoming Cleaner Pacific 2036), the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework, and the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards. Seven guiding principles underpin the Roadmap:

- ➔ Focused Action and Adaptability
- ➔ National Leadership with Regional Coordination
- ➔ Partnerships and Shared Learning
- ➔ Equity and Inclusivity
- ➔ Data-driven, Results-focused Delivery
- ➔ Innovation, Circularity, and Efficiency
- ➔ Respect for Pacific Cultures and Nature

CLOSING THE LOOP - CIRCULAR STRATEGIES FOR PACIFIC TOURISM

1 **Design out waste and pollution**

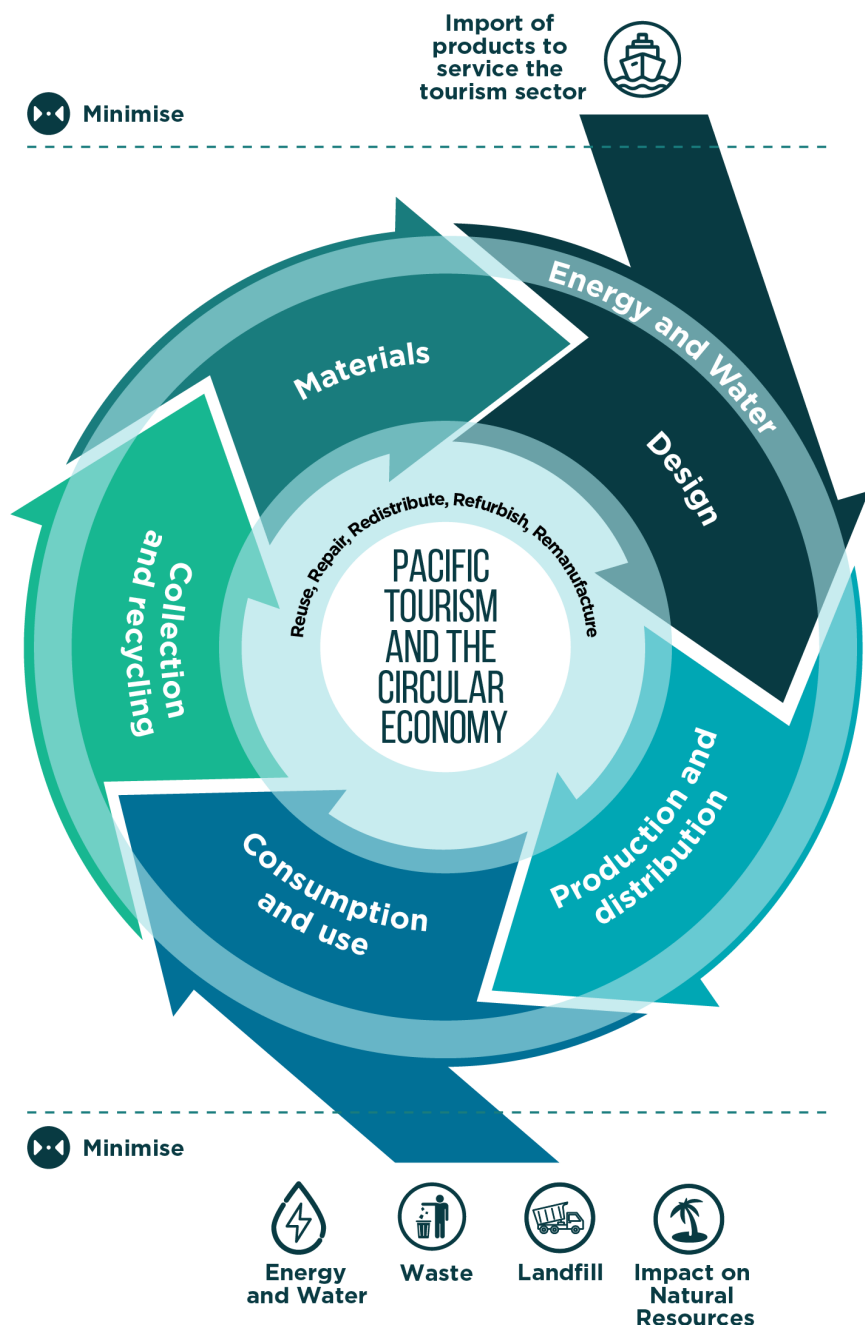
Tourism businesses can reduce waste and boost sustainability with smart design. When items like reusable water bottles or refillable toiletry dispensers in guest rooms are designed for easy cleaning, refilling, or recycling, they stay in use longer and are less likely to become waste. This makes it easier for operators and visitors to repair, reuse, and recycle plastic products—cutting down single-use plastics and their impact on the environment.

2 **Keep products and materials in use at their highest value**

By choosing durable equipment, reusing supplies, and repairing items instead of discarding them, tourism operators keep resources in circulation longer. This approach reduces waste, lowers business costs, and creates a more sustainable experience for visitors.

3 **Conserve natural resources and regenerate nature**

Resource use in tourism can strain the Pacific's fragile environments. Adopting circular economy practices—such as considering the full life cycle of products and materials—helps operators reduce their footprint and protect their islands' unique natural and cultural heritage for generations to come.



Regional Priorities

By charting a series of high-impact interventions ranging from enabling policy frameworks to on-the-ground demonstration projects, the Roadmap addresses both regional and national priorities. Its phased approach empowers countries to take action at their own pace, drawing on shared tools, knowledge, and resources, while allowing for tailored solutions that reflect local needs and aspirations. The Roadmap outlines 14 priority interventions for the Pacific, grouped into three categories:

- **Foundational:** Establishing policy frameworks, national standards, knowledge platforms, and self-assessment tools to create an enabling environment
- **Enabling:** Building practical systems such as supply-chain development, procurement policies, and financing mechanisms to support industry adoption
- **Applied & Scalable:** Piloting and expanding on-the-ground solutions, including climate-resilient accommodation, traditional sustainable construction, and regional knowledge exchange

Nine interventions are being implemented at the regional level for all Pacific nations, focusing on shared resources, capacity-building, monitoring, and collaborative learning, and five are being piloted within demonstration countries, serving as test sites for national adaptation and scalability.

The regional approach is complemented by tailored Country Pathways in four countries: Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, and Vanuatu. These pathways offer country-specific implementation plans, informed by each nation's priorities, readiness, and capacity. These demonstration countries will provide practical models, insights, and lessons for all Pacific Island countries (PICs). Key outcomes and experiences will be documented and shared regionally, enabling other nations to rapidly adapt and scale successful approaches.



Call to Action

The Roadmap recognises the essential role of collaboration: success depends on continuing partnerships among governments, the private sector, communities, donors, and development partners. Through regular knowledge exchange, capacity-building, and collective problem-solving, the Pacific can accelerate the adoption of sustainable and circular tourism practices, safeguard its rich natural and cultural assets, and build a more resilient, inclusive, and prosperous tourism sector.

ROADMAP AT A GLANCE

ROADMAP AMBITION

To embed circular economy practices within the Pacific tourism sector by breaking down persistent barriers, aligning efforts across the region, piloting successful national models, and attracting investment to scale proven solutions

PRIORITIES

Regulatory & Policy Framework	Capacity Building, Communication & Awareness	Supply Chain, Purchasing & Procurement	Sustainable Infrastructure
Mainstream circular economy principles into national tourism policies Align national tourism standards with circular tourism practices	Strengthen sector-wide knowledge and skills through toolkits, communication platforms and knowledge exchange	Strengthen local supply chains to provide sustainable alternatives for tourism operations Create structured procurement and traceability systems linking local producers with tourism businesses	Develop and promote guidelines for low-carbon, climate-resilient tourism buildings Provide targeted skills training for the construction and operation of sustainable accommodation

ENABLERS

Collaboration between government, development partners, industry, and communities	Sustainable finance and investment that will accelerate transition by the private sector	Infrastructure development to support circular solutions	Institutional capacity building and technical assistance
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