STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Consolidated Review Report of the Tourism Fiji Annual Reports 2015, 2016 1st January-31st July, August 2016-July 2017 and August 2017-July 2018

Appendices

ANNEX 1

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

TOURISM FIJI ANNUAL REPORTS 2015, 2016, 2017 AND 2018

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. **Why were Tourism Fiji's Annual Reports from 2015 to FY2017/18 only tabled in Parliament in November 2023, up to eight years late? Who was responsible for ensuring they were tabled on time? What actions has been taken to prevent future delays, and what is the status of annual reports from 2019 onwards?**

The delay in completing and finalising Tourism Fiji's audited financial statements was the result of several exceptional and unprecedented circumstances experienced by the organisation over a number of years.
These circumstances included:

- Two separate fire incidents that resulted in the destruction of significant financial records and supporting documentation.

- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted operations, restricted access to information, and affected the ability of organisations and service providers to support information recovery efforts.

- A cyber incident that resulted in the loss of additional records and data, requiring further reconstruction and verification of information.

- Historical governance matters prior to 2015, where changes in Board membership resulted in delays in obtaining approval and sign-off of financial statements. The Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) worked closely with Tourism Fiji to assist in resolving these matters.

Despite these significant challenges, Tourism Fiji remained committed to its responsibilities as a publicly funded organisation and to the principles of accountability, transparency, and good governance.

Rather than accepting a qualified audit opinion due to the loss of records, Tourism Fiji undertook the substantial task of reconstructing historical financial information and supporting documentation from available sources. This process involved recollecting records, rebuilding financial data, reconciling accounts, and validating supporting evidence to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the financial statements.

The timing of this work coincided with the COVID-19 period, which created additional challenges. Many organisations were either closed, operating with reduced staffing levels, or experiencing significant operational disruptions, limiting Tourism Fiji's ability to obtain historical information and supporting documents within normal timeframes.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, Tourism Fiji successfully completed the reconstruction of historical records, reconciled all affected accounts, and progressed the audit programme. As a result, audit fieldwork and audit reviews have now been completed up to the 2023 financial year.

To strengthen organisational resilience and reduce future risks, Tourism Fiji has since invested in enhanced records management and business continuity measures, including off-site document storage, cloud-based systems, and improved data management and recovery processes.
Tourism Fiji has now completed audits up to the 2023 financial year, subject only to the resolution of one remaining foreign exchange clarification. Upon final sign-off of the accounts, the relevant Annual Reports will be tabled through the appropriate processes.

In addition, the narrative components of the Annual Reports have been completed up to the 2024–2025 financial year. Finalisation of these reports is currently awaiting a small amount of outstanding information from the Ministry, after which the reports will be completed and submitted accordingly.

2. **Were Board Members required to disclose any commercial interests in tourism businesses that received Tourism Fiji funding the review period? If yes, can those declarations be provided to the Committee? If not, why such declarations not required?**

Board members are now required to declare any commercial interests under standard conflict of interest register. We are able to share only these conflicts of interest register. We will let Ministry of Civil Aviation & Tourism to further comment further on this.

3. **How much was paid in total to Board Members and the CEO each year during the review period, and why is this information not disclosed in the reports?**

The remuneration for Board members are paid in accordance to the confirmation by Ministry of Public Enterprise and the CEO renumeration are paid according to the contracted amount. All information is is captured in the financial statements and explained in the notes to financial statements in the standard format under Note 6. However, payroll are nearly 100% audited by Office of Auditor general especially for top level management

4. **Did the Auditor-General identify any weaknesses in internal controls or other irregularities during the review period? If so, what corrective actions were taken and when were they implemented?**

Normal audit test during audit did highlight some areas of improvements in internal controls. Most of these are addressed through improved reconciliation processes, accounting standards and financial systems.

Tourism Fiji continues to adopt best practices and improvement – a key example is that after recollecting our lost data from Cyber situation, we may be the first organisation in Fiji to have more than 95% of our records at all levels online. We strongly support sustainability and take serious measures towards environment.

5. **Board Members are mainly representatives from major tourism industry and small niche properties and operators not represented? Financial Efficiency and Value for Money?**

Board appointments are made by the Ministry of Public Enterprises. The current Board includes a mix of industry representation across key tourism sectors and represents different regions which includes rep from Vanua Level and Yasawa's.

6. **What was Tourism Fiji's total marketing expenditure per visitor arrival in each year of the review period? How does this compare with benchmark destination marketing organisations in comparable Pacific Island nations?**

Marketing spends per visitor ranged from about FJD 25 to FJD 39 across the relevant period. Tourism Fiji, consistently with its mandate as a marketing arm of the Ministry, assesses its performance against KPIs, market share and visitor expenditure. Data are independently collected and reported by BoS

	Marketing Expenditure	Visitor Arrivals	total marketing expenditure per visitor arrival
2015	FJD$18,503,196	754,835	FJD$25 per arrival
2016(til July)	FJD$12,857,081	435,413	FJD$30 per arrival
2016/2017	FJD$23,808,048	819,701	FJD$29 per arrival
2017/2018	FJD$33,587,599	859,132	FJD$39 per arrival

7. **In FY2017/18, an additional allocation of funds was made for the Global Brand Revitalisation project with Saatchi @ Saatchi NZ. What was the total cost of this engagement? What was the procurement process?**

The Saatchi & Saatchi NZ engagement cost about FJD 1.6M. The award followed the standard procurement processes.

The project resulted in refreshed brand assets, including videos designed to create a uniquely Fijian expression of happiness that supports premium pricing and showcases the breadth of experiences available across the islands.

8. **What percentage of Tourism Fiji's annual budget was spent on overseas offices, including salaries, rent and operating costs, compared to direct marketing and advertising? Has Tourism Fiji ever conducted an independent value-for-money review of its offshore office model?**

Offshore offices typically accounted for about 60-65% percent of the direct marketing cost across the relevant time period. The existing structure is based on hybrid model supported by an independent review. It is based on trade engagement, airline partnerships and in-market presence.

% of Total annual budget was spent on overseas offices

Region	2015	2016 (Jan-Jul)	2016-17	2017-18
Australia	18%	15%	15%	17%
New Zealand	9%	7%	7%	7%
USA	20%	13%	18%	16%
United Kingdom	5%	4%	4%	6%
Cont. Europe	4%	2%	4%	3%
China	0%	0%	5%	7%
Japan	0%	0%	0%	2%
Singapore	0%	0%	3%	7%
Korea	3%	1%	0%	0%
Total	**59%**	**42%**	**57%**	**65%**

9. **The 2016/17 identify brand health research reportedly showed the 'Where Happiness Finds You' brand resonate strongly in core markets. Yet within one year, Tourism Fiji commissioned a brand revitalization. Can Tourism Fiji reconcile this apparent contradiction and justify the cost of the revitalization on that evidence base?**

There is no contradiction. Research showed strong brand resonance. The revitalization was an evidence-based strategic progression. Quantitative research conducted by Edentify in 2016/17 confirmed that the "Where Happiness Finds You" brand resonated well with consumers in Australia, New Zealand, and North America.

This ensured a sustainable growth of the brand (and the destination).

10. **Are allocation directed towards different tourism sectors like hotels, tours and cruise? Visitor Arrival Performance and Market Strategy.**

Yes. Tourism Fiji's marketing investments are strategically allocated across various sectors to ensure broad industry benefits. Examples from the review period include:

- **Niche Sectors**: Dedicated funding and campaigns for Dive (e.g., Asia Dive Expo, AIDE Dive Consumer Expo), Weddings (e.g., roadshows in Australia and specialized "Bride Guides"), and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) through events like MICE Asia.

- **Events and Sports:** Support for high-profile events including the Fiji Open Golf, Fiji International Triathlon, Interhash 2018, and integrated consumer campaigns centered on Rugby 7s.

- **Trade Partnerships**: Collaborative campaigns with partners like Expedia, Flight Centre, and Helloworld that directly drive bookings for hotels and room nights.

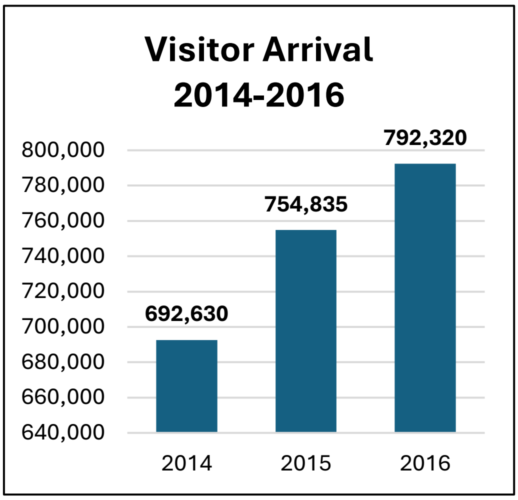
- **Sector Consultation**: In FY 2017/18, Tourism Fiji held Industry Days in Pacific Harbour, Nadi, and Savusavu to hear directly from operators about sector-specific challenges and how to better support them.

- **Marketing:** Inclusive of Global Campaigns and partnership, Content Management, Digital marketing and Public Relations and Communications,

11. **Tourism Fiji missed the visitor arrival targets in every major market in FY2017/18 by margin of 10-23%. Where the targets evidence-based, and what methodology was used to set them?**

    Were any staff or contractors held accountable for the shortfalls?

TF is reviewing its position on this. It is verifying the numbers in the KPI tables and the methodology used to set the targets. TF acknowledges that the targets appear rather optimistic. In any event, the actual arrivals were above 5% compared to the previous period with growth recorded across key source markets including Australia, New Zealand, North America and Asia.



Visitor arrival targets are evidence-based, developed using historical performance data, airline capacity, economic forecasts, market conditions, and industry consultation. While FY2017/18 saw record total visitor arrivals (859,132) and tourism earnings ($1.96bn), individual market targets were still affected by external factors:

- **Natural Disasters**: Tropical Cyclone Keni in April 2018 necessitated the late cancellation of the Fijian Tourism Expo (FTE), Fiji's premier tourism marketing event, which had 162 buyers and media registered to attend.
- **Market Competition**: Arrivals from the UK and Singapore were specifically impacted by a significant increase in competitor activity in those markets.

Yes. Funding was allocated various sectors to support a broad range of tourism operators. TF is looking are further segmentation (and has proposed this in its budgets) to further improve performance in these key areas.

12. **Australia and New Zealand consistently accounted for over 65% of total arrivals throughout the review period. What specific structural actions beyond marketing campaign has Tourism Fiji taken to reduce this market concentration risk? What is the measurable progress in diversifying the source market mix?**

Overall, visitor targets were achieved. Targets were set using data, airline capacity and market conditions.

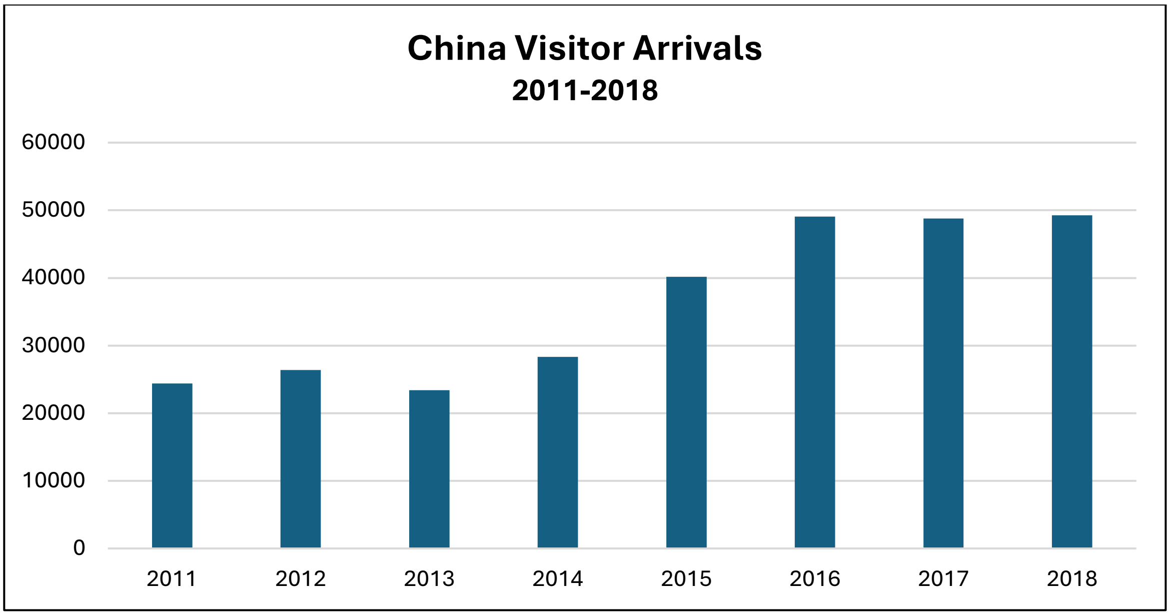
Australia and New Zealand are core markets due to geography and connectivity. Diversification efforts focused on new routes and emerging markets including India, Japan and Singapore. TF continues to explore avenues to provide optimum and sustainable growth of visitor arrivals for and spending in the destination.

Calendar Year	FJD$M	Y.o.Y %
2015	1,683.4	
2016	1,823.4	8%
2017	1,924.3	6%
2018	2,010.3	4%

13. **China was identified as a priority growth market throughout the period, yet arrivals from China stagnant (0% growth, FY2017/18) and significantly underperformed from China against targets.**

    What independent assessment was conducted of the effectiveness of Tourism Fiji's China Strategy and the market representation model?

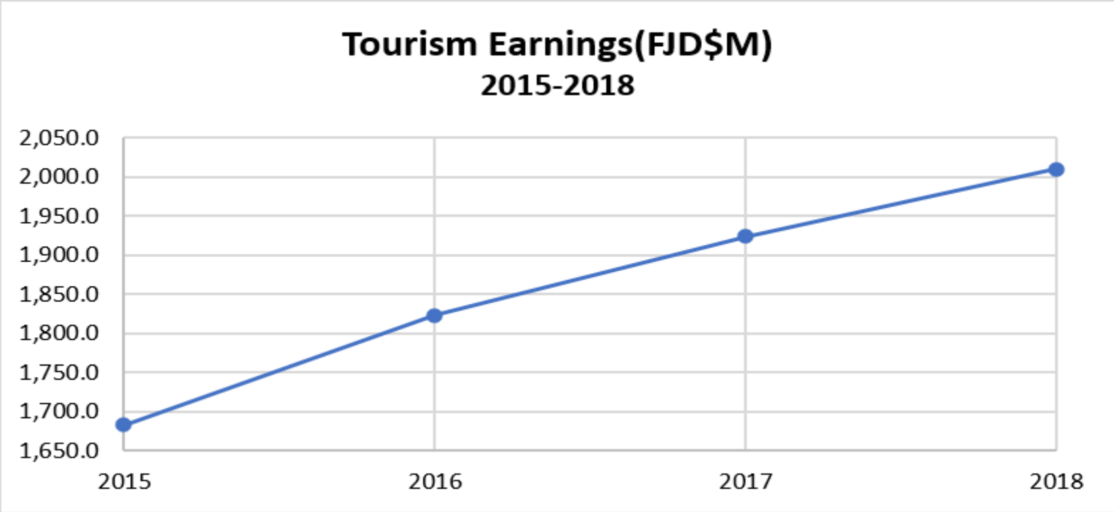
China, during that time, implemented a restriction on outbound travel. Despite this challenge, Fiji maintained its numbers in the Chinese market. TF uses its airline partnerships, digital platforms and OTA campaigns to support sustainable growth.



14. Studies suggest that a large share of tourism earning leaves Fiji through imports and profits sent overseas. Does Tourism Fiji agree with this assessment? What steps were taken between 2015 and 2018 to ensure more tourism income remained in Fiji, and what results were achieved?

TF, as the marketing arm, is not in a position to manage leakage. However, Tourism Fiji acknowledges that tourism leakage is a global challenge, though assessments vary significantly based on methodology. The organization maintains that Fiji's industry has evolved with substantial local ownership and investment from entities such as Fiji Airways, the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF), and numerous local operators.

To ensure more income remains within the local economy, Tourism Fiji has focused on visitor dispersal and promoting local experiences to spread wealth beyond traditional hubs. For example, in FY 2017/18, Tourism Fiji held Industry Days in Pacific Harbour and Savusavu to engage directly with regional operators and address their specific challenges. By supporting events like Interhash 2018, which Fiji won the rights to host over much larger nations, the organization brought 1,700 visitors directly into the Nadi community. These efforts contributed to record tourism earnings of $1.96 billion in FY 2017/18, providing a vital boost to the national economy.



15. What information does Tourism Fiji collects on where visitors travel and spend their money within Fiji? Has Tourism Fiji assessed whether its marketing promotes benefits for community based tourism operations and outer islands, or whether most benefits continue to flow to the main tourism centres and large resorts?

While Tourism Fiji does not collect this data as our role is focused on marketing Fiji as a destination, it utilizes data from the International Visitor Survey (IVS) and the Fiji Bureau of Statistics (FBoS) to track visitor behaviour, including Average Length of Stay (ALOS) and Average Spend per market. For instance, data from 2015 showed that while Australians stay for an average of 7.8 nights.

Marketing strategies specifically target niche sectors that benefit outer islands and community-based tourism, such as Dive, Weddings, and Adventure tourism. Campaigns like #FijiNow utilized social media to showcase diverse regions of Fiji post-cyclone, successfully restoring sentiment and driving traffic to various island properties. Furthermore, regional offices actively promote these experiences through specialized "Bride Guides" and dive-specific expos like the AIDE Dive Consumer Expo, which featured outer-island properties like Mantaray Island and Waidroka

16. In this modern-day and electronic advertising, is Tourism Fiji looking at reducing officers around the world and review strategies marketing? Sustainability and Environment Governance?

Tourism Fiji continues to evolve toward digital-first marketing while maintaining key offshore presence for trade, airline partnerships and market access.

We can confirm that staff have reduce overall in Tourism Fiji now. We are also in much-digitized advertising, and we are an in-house team as well. However, our key difference to attract visitors to Fiji are people hence we are strategizing properly to ensure that our people show their warmth when they are promoting internationally

Tourism Fiji continually reviews its marketing strategies to ensure they remain aligned with changing consumer behaviour and industry trends. While digital marketing has transformed destination promotion, technology complements rather than replaces the need for market-based expertise and relationships. International teams play a critical role in trade engagement, airline partnerships, media relations, market intelligence, crisis communications, and stakeholder management.

As the tourism landscape becomes increasingly competitive and fast-moving, the demand for specialised expertise in both digital and traditional channels has increased rather than diminished.

While digital marketing is a core priority, evidenced by a 419% increase in social media engagement in 2015, physical offices remain critical for managing high-value trade relationships and airline partnerships.

Strategic adjustments are made based on market potential: in 2015, the Korean office was closed to refocus resources on the Singapore market following the launch of direct flights. Conversely, the organization moved from a representation model to establishing dedicated Tourism Fiji offices in the UK and Germany to better capture the European market. For the Indian market, an independent consultant, Greg Anderson, recommended a hybrid representation model as the most efficient way to expand Fiji's presence. This balance of digital reach and physical representation supported the launch of critical new routes to San Francisco, Singapore, and Narita.

17. The SDG sections in the reports focus almost exclusively on internal HR practices. What concrete actions did Tourism Fiji take during 2015-2018 to reduce the environmental footprint of the tourism industry it promotes, including carbon emissions from air travel, waste management, and reef protection? Crisis Management and Resilience

While Tourism Fiji's primary mandate is destination marketing, it actively promotes environmental stewardship as a core component of the Fiji brand. During the review period, the organization aligned its activities with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Goals 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land).

Concrete actions undertaken include:

- **Tree Planting:** Conducting tree planting exercises with international media and trade famils to promote reforestation and carbon offsetting.

- **Biodiversity Partnerships:** Partnering with industry stakeholders to execute at least five major activities annually that promote sustainability and forest protection.

- **Reef Awareness:** Leveraging Fiji's reputation as a world-class dive destination to highlight the importance of reef protection through participation in international dive expos.

- **Advocacy:** Supporting the Fijian Government's global efforts to raise awareness regarding the detrimental impacts of climate change on Pacific island nations.

18. The FTE 2018 was cancelled due to Tropical Cyclone Keni, affecting 74 exhibitors and 162 registered buyers. What was the financial cost of the cancellation to Tourism Fiji and to industry partners? Does Tourism Fiji maintain event cancellation insurance? What changes to event risk management were implemented as a result?

The FTE 2018 cancellation led to partial recoverable costs with some expenses offset or carried forward. This cancellation was called on a night before the event, after confirmation from weather office that cyclone will hit Fiji. Most of the agents were already in Fiji and most things were also completed – ready to kick start in few hours. Therefore the cost did incur for pre- famil etc amounting to less than 30% of the total budget. Most of the cost payments were also credited to Tourism Fiji future events and subsequently utilised the following year.

Changes to event timing - we have kept the dates for event post cyclone season.

19. The Fijian taxpayer fully funds Tourism Fiji. What mechanisms existed during 2015-2018 for the public and industry stakeholders to provide input into Tourism Fiji's strategy priorities and marketing plans?

Tourism Fiji maintains several structured mechanisms for industry and stakeholder engagement to ensure its marketing plans are evidence-based and inclusive:

- **Industry Days:** Annual forums held in locations like Pacific Harbour, Nadi, and Savusavu allow the entire Tourism Fiji team to meet regional operators, share strategic plans, and hear directly about local challenges.

- **Talanoa Sessions:** Regular talanoa sessions and product updates are conducted at the Nadi headquarters to keep international trade partners and local stakeholders informed.

- **Marketing Forums:** Events like the three-day Fiji Marketing Forum in 2016 specifically sought stakeholder buy-in for North American tactical strategies.

- **Board Oversight:** Tourism Fiji is governed by a Board of Directors that includes key industry leaders from major entities such as Fiji Airways and the Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association, ensuring private sector expertise informs government-funded activities.

- **Matai Mega Conference:** This event brings together over 140 agents and local trade to network and learn about new products, ensuring marketing efforts align with what operators are delivering on the ground

20. Given the significant structural issues identified in this analysis, such as delayed tabling, missing community benefit data, absence of leakage analysis, and inadequate sustainability reporting, what reforms has Tourism Fiji made to its annual reporting framework since 2018 to address these gaps

Since 2017, reporting has improved through stronger KPI tracking, SDG integration and improved data systems.

Tourism Fiji does not accept the characterisation that these matters constitute "significant structural issues" as the organization has consistently evolved its reporting to meet and exceed statutory requirements. Several of the observations referenced involve subjective assessments or matters that extend beyond Tourism Fiji's reporting obligations and mandate during the review period.

Key reforms implemented during and since the review period include:

- **Enhanced KPI Tracking**: In FY 2016/17, Tourism Fiji introduced a comprehensive "KPI Analysis per Region" table, which provides transparent tracking of Targets versus Actual results for visitor arrivals, website sessions, and cooperative campaigns across all major markets.

- **Strategic Alignment**: Reporting has shifted from purely activity-based summaries to a model aligned with the Government's Fijian Tourism 2021 strategy, focusing on long-term sustainable growth rather than just tactical outputs.

- **Sustainability Reporting**: Since 2016/17, Tourism Fiji has formally integrated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its reporting, specifically tracking progress against Goal 13 (Climate Action) and Goal 15 (Life on Land) through initiatives like biodiversity partnerships and tree planting.

- **Data-Driven Decision Making**: The organization developed in-house capabilities to analyze the International Visitor Survey (IVS) and other metrics, ensuring that reporting on visitor behavior and regional dispersal is based on rigorous data.

- **Historical Benchmarking**: Following committee recommendations, Tourism Fiji now includes multi-year longitudinal summaries of visitor statistics to provide better context for performance trends.

21. Provide data on the table below.

Please refer to next page.

Year	Marketing Budget	Operational Cost	Actual Visitor Arrivals	Cost per Visitor	Percentage of Budget Spent on Overseas Offices	Total Visitors from Key Markets	Revenue Generated from Tourism	Feedback/Assessment
2015	**23,500,000**	**2,328,203**	754,835	FJD$25 per arrival	59%	Australia (367,273), New Zealand (138,537), United States (67,831), China (40,174), Continental Europe (31,195), United Kingdom (16,716) and Canada (11,709).	1683.4M	Increase from previous years
2016 (Jan to Jul)	**19,867,499**	**1,090,164**	435,413	FJD$30 per arrival	42%	Australia (360,370), New Zealand (163,836), United States (69,628), Canada (11,780), United Kingdom (16,712), Continental Europe (31,916) and China (49,083).	755.4M	This income is for 7 months only
2016/2017	**27,654,088**	**2,811,060**	819,701	FJD$29 per arrival	57%	Australia (362,222), New Zealand (174,924), United States (76,602), Canada (12,435), United Kingdom (16,936), Continental	1869.7M	More than 200M increase in comparison to 2015

						Europe (33,412) and China (49,647).		
2017/2018	**30,391,053**	**4,060,705**	859,132	FJD$39 per arrival	65%	Australia (365,517), New Zealand (193,767), United States (84,569), Canada (12,821), United Kingdom (16,291), Continental Europe (35,287) and China (49,358).	1961.04M	Consistent visitor and yield increase YOY

Na Vualiku Project

Update

June 2026

Overview

- The Fiji Tourism Development Program in Vanua Levu, or Na Vualiku, is a transformative initiative financed by the World Bank.
- US$200 million over 3 phases.
- Phase 1 has US$61.5 million
  - Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation: US$41.0 million
  - Airports Fiji: US$14.5 million
  - Fiji Roads Authority: US$6.0 million

Phased Approach over 10 Years

2024

2034

Phase 1: Setting foundational framework and implementing demonstration projects ($US61.5 m)

Phase 2: Putting physical and social capital in place ($US70.0 m)

Phase 3: Full roll out of Sustainable Tourism Master Plan ($68.5 m)

Phase 1 Program Components (US$ 61.5m)

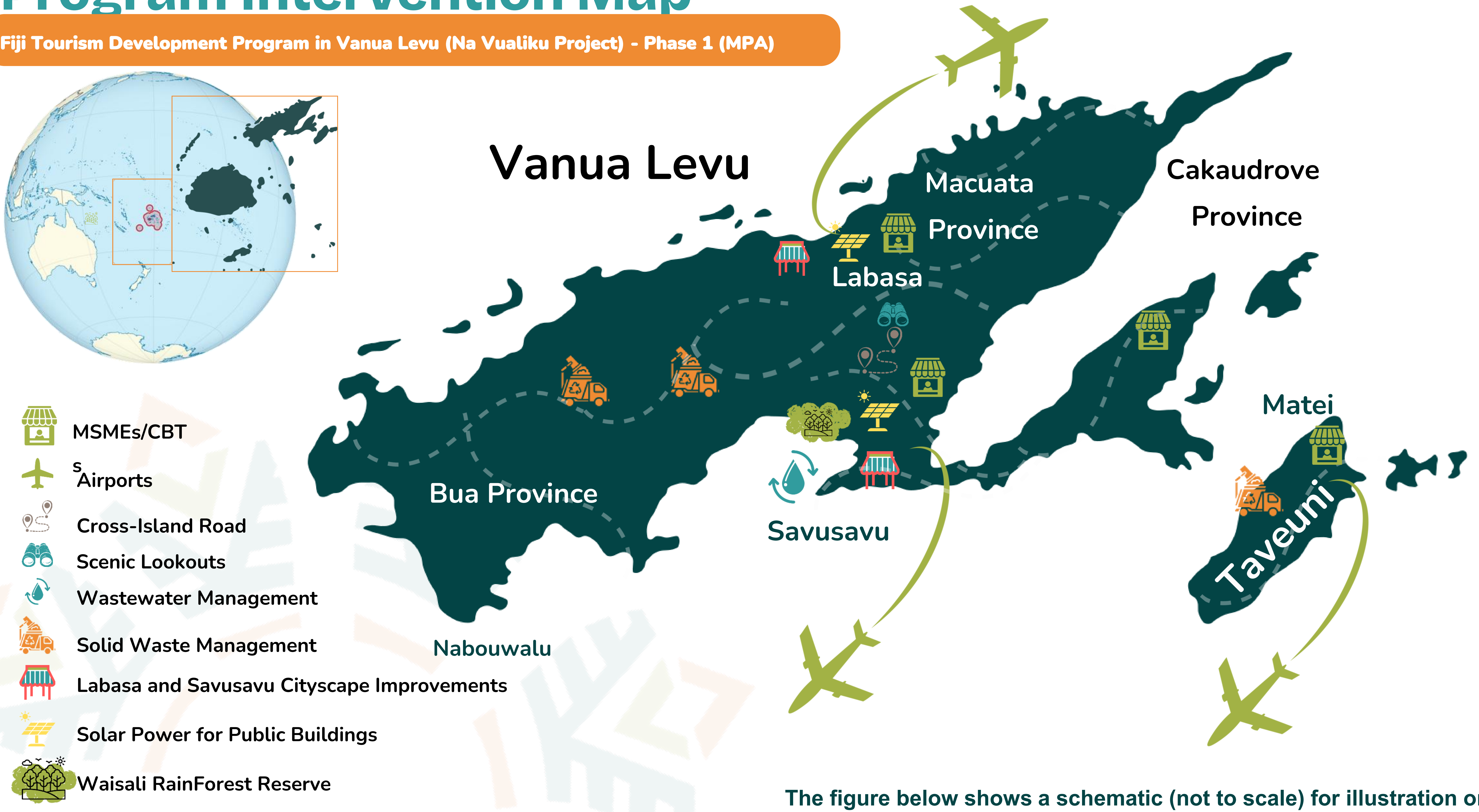
Component 1: Overcoming Barriers & Developing Sustainable Tourism (US$12.45m)

Component 2: Building Resilient Tourism Infrastructure (US$40.05m)

Component 3: Tourism Capacity Enhancement & Project Management (US$9m)

Program Intervention Map

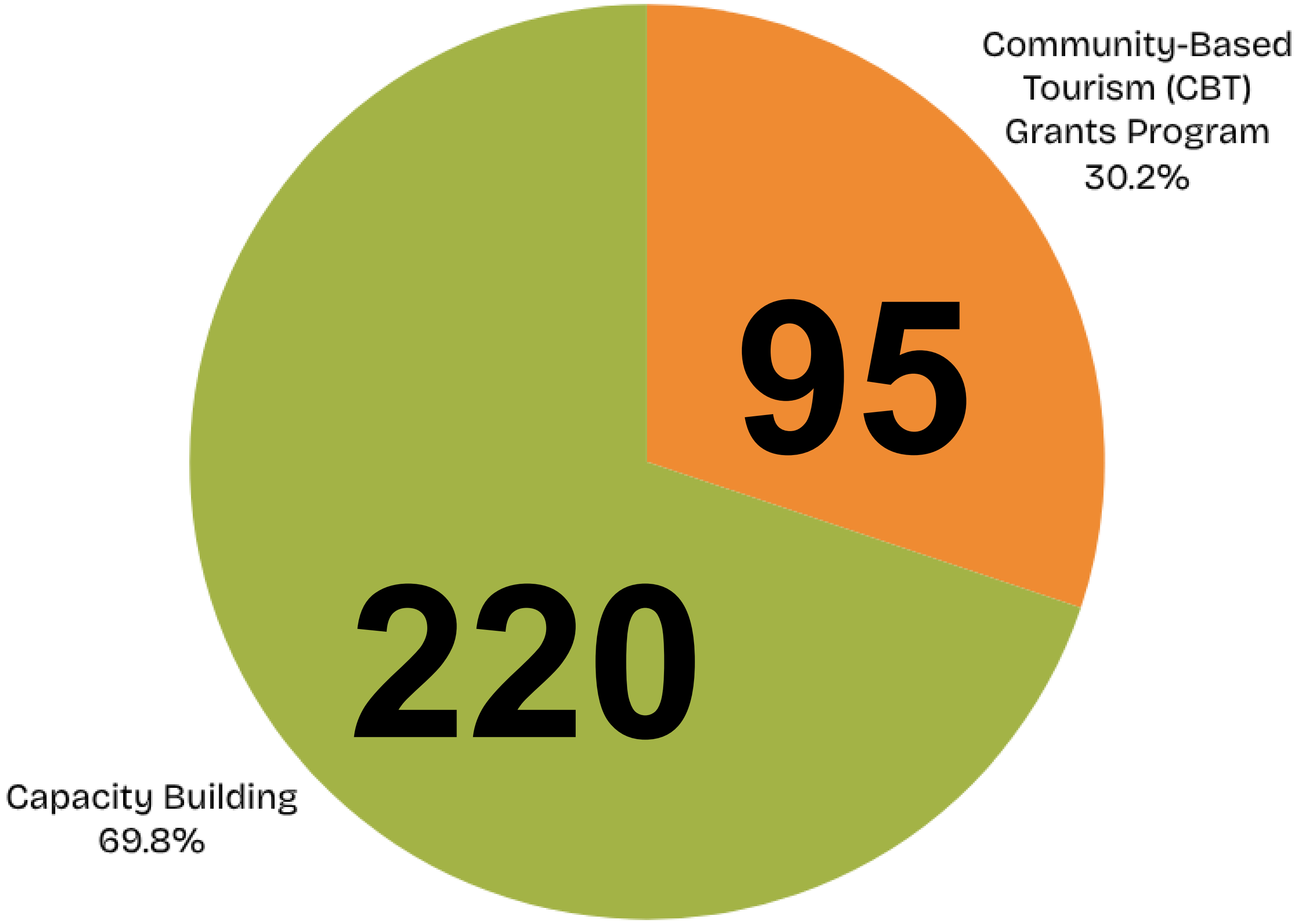
Fiji Tourism Development Program in Vanua Levu (Na Vualiku Project) - Phase 1 (MPA)



The figure below shows a schematic (not to scale) for illustration only.

MSME Support Program:

CBT Small-scale Infrastructure Grants and MSME, CBTs, Women-Led Enterprises (WLEs) Capacity Building program



- **Evaluation of applications are currently underway for CBT Small-scale Infrastructure Grants.**
- **The MSME, CBTs, WLEs Capacity Building program will commence May/June 2026.**
- **61 CBT and 161 MSME applications were from Cakaudrove**

Over 300 applications received.

MSME Support Program Next Steps:

Finalise Selection of Beneficiaries:

- **Complete screening, assessments, and site visits for CBT applications.**

Mobilise Delivery Support:

- **Onboard Business Development Services (BDS) firm and commence assessment of Capacity Building applications to enable program rollout.**
- **Request for Proposals closes end of April 2026.**

Feasibility Study for the Design, Procurement and Installation of Solar Photovoltaics in Labasa and Savusavu:

On track:

Implementation is progressing well and remains on track for completion by July 2026.

Phased approach established:

This work represents Phase 1 of a two-phase process, focused on feasibility assessment, with Phase 2 to progress design and installation of solar systems at agreed sites.

Photo: One of the proposed sites - Savusavu Town Council

Feasibility Study for the Design, Procurement and Installation of Solar Photovoltaics in Labasa and Savusavu:

Priority sites identified:

The solar projects targets selected municipal buildings in Labasa (Town Council building, municipal market, bus stand, Subrail Park) and Savusavu (Town Council building, New Market, bus stand), aligning solar investments with high-use public infrastructure.

Optimised and refined site approach in Savusavu:

- The New Market's modern steel-frame structure can generate sufficient power to supply adjacent facilities (bus stand and Council Building), enabling efficient, clustered energy solutions.
- The Savusavu Hospital has been added as an additional site.

Supply and Installation Contract :

We expect to go to the market for the supply and installation by August 2026.

Integrated Tourism Master Plan (ITMP):

ITMP overview:

The ITMP establishes the foundation of the Program, delivering a 25-year phased development plan for the Northern Division alongside detailed 5-year plans for key tourism areas, including Savusavu and surrounds, Natewa Peninsula and Bay, and Labasa and Taveuni.

Initiated in September 2025 and scheduled for completion by January 2027, the plan is designed to address four major constraints to sustainable tourism growth.

Integrated Tourism Master Plan (ITMP) Update:

ITMP implementation progress:

The ITMP is advancing across core phases, including tourism baseline analysis, SESA integration, and development of growth scenarios, forming the foundation of the long-term plan.

Stakeholder consultations and visioning:

Consultations and visioning workshops have been completed across Labasa, Nabouwalu, Savusavu, and Taveuni, ensuring the plan reflects community priorities and local development aspirations.

Spatial analysis and scenario development:

GIS-based spatial modelling and development scenarios are underway to guide future tourism growth pathways and infrastructure planning.

Growth Projections and Development Scenarios:

To assess the potential evolution of tourism demand in Fiji's Northern Division, a set of scenarios has been developed. They are based on stakeholder feedback

Growth model: Communities favor low-volume, high-value tourism that protects authenticity, culture, and local benefits rather than rapid mass-market expansion
Tourism's environmental impacts: Environmental protection is seen as essential because reefs, forests, water quality, and biodiversity are the core assets that sustain the tourism offer
Community involvement and jobs: Tourism should create inclusive local jobs, strengthen community ownership, and prioritize training so residents can lead and benefit from the sector
Infrastructure investments: Water, sanitation, waste, energy, roads, and connectivity must be treated as first-order priorities, since tourism growth cannot be sustainable without them

Combined Design and Supervision Update:

Three components support the Design and Supervision (D&S) of tourism infrastructure under the Na Vualiku Project

1. Waisali Forest Reserve Visitor Centre, Treks and Trails
2. Cityscape Improvements in Labasa and Savusavu
3. Small Infrastructure Development for Community-Based Tourism Operators

Integrated consultancy approach:

Packaging under a single consultancy ensures consistent design standards and economies of scale, enabling parallel implementation across locations with coordinated methodologies and reporting.

The project is expected to start by July 2026.

1. Waisali Forest Reserve:

Waisali Forest Reserve development:

Prepare and supervise an integrated package of investments for the Waisali Forest Reserve, including a market demand assessment and business plan with management options, conceptual and detailed design of a Visitor Information Centre and trail network.

2. Cityscape Improvements in Labasa and Savusavu

Cityscape improvements in Labasa and Savusavu:

Enhance the town centres of Savusavu and Labasa to be safe, functional, attractive, and climate-resilient, building on pre-feasibility work by the World Bank and GIZ. The scope covers wayfinding and informational signage, streetscape improvements, parks and public open spaces, and coastal protection with an integrated foreshore walkway.

3. Small Infrastructure Development for Community-Based Tourism Operators

Small Infrastructure for Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Operators:

Design and supervise small-scale infrastructure for selected CBT enterprises under the Na Vualiku CBT Grants Pilot Program, ensuring investments are sustainable, culturally aligned, inclusive, and economically empowering.

The approach is guided by co-creation with local communities, regenerative and sustainable design, and a focus on safety, accessibility, and low maintenance.

Photo: A small visitor shelter provides essential shade and comfort, reflecting practical, low-maintenance infrastructure that supports community-based tourism and enhances the visitor experience.

Solid Waste Management (SWM) Update:

Labasa has an engineered landfill that has already exceeded the projected volume of its lifespan. Savusavu has a dumpsite on mangroves which is under closure notice. Taveuni has an informal dumpsite on Mataqali land. Leachate and blown rubbish are significant environmental concerns at all three sites.

Scope Focused on Immediate and Long-term Solutions:

- Identification of ‘quick win’ improvements for existing facilities to deliver immediate service enhancements.
- Options assessment to determine a preferred long-term solid waste management scenario for Vanua Levu and Taveuni, including:
  - Locally based solution (new greenfield landfill for Savusavu and a transfer station for Taveuni), or
  - Regional solution (new landfill in Labasa/Seaqaqa area with transfer stations across key centres), or
  - Alternative innovative approaches.

Solid Waste Management (SWM) Next Steps:

Implementation Underway:

Project commenced in March 2026 with site visits and stakeholder engagements underway across Savusavu, Taveuni, and Labasa.

Immediate Improvements: **Submission of report and bidding documents for quick-win upgrades to existing facilities by July 2026. Improvement works commence by November 2026.**

Strategic Planning: **Infrastructure scenario development workshops scheduled for July 2026 to define preferred long-term approach.**

Master Planning Outputs: **Northern Division Waste Management Investment Master Plan and bidding documents to be submitted by October 2026. Physical implementation of preferred option commence early 2027.**

Waste Water Update:

The main priority activities to be financed for water supply and sanitation are a master plan (and associated detailed technical designs) for sanitation in Savusavu

Update

- The activity includes a rapid assessment, development of a strategic master plan, and development of detailed technical designs (with associated environmental and social assessments) for priority sanitation investments in Savusavu.
- The rapid assessment and master planning process will also prioritise securing land for a future treatment plant and associated sanitation infrastructure (e.g., pumping stations)
- The inception stage is currently underway.

Airport Upgrades & Feasibility Study for New Airport Updates:

Labasa runway strengthening completed: Emergency runway repairs were completed on schedule within six weeks, restoring pavement condition to support ATR-72 operations and enabling improved operational reliability.

Design and supervision progressing: Technical documentation for Labasa and Savusavu works advancing, including geotechnical investigations and detailed design; Labasa fire station and car park designs targeted for mid-June submission.

Savusavu airport: Planning for a new terminal building, a new fire station, flood-resilience works, and seawall repairs is advancing. Separately, a government interagency task force is evaluating Savusavu Airport's capacity and operational requirements.

Airport Upgrades & Feasibility Study for New Airport Updates:

Future capacity planning underway:

Feasibility for potential runway extension underway at Labasa to reduce operational constraints.

New airport and master planning advancing:

A feasibility study for a new airport and masterplanning for Labasa, Matei have commenced.

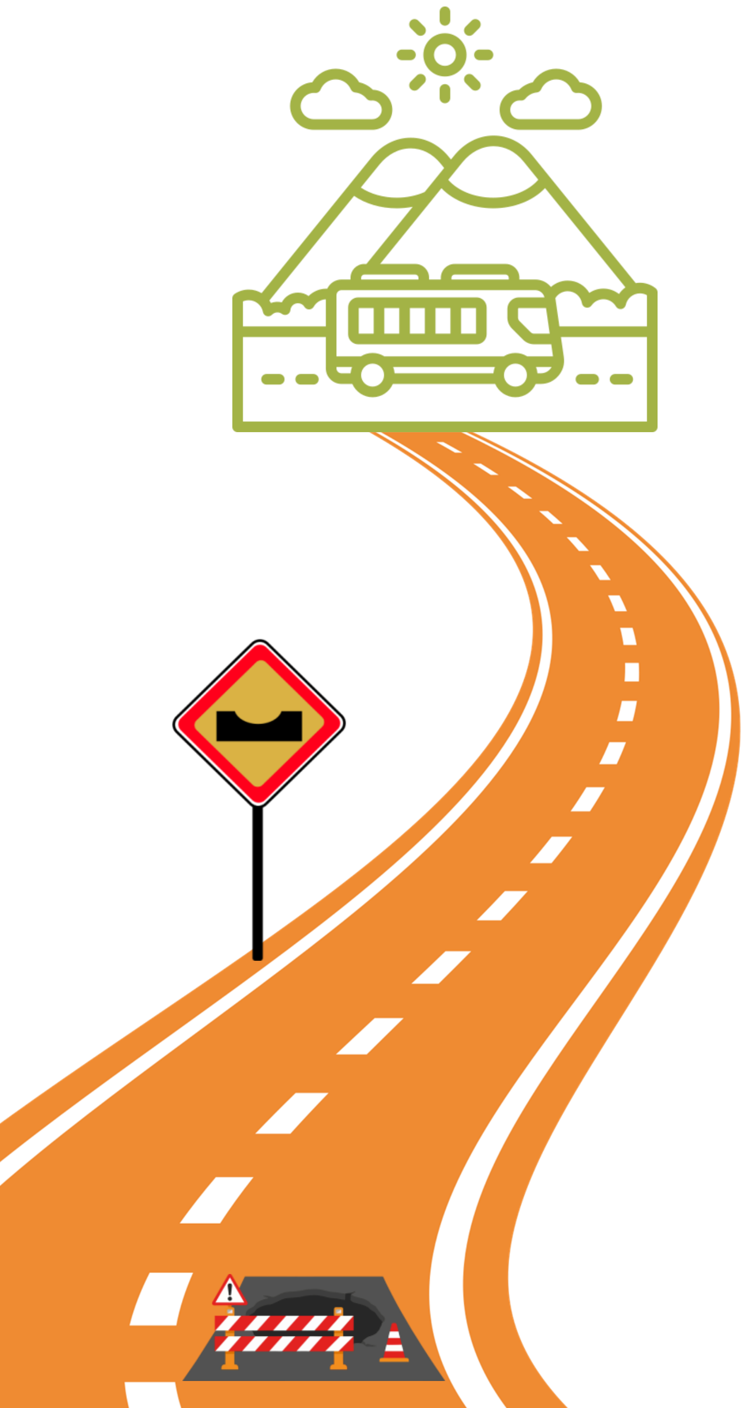
Initial stakeholder consultations and site visits completed.

Remote Tower AFIS progressing:

The project is expected to commence in May 2026.

Labasa–Savusavu Cross-Island Road and Scenic Lookouts:

Travel between Labasa and Savusavu will become safer and the Cross-Island Road more resilient and scenic, creating new opportunities for villages along the route.



Along the Saivou–Lomaloma–Urata corridor:

- **Safety improvements, including off-ramps**
- **Building climate resilience**
    - **strengthening of a 600-metre coastal section to protect against ongoing erosion.**
- **6 lookout points**

4 June 2026

Ms. Awantika Raj
Deputy Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Economic Affairs
Legislative Services Division
Parliament of the Republic of Fiji
P.O Box 2352, Government Buildings
Suva, Fiji

Phone: (679) 2885269
Website: http://www.parliament.gov.fj

Dear Ms. Raj,

RE: SUBMISSION ON TOURISM CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NORTH

On behalf of the Macuata Tourism Association (MTA), I would like to sincerely thank the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs for inviting our Association to participate in this important consultation regarding the tourism industry in Labasa and the Northern Division.

The Macuata Tourism Association is a formally registered tourism association representing tourism operators, tourism-related businesses, community stakeholders, and development interests within Macuata and the Northern Division. The Association was established with the objective of creating an inclusive platform that supports sustainable tourism development, promotes collaboration within the tourism industry, and advocates for opportunities that benefit local communities throughout the North.

A key focus of the Association is to facilitate and support the development of eco-tourism projects within villages and rural communities across Macuata and Vanua Levu. We believe that tourism development in the North must be community-based, environmentally sustainable, culturally respectful, and economically beneficial to local people.

The Association also aims to support and complement the long-term objectives of the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation and the World Bank-supported Na Vualiku Tourism Project over the next ten years by helping bridge communication, coordination, connectivity, and engagement between communities, tourism stakeholders, development partners, and government agencies within the Northern Division.

Tourism in the Northern Division holds significant untapped potential. Vanua Levu offers unique cultural, eco-tourism, adventure, marine, and agricultural tourism experiences that distinguish it from other destinations within Fiji. However, the growth of the industry continues to be constrained by several longstanding issues that require coordinated support, strategic prioritization, and investment from government, municipal authorities, infrastructure providers, and the private sector.

1. INFRASTRUCTURE, CONNECTIVITY AND ROAD ACCESS

• Prioritize upgrading and maintenance of roads servicing tourism areas and rural communities.
• Improve transportation connectivity between Labasa, Savusavu, Nabouwalu, Taveuni, and key tourism sites.
• Improve access to reliable telecommunications and internet services for tourism operators and rural tourism communities.
• Improve street lighting, signage, drainage, beautification, and public infrastructure within Labasa Town and surrounding tourism corridors.
• Prioritize Northern Fiji within national infrastructure development and tourism investment planning.

2. AIR CONNECTIVITY AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS

• Encourage increased domestic flight frequencies and competitive pricing.
• Explore incentives to improve connectivity between Nadi, Suva, Labasa, and Savusavu.
• Strengthen inter-island ferry reliability and tourism transport services.
• Prioritize improved accessibility into Vanua Levu to support tourism growth and investment opportunities.

3. SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY AND ECO-TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

• Support feasibility and scoping trips to rural communities and villages to assess eco-tourism opportunities throughout Macuata and Vanua Levu.
• Prioritize community-based tourism development initiatives that create direct economic benefits for local communities.
• Provide technical assistance and development support for community-based tourism initiatives.
• Establish funding pathways and grant support for eco-tourism projects in villages and rural communities.
• Encourage sustainable tourism models that preserve culture, protect the environment, and generate local income opportunities.

4. TOURISM DATA, RESEARCH AND VISITOR DATABASE DEVELOPMENT

• Support the development of a centralized tourism database for Northern Fiji to capture both domestic and international visitor data.

• Develop systems to monitor visitor arrivals, tourism movement, accommodation usage, tourism spending patterns, and visitor interests within the North.
• Utilize tourism data and research findings to support eco-tourism development projects and investment planning in villages and rural communities.
• Strengthen collaboration between tourism operators, government agencies, municipal councils, and tourism associations in data collection and reporting.
• Support tourism research and market assessments that identify growth opportunities for Northern Fiji.

5. FUNDING AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT FOR TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS

• Provide institutional support funding for tourism associations operating in the Northern Division.
• Support administrative requirements including office operations, staffing, communication, stakeholder coordination, and regional connectivity.
• Assist with the development of a tourism website, digital marketing platforms, destination branding, and promotional activities for Northern Fiji.
• Support tourism research, stakeholder consultations, and community engagement programmes.
• Provide assistance for travel and field assessments to tourism sites and communities throughout Macuata and Vanua Levu.
• Prioritize tourism associations as key stakeholders and implementation partners within tourism development initiatives.

6. LIMITED INVESTMENT SUPPORT FOR NORTHERN TOURISM

• Establish targeted tourism development incentives for Vanua Levu and the Northern Division.
• Provide easier access to small business grants, concessional financing, and tourism recovery assistance.
• Develop investment promotion initiatives specifically focused on Northern Fiji.
• Prioritize tourism investment projects that support sustainable development and local employment opportunities.

7. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

• Expand hospitality and tourism training programmes within the Northern Division.
• Strengthen partnerships with training institutions and industry stakeholders.
• Support internship and apprenticeship programmes for young people entering the tourism sector.
• Prioritize workforce development initiatives that support long-term tourism sustainability in the North.

8. MARKETING, CONNECTIVITY AND DESTINATION PROMOTION

- Increase national and international promotion of Vanua Levu as a tourism destination.
- Support collaborative destination branding initiatives for the North.
- Develop dedicated marketing campaigns highlighting eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and community tourism experiences in Macuata and Vanua Levu.
- Improve digital connectivity and online visibility for Northern tourism operators and destinations.
- Encourage tourism events, festivals, conferences, and familiarization visits in Labasa and surrounding areas.
- Prioritize Northern Fiji within national tourism marketing strategies.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND TOWN SERVICES

- Improve waste collection and public sanitation services.
- Strengthen environmental management and enforcement.
- Support sustainable tourism initiatives and climate resilience programmes.

10. GREATER PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION

- Establish regular tourism stakeholder consultation forums in the Northern Division.
- Include tourism industry representatives in development planning discussions.
- Strengthen partnerships that support long-term tourism growth, connectivity, and resilience.
- Prioritize inclusive stakeholder engagement in tourism planning and policy implementation.

CONCLUSION

The Macuata Tourism Association remains committed to working collaboratively with government, municipal authorities, community leaders, development partners, and private sector stakeholders to strengthen tourism development in the North.

We believe that with improved infrastructure, stronger connectivity, strategic prioritization, policy support, investment, reliable tourism data, community empowerment, and enhanced collaboration, Northern Fiji can become a major contributor to Fiji’s tourism economy while creating sustainable opportunities for local communities over the next decade and beyond.

We thank the Committee once again for this opportunity to present our views and recommendations and look forward to constructive engagement moving forward.

Yours faithfully,

Milia Amelia L Simmons JP
President
Macuata Tourism Association

Destination Coral Coast Submission

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Economic Affairs – Tourism Fiji

Submitted by: Destination Coral Coast

June 2026

Introduction

Destination Coral Coast is a collective of tourism operators, resorts, attractions, businesses, and stakeholders working together to strengthen, promote, and develop Fiji's Coral Coast as a premier tourism destination.

The Coral Coast is one of Fiji's most established tourism regions, stretching from Natadola to Pacific Harbour and offering a diverse range of experiences including resorts, adventure tourism, cultural attractions, marine activities, local communities, and small businesses.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.

---

1. Recommendations

Strengthen Regional Destination Marketing

While Tourism Fiji does an excellent job promoting Fiji internationally, there is an opportunity to increase support for regional destination marketing initiatives.

Destination-specific campaigns for areas such as the Coral Coast would help showcase the unique experiences available beyond Fiji's traditional tourism hubs.

Increase Support for Digital Marketing

Additional support should be provided for regional digital marketing initiatives, including:

- Social media promotion
- Content creation

- Influencer partnerships
- Destination websites
- Digital visitor guides

Many smaller tourism operators do not have the resources to market themselves effectively online.

Improve Destination Signage

Clear and attractive directional signage throughout the Coral Coast would improve visitor experiences and encourage guests to explore more attractions, businesses, and communities.

Support Tourism Product Development

Funding and technical support should be made available to encourage new tourism products, cultural experiences, eco-tourism activities, and community-based tourism initiatives.

Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships

Greater collaboration between Government, Tourism Fiji, municipal councils, tourism associations, and private sector stakeholders will help ensure tourism development aligns with industry needs.

---

2. Key Challenges

Limited Regional Marketing Resources

Many regional tourism operators have limited budgets for marketing and promotion, making it difficult to compete in an increasingly digital marketplace.

Infrastructure Challenges

Several areas along the Coral Coast require continued investment in:

- Roads
- Street lighting

- Public amenities
- Waste management
- Visitor facilities
- Tourism signage

These improvements are essential to maintaining a positive visitor experience.

Labour and Skills Shortages

The tourism industry continues to face challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled employees across operational and management positions.

Ongoing training and workforce development programs remain important.

Seasonality and Economic Pressures

Fluctuating visitor arrivals, rising operating costs, and global economic uncertainty continue to impact tourism businesses of all sizes.

Limited Regional Coordination

Many businesses work independently, resulting in missed opportunities for joint marketing, shared promotions, and destination development initiatives.

---

3. Way Forward

Develop a Coral Coast Destination Management Plan

A long-term destination management strategy should be developed in partnership with stakeholders to guide future tourism growth.

Invest in Regional Branding

The Coral Coast should be promoted as a distinct destination with a clear identity that highlights:

- Culture
- Nature

- Adventure
- Community experiences
- Wellness and relaxation

Support Sustainable Tourism

Future development should balance economic growth with environmental protection and community involvement.

Encourage Industry Collaboration

Continued support should be given to destination groups such as Destination Coral Coast that bring stakeholders together to share ideas, resources, and opportunities.

Improve Visitor Experience

Investment in infrastructure, beautification projects, safety measures, and visitor information services will help maintain Fiji's reputation as a world-class tourism destination.

---

4. Role and Initiatives of Destination Coral Coast

Destination Coral Coast was established to create a collaborative platform for tourism stakeholders across the region.

Current initiatives include:

Coral Coast Destination Branding

Development of a unified destination identity and marketing approach to strengthen regional visibility.

Regional Social Media Strategy

Establishment of a dedicated social media coordinator role to promote the Coral Coast through digital channels and showcase member businesses and experiences.

Coral Coast Website Redevelopment

Development of a modern destination website featuring accommodation providers, attractions, activities, dining options, events, and visitor information.

Coral Coast Regional Video

Collaboration with Tourism Fiji to develop destination video content showcasing the region's unique experiences and attractions.

Destination Mapping Project

Creation of a regional tourism map highlighting attractions, businesses, experiences, and key visitor points throughout the Coral Coast.

Membership Growth

Encouraging greater participation from tourism operators, businesses, and community stakeholders to strengthen collective destination development efforts.

Proposed Development Priorities for the Coral Coast

Destination Coral Coast recommends consideration of the following projects:

1. Improved destination entry signage and wayfinding.
2. Development of scenic viewing areas and visitor rest stops.
3. Enhanced public facilities at key tourism locations.
4. Greater support for community-based tourism experiences.
5. Beautification projects throughout the Coral Coast corridor.
6. Annual Coral Coast tourism events and festivals.
7. Increased destination marketing partnerships with Tourism Fiji.
8. Development of eco-tourism and cultural tourism experiences that directly benefit local communities.

Conclusion

The Coral Coast remains one of Fiji's most important tourism regions and has significant potential for continued growth.

Through stronger collaboration, targeted investment, improved infrastructure, and destination-focused marketing, the Coral Coast can further enhance its contribution to Fiji's tourism industry and national economy.

Destination Coral Coast looks forward to working closely with Government, Tourism Fiji, and industry stakeholders to support sustainable tourism development and create lasting benefits for businesses, communities, and visitors alike.

Submitted respectfully on behalf of Destination Coral Coast.

ANNEX 2

RESEARCH BRIEF

Information Brief for Standing Committee

Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

Comparative Analysis on Tourism Fiji Annual Reports 2015-2018

1.0. Overview

This Information Brief is provided to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs ("SC-EA" or "Committee") as requested through its secretariat. The information material is the information brief (Comparative Analysis) on the Tourism Fiji "TF" Annual Report "AR" 2015[1], 2016[2]z, 2016-2017[3] and 2017-2018[4], and Annual Committee report on Review Report Tourism Fiji 2013 – 2014[5]. This brief provides an overview of some key trends, performance, and overall direction as documented in these annual reports. This brief is intended to supplement other resources available to the Committee.

2.0. Introduction				
2.1. Vision	Seen by the world as the jewel of the South Pacific; spearheading the growth of international Visitor Arrivals and Tourism Earnings			
2.2. Mission	We achieve our vision by highlighting the richness and diversity of our people, culture, land and sea, delivering increased visitor arrivals that create wealth for the nation			
2.3. Value	• Conduct our business with integrity. • Be accountable for all decisions. • Demonstrate commitment to the vision. • Promote teamwork. • Foster innovative thinking. • Ensure transparency in all operations. • Socially and culturally responsible for all actions.			
	2015	**2016**	**2016-2017**	**2017-2018**
2.4. Yearly Performance Summary	Tourism in Fiji performed strongly in 2015, with	Tourism Fiji's 2016 performance was guided by	Tourism Fiji's 2016/17 performance was initially	Tourism Fiji's 2017/18 performance was

[1] Tourism Fiji Annual Report 2015. [Accessed on 29/05/2026]; annual-report-2015_updated.pdf

[2] Tourism Fiji Annual Report 2016. [Accessed on 29/05/2026]; 98-Tourism-Fiji-Annual-Report-2016-1st-January–31st-July.pdf

[3] Tourism Fiji Annual Report 2016-2017. [Accessed on 29/05/2026]; 99-Tourism-Fiji-Annual-Report-August-2016–July-2017.pdf

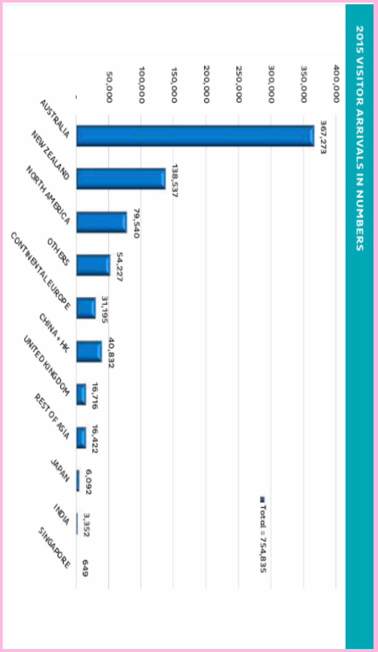
[4] Tourism Fiji Annual Report 201702018. [Accessed on 29/05/2026]; 2017-18-annual-report-print-compressed.pdf

[5] Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, Consolidated Report on the Review of Tourism Fiji 2013 and 2014 Annual Reports. [Accessed on 29/05/2026]; EA2-Consolidated-Report-on-the-Review-of-Tourism-Fiji-2013-and-2014-Annual-Reports-final.pdf

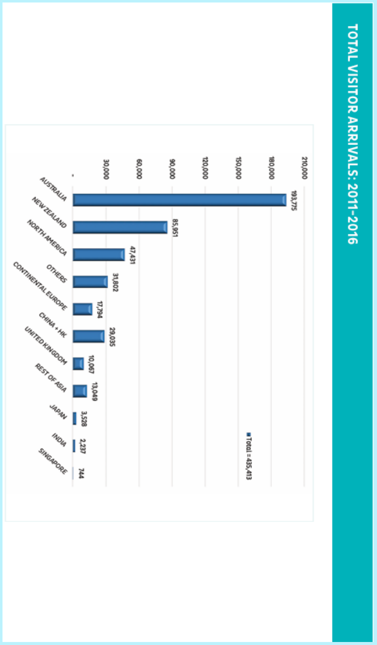
	754,835 international visitors—well above the target of 714,000. Tourism Fiji focused on six key areas, including targeting core and emerging markets, strengthening its "Fiji – where happiness finds you" brand, expanding public relations, improving industry engagement, growing digital capabilities, and enhancing internal capacity. The brand strategy centered on four pillars—people, place, experiences, and connections—emphasizing personalized notions of happiness and supported by increased digital marketing that boosted social media presence and global media coverage. Regionally, Tourism Fiji expanded its footprint by establishing dedicated offices in the UK and Germany, replacing the previous representation model, while also successfully hosting an enlarged Fiji Tourism Expo with 30% more participants. At the same time, it **closed its Korean office** to refocus efforts on the Singapore	key strategic priorities, including strengthening the "Fiji – Where Happiness Finds You" brand, improving research and data-driven decision-making, targeting specific market segments, enhancing measurement of marketing outcomes, consolidating traditional markets such as Australia and New Zealand, expanding into emerging markets, and aligning closely with government development plans. However, the year was significantly impacted by **Cyclone Winston in February 2016**, which caused widespread damage and negative publicity. In response, the Tourism Action Group (TAG) was formed to maintain visitor confidence through coordinated public relations, targeted marketing campaigns, and securing funding to sustain recovery efforts. Despite these challenges, the industry demonstrated resilience, supported by major developments such as **Fiji Airways launching new**	dominated by recovery efforts following Tropical Cyclone Winston, with the Tourism Action Group playing a key role in restoring confidence in the destination. Once recovery stabilized, Tourism Fiji refocused on its strategic priorities, including strengthening the "Fiji – Where Happiness Finds You" brand, improving research and market insights, targeting niche segments, enhancing measurable marketing outcomes, consolidating traditional markets such as Australia and New Zealand, expanding into emerging markets, and aligning closely with government development plans. With the **appointment of new CEO Matthew Stoeckel** in August 2016, the organization placed greater emphasis on delivering key initiatives such as brand health research, reviewing India market representation, and conducting a social media audit, while also planning future projects including a new website. Additionally,	characterized as a year to kick-start transformation, focused on building organizational capabilities to be more creative, innovative, and effective. A primary objective was the global revitalization of the "Fiji – Where Happiness Finds You" brand to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness, leading to the appointment of brand agency Saatchi & Saatchi NZ following a rigorous global tender process. Strategic priorities included transitioning to a content-led marketing approach to engage consumers 365 days a year, developing world-class brand assets such as a new website and license-free content, and enhancing in-house research capabilities to inform strategic decision-making. Despite the **cancellation of the premier Fijian Tourism Expo 2018 due to Tropical Cyclone Keni**, Fiji achieved a record 859,132 international visitors with tourism earnings valued at $1.96 billion. Under the leadership of CEO

	market, in line with the launch of direct flights between Nadi and Singapore in 2016.	**routes to San Francisco and Singapore**, and continued engagement through events like the **Fiji Tourism Expo** in May, which highlighted the sector's recovery and strength.	the **launch of the Fijian Tourism 2021 strategic document** by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism provided clear direction for Tourism Fiji to lead and support long-term industry growth.	Matthew Stoeckel, the organization prioritized building team capacity through an extensive recruiting process to fill specialized roles in digital marketing, social media, and brand management. These efforts remained closely aligned with the directions set out in the government's Fijian Tourism 2021 strategy, positioning the industry for long-term sustainable growth.

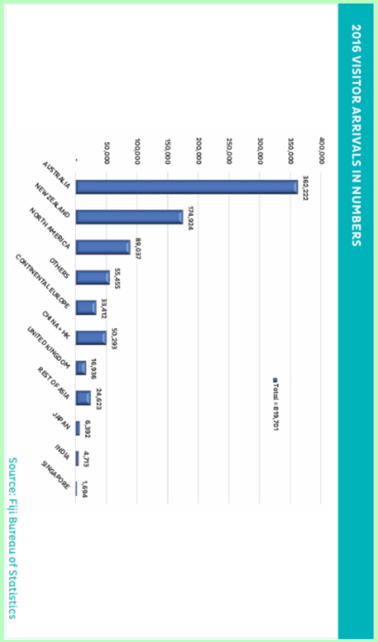
2.5. Visitors Arrival Statistics



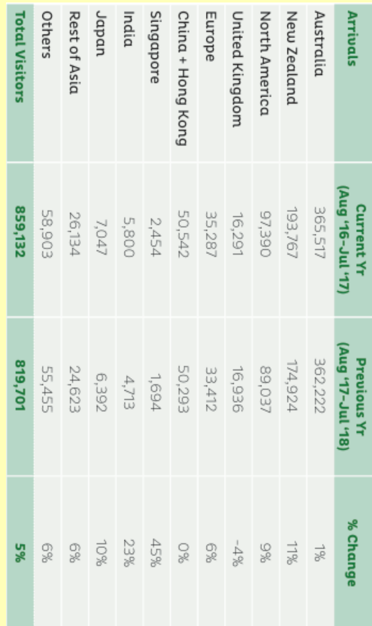
Source: TF AR 2015, p9



Source: TF AR 2016, p8

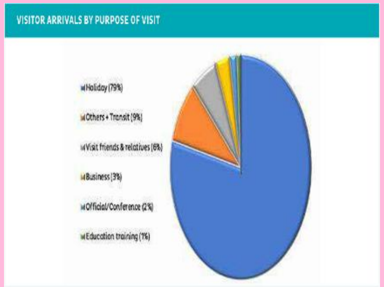
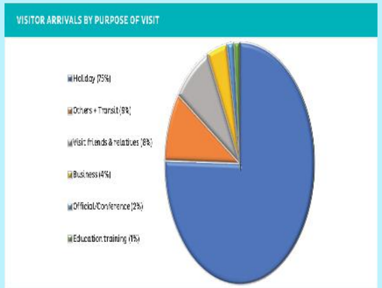
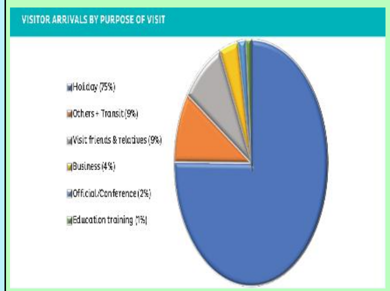
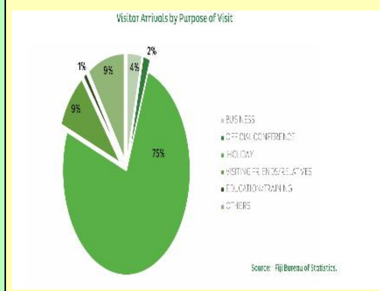


Source: TF AR 2016-2017, p8



Arrivals	Current Yr (Aug '16–Jul '17)	Previous Yr (Aug '17–Jul '18)	% Change
Australia	365,517	362,222	1%
New Zealand	193,767	174,924	11%
North America	97,390	89,037	9%
United Kingdom	16,291	16,936	-4%
Europe	35,287	33,412	6%
China + Hong Kong	50,542	50,293	0%
Singapore	2,454	1,694	45%
India	5,800	4,713	23%
Japan	7,047	6,392	10%
Rest of Asia	26,134	24,623	6%
Others	58,903	55,455	6%
Total Visitors	859,132	819,701	5%

Source: TF AR 2017-2018, p9

2.6. Purpose of Visit	 *Source: TF AR 2015, p11* • Holiday: 79% • Others + Transit: 9% • Visit friends & relatives: 6% • Business: 3% • Official/Conference: 2% • Education training: 1%	 *Source: TF AR 2016, p10* • Holiday (75%) • Others + Transit (9%) • Visit friends & relatives (8%) • Business (4%) • Official/Conference (2%) • Education training (1%)	 *Source: TF AR 2016-2017, p10* • Holiday (75%) • Others + Transit (9%) • Visit friends & relatives (9%) • Business (4%) • Official/Conference (2%) • Education training (1%)	 *Source: TF AR 2017-2018, p12* • Holiday: 75% • Visiting friends/relatives: 9% • Others: 9% • Business: 4% • Official/Conference: 2% • Education/training: 1%
2.7. Key Highlights	• Exceeded Arrival Targets: Welcomed 754,835 international visitors, significantly exceeding the internal target of 714,000 • Digital Growth: Achieved massive growth in social media engagement, with a 419% increase in engagements compared to the previous year	• Crisis Management: Executed a highly successful crisis communication strategy and the #FijiNow campaign following Tropical Cyclone Winston, which restored traveler confidence and saw visitor numbers peak just four months later • Social Media Impact: The organization	• Significant Visitor Arrivals: Fiji welcomed a total of 819,701 international visitors during this period • Strong Growth in Emerging Markets: The period saw notable year-on-year growth in several markets, including India (23%), Japan (10%), and New Zealand (11%)	• Record Visitor Arrivals: Fiji welcomed a record 859,132 international visitors, representing a 5% year-on-year growth • Economic Impact: Tourism earnings reached a record value of $1.96 billion • Global Brand Revitalization: Commenced a major project to refresh the

	• Structural Evolution: Moved from a representation model to establishing dedicated Tourism Fiji offices in the United Kingdom and Continental Europe • Fijian Tourism Expo (FTE) Success: The second FTE saw 30% growth in participation, hosting 358 tourism operators • Award-Winning Presence: The Australian team won “Best Stand” at the Flight Centre Expos in Sydney and Melbourne for the second consecutive year • Niche Recognition: Fiji was voted “Best Shark Diving Destination” at the DRT Shanghai Show 2015	established itself as a critical information provider during the cyclone; #FijiNow videos were viewed 465,117 times • Route Expansion Support: Supported the launch of new Fiji Airways routes to San Francisco and Singapore • Resilience of Events: Successfully delivered the Fiji Tourism Expo 2016, the Fiji Open Golf Championship, and the Fiji International Triathlon despite the impact of the cyclone.	• New Leadership: The organization secured a new Chief Executive Officer, Matthew Stoeckel, who was appointed in August 2016 to lead the organization’s new strategic direction • Strategic Alignment: Tourism Fiji aligned its marketing and operational strategies with the government’s Fijian Tourism 2021 development plan to ensure long-term sustainable industry growth • Brand Revitalization Planning: Initiated the process of revitalizing the global brand (“Fiji – Where Happiness Finds You”) and planning for the development of world-class brand assets, including a new website project and license-free digital content • Transition from	“Fiji – Where Happiness Finds You” brand, appointing Saatchi & Saatchi NZ after a rigorous global tender • Virtuoso Award: Fiji was named the “Hottest Destination of the Year” by the luxury consortia Virtuoso in August 2017 • San Francisco Rugby Campaign: A high-impact consumer campaign reached 44 million consumers, gathering 75 million earned impressions • Content-Led Marketing: Shifted to a content marketing approach to engage consumers 365 days a year through digital stories and videos • Interhash 2018: Successfully supported and hosted the first Interhash event in the Pacific region, attracting 1,700

			Recovery: Successfully stabilized the industry following the immediate crisis management of Tropical Cyclone Winston (February 2016) and refocused on niche market segments and measurable marketing outcomes	visitors from over 20 countries
2.8. Sustainable Development Goal Position (SDG)	• NA	• NA	• Goals Adopted: 3,4,5,8,10,13,14,15 & 17. Action and Progression came be found on Page 22 and 23 of the Annual Report 2016 - 2017	• Goals Adopted: 3,5,8,10,13 & 15. Action and Progression came be found on Page 26 of the Annual Report 2017 - 2018

3.0. Consolidated Report on the Review of Tourism Fiji 2013 and 2014 Annual Reports – Recommendations				
	2015	**2016**	**2016-2017**	**2017-2018**
3.1. Recommendation 1 Include summary of key visitor statistics (5–10 years prior)	The organization provided detailed statistics for the current reporting year but had not yet implemented the multi-year longitudinal summary in this specific report	Tourism Fiji adopted the recommendation by including a graph titled **"TOTAL VISITOR ARRIVALS: 2011–2016,"** providing a clear six-year comparison of growth and decline	Statistical summaries for this period were included as comparative data in the subsequent report, focusing on year-on-year growth across all markets	The report maintained historical context by providing Year-on-Year visitor arrival comparisons for every major international market against the previous fiscal year
3.2. Recommendation 2 Expand to include details	Reporting remained primarily activity-based, structured	Focus was largely dedicated to the outcomes and tactical	Under new leadership, the organization began aligning	Fully adopted the recommendation by

on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Overseas Regional Offices performance	around six strategic focus areas like branding and internal capability rather than specific regional KPIs	marketing efforts of the Tourism Action Group following Tropical Cyclone Winston.	its performance metrics more closely with the specific industry targets set in the government's **Fijian Tourism 2021** plan	introducing a comprehensive **"KPI Analysis per Region"** table, which tracked specific **Targets versus Actual results** for every regional office across arrivals, cooperative campaigns, website sessions, and Matai specialist registrations
3.3. Recommendation 3 Continuation and development of acknowledged campaigns (Brand, Website, Tourism Expo, Matai Programme)	The brand messaging was refined through digital channels; the second **Fijian Tourism Expo (FTE)** saw 30% growth; and the **Matai Programme** was relaunched in Australia with a new online training platform.	Despite natural disasters, FTE 2016 was successfully delivered, and regional teams engaged 100 key trade partners in North America to drive new Matai registrations	Appointed CEO Matthew Stoeckel to lead a new strategic direction and initiated planning for a global brand revitalization and a new website project.	Commenced the global project to refresh the **"Fiji – Where Happiness Finds You"** brand with agency Saatchi & Saatchi NZ and hosted the **Matai Mega Conference**, bringing 140 agents to Fiji.
3.4. Recommendation 4 Exploration of social media and digital marketing	Achieved a **419% growth in social media engagement** and used Facebook content to reach more than 27 million users.	Established Twitter as the primary channel for real-time crisis communication during the cyclone and executed the **#FijiNow campaign**, which saw regional videos viewed over 465,000 times to restore traveller sentiment.	Focused on developing "world-class assets," including license-free digital content and a more dynamic, market-leading web platform.	Formally transitioned to a **content-led marketing approach**, creating stories and videos to engage consumers 365 days a year across digital channels.

4.0. Statement of Comprehensive Income

Statements

2015

Tourism Fiji

Statement of Comprehensive Income
For the year ended 31 December 2015

	Notes	2015 $	2014 $
Government grant		23,043,476	23,043,481
Co-operative promotion and advertising		1,485,013	1,760,707
Other operating income	5	73,363	65,818
		24,601,852	**24,870,006**
Employee salaries and benefits	6	(3,508,909)	(2,987,594)
Operating and administrative expenses	7(ii)	(1,906,067)	(1,647,067)
Selling and marketing expenses	7(i)	(18,503,196)	(25,648,334)
Depreciation expense	7(iii)	(165,922)	(148,734)
Surplus/(deficit) from operations		**517,758**	**(5,561,723)**
Finance income	8	6,171	15,693
Surplus / (deficit) for the year		**523,929**	**(5,546,030)**
Other comprehensive income			
Realised exchange (loss)/gain		303,431	52,699
Unrealised exchange (loss)/gain		264,854	(89,730)
Total comprehensive income for the year		**1,092,214**	**(5,583,061)**

The accompanying notes form an integral part of the statement of comprehensive income.

Source: TF AR 2015, p33

2016

Tourism Fiji

Statement of Comprehensive Income
For the period ended 31 July 2016

	Notes	7 months ended 31 July 2016 $	12 months ended 31 December 2015 $
Government grant		20,349,426	23,043,476
Co-operative promotion and advertising		756,273	1,485,013
Other operating income	5	7,082	73,363
		21,112,781	**24,601,852**
Employee salaries and benefits	6	(1,750,247)	(3,508,909)
Operating and administrative expenses	7(ii)	(1,137,416)	(1,906,067)
Selling and marketing expenses	7(i)	(12,857,081)	(18,503,196)
Depreciation expense	7(iii)	(93,303)	(165,922)
Surplus from operations		**5,274,734**	**517,758**
Finance income	8	2,782	6,171
Surplus for the year		**5,277,516**	**523,929**
Other comprehensive income			
Realised exchange (loss)/gain		(92,139)	303,431
Unrealised exchange (loss)/gain		137,433	264,854
Total comprehensive income for the year		**5,322,810**	**1,092,214**

The accompanying notes form an integral part of the statement of comprehensive income.

Source: TF AR 2016, p29

2016-2017

TOURISM FIJI

Statement of Comprehensive Income
For the year ended 31 July 2017

	Notes	12 months ended 31 July 2017 $	7 months ended 31 July 2016 $
Government grant		33,392,405	20,349,426
Co-operative promotion and advertising		2,135,484	756,273
Other operating income	5	30,153	7,082
		35,558,042	**21,112,781**
Employee salaries and benefits	6	(3,187,634)	(1,750,247)
Operating and administrative expenses	7(ii)	(2,550,936)	(1,137,416)
Selling and marketing expenses	7(i)	(23,808,048)	(12,857,081)
Depreciation expense	7(iii)	(150,018)	(93,303)
Surplus/(deficit) from operations		**5,861,406**	**5,274,734**
Finance income	8	7,146	2,782
Surplus / (deficit) for the year		**5,868,552**	**5,277,516**
Other comprehensive income			
Realised exchange (loss)/gain		71,660	(92,139)
Unrealised exchange (loss)/gain		(42,867)	137,433
Total comprehensive income for the year		**5,897,345**	**5,322,810**

The accompanying notes form an integral part of the statement of comprehensive income.

Source: TF AR 2016-2017, p33

2017-2018

No records in the AR

5.0. International Best Practice

1.1 Governance dimension

Principle	Investment strategies and policies
Principle 1: Policy coherence and internal organization	Investment policies for tourism should reflect a whole-of-government approach and be grounded in a country's overall investment, tourism and development strategies. All investment policies for the tourism sector should be coherent and synergetic at different levels of investment policymaking and with respect to adjacent sectors.
Principle 2: Dynamic policymaking and right to regulate	Each country has the sovereign right to establish conditions of entry and operation for the tourism sector. States should regulate investment in tourism in pursuance of sustainable development objectives, regularly review their policies for effectiveness and relevance, and adapt them to changing circumstances and priorities.
Principle 3: Stakeholder collaboration and rule of law	Investment policymaking should emphasize the importance of stakeholder collaboration, embedded in an institutional framework that is based on the rule of law, and predictably, efficiently and transparently involve governments, local communities, businesses and civil society in the planning, development and management of the tourism sector.
Principle 4: Investment facilitation, promotion, and protection	Policies and strategies to facilitate and promote investment in tourism should be aligned with the SDGs and avoid harmful competition for investment. Investors in sustainable tourism should receive non-discriminatory treatment and adequate protection based on the rule of law.
Principle 5: Corporate governance and responsibility	Investment policies should strive to ensure that investors in the tourism sector comply with relevant environmental, social and governance (ESG) frameworks and considerations, best international practices of corporate social responsibility, good corporate governance and their obligation to respect human rights and core labour standards.
Principle 6: Data collection and monitoring	To ensure accountability and enable data-driven decision-making, investment policies should require the collection of data on key sustainability indicators aligned with internationally agreed measurement frameworks, including by promoting the development of national systems of tourism statistics and by encouraging private sector tourism businesses to regularly report through the application of agreed ESG frameworks.
Principle 7: International cooperation	Countries should cooperate to address shared policy challenges relating to investment in the tourism sector, including in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states (SIDS). Regional and global international organizations can play an important role in supporting such engagement.

1.4 Environmental dimension

Principle	Investment strategies and policies
Principle 16: Environmental impact and biodiversity	Investment policies should recognize the materiality of environmental issues and support tourism development that minimizes negative environmental impacts, protects natural habitats, including through sustainable infrastructure, and promotes the conservation and restoration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems for the benefit of present and future generations.
Principle 17: Climate change mitigation and adaptation	Investment policies should consider climate risks and the opportunities that integrated mitigation and adaptation approaches can deliver to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the tourism sector, promote nature-based solutions and carbon removal, as well as more resilient infrastructure, so as to reduce vulnerabilities and promote sustainable development.
Principle 18: Responsible consumption and production	Investment policies should encourage tourism development that makes efficient use of resources, minimizes waste generation and pollution, promotes sustainable and local sourcing, and supports the integration of circular economy principles and business models, contributing to sustainable consumption and production patterns.

1.2 Economic dimension

Principle	Investment strategies and policies
Principle 8: Infrastructure	Policies should support investment in adequate infrastructure to promote economic development, create employment opportunities, enhance productivity, improve quality of life, and foster sustainability. Such policies must balance economic prosperity, social well-being, and environmental stewardship and ensure that infrastructure is sustainable, innovative and adaptable to meet the dynamic needs of the tourism sector.
Principle 9: Tourism diversification, innovation, digitalization and technology	Countries should create regulatory frameworks and incentives to streamline innovation, support digitalization and the transfer and diffusion of technology, and foster investment that develops diverse tourism offerings in terms of products, target markets and segments, and destinations. Policies should increase resilience by reducing the risks arising from overreliance on a single form of tourism, limited destinations or market segments.
Principle 10: Linkages to sectors along the tourism value chain	Investment policies should recognize the importance of integrating various industries that support tourism development to amplify and diversify economic opportunities and promote a holistic investment and development model.
Principle 11: Investment for MSMEs in the tourism sector	Investment policies should support the participation of local and – as appropriate – foreign micro-, small- , and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the tourism sector by promoting access to funding, capacity-building, and market opportunities with the aim of supporting their sustainable growth and competitiveness.

1.3 Sociocultural dimension

Principle	Investment strategies and policies
Principle 12: Workforce and skills development	Investment policies should foster partnerships between educational institutions, the private sector and government agencies to create comprehensive training programmes that address current and future skills needs. The focus on workforce and skills development should extend beyond traditional training to include digital literacy and green skills, aligning with the global shift towards digitalization and sustainability in the tourism sector.
Principle 13: Respect for cultural heritage and community values	Investment in tourism should respect the conservation and safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, traditions and values of local communities, encourage authenticity, foster a sense of pride and ownership, and encourage opportunities for meaningful cultural exchange between visitors and residents.
Principle 14: Social inclusivity and equity	Investment policies should foster inclusive investment in tourism that provides equal opportunities for all members of society, creates decent work, distributes benefits across local communities, including vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, and avoids negative impacts on groups such as children, youth, women, older individuals, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities.
Principle 15: Community engagement	Investment policies should enable active participation by local communities in decision-making processes relating to investment and ensure their perspectives, needs and development concerns are considered, including by systematically assessing the impact of tourism investment on local communities and their livelihoods.

Tourism is a major driver of global economic development, contributing significantly to jobs, exports, and GDP while supporting livelihoods and poverty reduction. Before COVID-19, the sector accounted for 4% of global GDP and was the third-largest export sector, and it has since recovered strongly, nearing pre-pandemic levels by 2024. While tourism supports economic growth and links with many industries, unmanaged expansion can lead to environmental damage, increased emissions, and social impacts, highlighting the need for sustainable tourism practices. Sustainable tourism aims to balance economic, social, and environmental needs and plays a key role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in areas such as decent work, responsible consumption, and ocean conservation. Future growth requires investment in infrastructure, innovation, and capacity while minimizing negative impacts. The sector's resilience will depend on balancing people, planet, and prosperity, supported by sustainable investment policies that encourage inclusive growth, environmental protection, and community empowerment. The Guiding Principles for Sustainable Investment in Tourism provide a framework to align governance, economic, sociocultural, and environmental priorities, helping countries develop policies that attract responsible investment and support long-term sustainable development[6].

5.1. For Fijis Comparison

5.1.1. Governance (policies, coordination, regulation)

- Fragmented and developing regulatory framework – Fiji has only recently moved toward a comprehensive Tourism Act and stronger policy coordination.
- Need for stronger institutional coordination across government, private sector, and communities.
- Limited enforcement and standardisation of sustainable tourism practices across operators.

5.1.2. Economic Dimension (inclusive growth, investment efficiency)

- High dependence on tourism makes the economy vulnerable to shocks (e.g., COVID-19, cyclones).
- Economic leakage (profits flowing out to foreign investors) reduces local benefits.
- Uneven distribution of benefits, particularly for rural communities and landowners.

5.1.3. Environmental Dimension (climate, ecosystems, sustainability)

- Environmental degradation risks from tourism development (e.g., coral reefs, coastal areas).
- Climate vulnerability (cyclones, sea-level rise) impacting tourism infrastructure.
- Infrastructure gaps (waste management, sustainable energy) limiting implementation of green practices.

5.1.4. Sociocultural Dimension (communities, culture, inclusion)

- Pressure on local culture and traditions due to commercialization and tourism growth.
- Community engagement not always consistent, especially in decision-making processes.

[6] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *Guiding Principles for Sustainable Investment in Tourism*. [Accessed on 30/05/2026]; https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diae2024d6_en.pdf

- Challenges in achieving inclusive participation, particularly for small operators and remote communities.

5.1.5. Cross-cutting gaps (across all UNCTAD dimensions)

- Limited data, measurement, and monitoring systems for sustainability performance.
- Capacity constraints (skills, financing, technology) for adopting sustainable practices.
- Need for stronger public–private partnerships and innovation to align with SDGs.

Suggestive Questions

1. Why was SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goal) discontinued in AR 2017-2018 report after its mention in the 2016-2017 Report?
2. Based on the "Guiding Principles for Sustainable Investment", does Tourism Fiji conduct systematic "human rights impact assessments" or community livelihood evaluations before launching major niche market strategies in rural regions?
3. How much tourist or income money actually stays in the local economy, has Tourism Fiji established a formal research framework or has record for tracking "economic leakage" and the percentage of revenue captured by local vs. international stakeholders? (Can be a committee recommendation to do reporting on this).

31/05/2026

ANNEX 3

VERBATIM REPORTS

- **Tourism Fiji**
- **Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation**

[VERBATIM REPORT]

<u>STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS</u>

Annual Report

Tourism Fiji 2015–2018 Annual Reports

SUBMITTEES: **(1) Tourism Fiji**
(2) Ministry of Tourism & Civil Aviation

VENUE: **Big Committee Room, Parliament**

DATE: **Monday, 15th June, 2026**

VERBATIM REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON MONDAY, 15TH JUNE, 2026, AT 12.42 P.M.

Present:

(1) Hon. S. Tubuna	Chairman
(2) Hon. P.D. Kumar	Deputy Chairperson
(3) Hon. S.T. Koroilavesau	Member
(4) Hon. K.V. Ravu	Member

Interviewee/Submittee: Tourism Fiji

In Attendance:

(1) Mr. Vimlesh Magan	Chief Financial Officer
(2) Mr. Deepesh Singh	Board Secretary

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, members of the media and the public, secretariat, ladies and gentlemen, a very good afternoon to you all and it is a pleasure to welcome everyone to this public hearing session.

At the outset for information purposes, pursuant to the Standing Orders of Parliament, all Committee meetings are to be open to the public. Therefore, the submission meeting is open to the public and the media and will be aired live on Parliament's channel through the *Walesi* platform and live-streamed through the Parliament's *Facebook* page.

For any sensitive information concerning the submission that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the Committee either in private or in writing. Do note that this will only be allowed in a few specific circumstances, which include:

- National security matters;
- Third-party confidential information;
- Personnel or human resources matters; and
- Meetings whereby the Committee deliberates on all issues before it and develops its recommendations and reports.

I wish to remind honourable Members and our invited submittees that all comments and questions to be asked are to be addressed through the Chairman. Also be mindful that only the invited submittees will be allowed to ask any questions or give comments to the Committee.

This is a parliamentary meeting and all information gathered here is covered for under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act and the Standing Orders of Parliament. Please note that the Committee does not condone libel or slander or any allegations against an individual that is not present here today to defend themselves.

In terms of other protocols, please be advised that whilst the meeting is in progress, movement within the meeting room will be restricted. There should be minimal issues of mobile phones, whereby answering of phones should be done outside this room and all mobile phones are to be on silent mode.

(*Introduction of Committee Members*)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, with us this afternoon are the representatives of Tourism Fiji which the Committee has invited to provide their submission on their Annual Report 2015-2016 (1st January to 31st July 2016) to July 2017, and August 2017 to July 2018.

It is important for Tourism Fiji to appear before the Committee to provide firsthand clarification on issues raised in its Annual Reports, including the financial management, performance, governance, and strategic direction. This allows the Committee to verify information, assess the effective use of public funds, and better understand the organisation's impact on the tourism sector and wider economy, thereby strengthening oversight, transparency, and accountability to Parliament and the public at large.

With this brief introduction, I now take this time to invite our submission guests to introduce themselves before we proceed with the submission. Please note if there are any questions by the honourable Members, they may interject during the presentation.

I wish to remind the honourable Members and submittees to turn on your microphones before you speak.

(*Introduction of Tourism Fiji representatives*)

MR. V. MAGAN.- Before I proceed I would like to take a plea and excuse for our CEO, he will not be able to present himself. It is just because he probably is at the airport and I do not think he has any clear space where he will be able to connect properly.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Maybe you can proceed with your presentation, if there is one.

MR. V. MAGAN.- Sorry, we do not have a presentation. We have the question and answers which we have submitted to Awantika.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Perhaps you can cover the pertinent issues relating to the report, which you have highlighted, instead of going through the questions. Just the broad issues that you think the Committee should be aware of, and following that, there will be a question and answer session.

MR. V. MAGAN.- I will proceed with probably one of the key questions, which is in regards to the late submission of annual reports. I would like to quickly highlight the delays in completing the finalising of Tourism Fiji's audited financial statements was the result of several exceptional and unprecedented circumstances experienced by the organisation over a number of years. These were the two fire incidents. At that time, we were keeping all manual records, and a few of the things were on the software. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted operations, restricted access to information, and affected the ability of the organisation and service providers to support information recovery efforts. A cyber incident that happened one and a half to two years ago wiped out our online data permanently. We lost all the data, and that also took us time to recover.

The last issue, where the actual delay started is when there was a change of the Board of Tourism Fiji and only one year behind or two years behind, the accounts needed to be signed off and the new Board was not ready to sign off the accounts even though those were unqualified accounts and pretty clean accounts at that time. It took a bit of time, and there were a changeover of CEOs as well, so at that time it was a little challenging, but gladly OAG helped us to finalise one report and that is how we have signed and then onwards, we started submitting the financials.

While we submitted the financials, our records were burnt. What we were actually thinking of is to either accept a qualified account or go back and work with OAG and redo the accounts in a different way and still prove ourselves — which we did. As of now, we have been audited. The audit conducted by OAG has been completed as of 2023. The 2024 and 2025 financials have also been completed by the team. As soon as the sign-off of the accounts for 2023 will be completed — probably in two or three months' time — there are four accounts in there, and after that, we will be pretty much on par.

MR. D. SINGH.- If I might just add, all of these unfortunate circumstances, of course, delayed the financial statements. But Tourism Fiji has since developed systems which, for example, we are now storing records online, on remote sites, on the cloud, to ensure that such situations do not happen in the future, and that we are much more prompt in making sure the financial statements come across to the Fijian public.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, I am sure the very legislation under which Tourism Fiji is established, it must be saying exactly by when the report should be submitted to Parliament. If I am not mistaken, it is after the end of the financial year, six months after the end of the financial year, the reports must be submitted. Am I right?

MR. V. MAGAN.-Yes.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- So there is a huge delay in the submission of the reports.

Today, we are talking about a report which is like 10 years old, which is not justified in terms of the kind of grant given to an organisation. I do understand that you are trying your level best to ensure that all these reports are completed and will be submitted in a timely manner to Parliament.

I do recognise the fire, I do recognise the change of Board members — but I am saddened to hear that the Board members who were appointed as Board members for Tourism Fiji refused to sign the Annual Report, the financial statement. In fact, it is expected of them to sign, and they can also make a note if they agree or disagree, or whatever they wish, as part of governance. But they cannot just refuse to sign when they were sitting on the Board, collected their allowances, and then towards the end walked away, expecting someone else to take over from there. This is a lesson learnt, and perhaps that can be captured in your governance rules, whatever rules you are going to set up, because that is another point I wanted to raise.

Going through the reports, you can see a transition. In 2015, very little coverage. But as we go on, we can see 2017 and 2018, things are getting better, but I think it should be the best. To reach there, there needs to be an inclusion of Board assessment in your report. I suggest that you should go through the Reserve Bank of Fiji Report to have a fair understanding of how disclosures are made. Going through all your reports, it was more of a promotional material to me rather than how an annual report should be written, because as a Committee, our job is to scrutinise how you have spent the money and whether we have got value for money or not in all aspects. It is important that you try and include Board assessment in your Annual Report going forward.

Conflict of interest, if any, whenever it is declared, it must be noted in your Annual Reports. I hope with these words you will be able to further improve your Annual Report. Do not forget that you are not going to just talk about the numbers. If you look at the objective, the reason why Tourism Fiji was established, it is very clearly stated. Each time I have gone through the report where you say why Tourism Fiji was established, it is for the wider benefit of the whole country. So next time when you are doing your report, you tell us how did the whole country benefit. Do you have a budget for domestic, small-time operators to promote those sectors? You need to show and link it up with the main objective of why you were established, particularly the spend — when tourists come, how does the community benefit, what else can be done, et cetera. These are some of the areas which I felt your Annual Report lacked. You need to have very clear targets, and you have to measure it against that. In other words, when you receive the money, you will be able to visualise how you are going to use that money and what kind of results you are expecting. That, I found, was missing in your report.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Let me just add to what honourable Kumar has raised, the targeted approach. We were in Rakiraki and some of the operators there said that they have not heard from Tourism Fiji. They undertake diving expeditions in the Bligh Waters. Those are the sort of players that will need some form of support from Tourism Fiji in terms of promotion of those specific targeted markets. Similarly, we were in Denarau, where the marina operators were also talking about the yachting market — a huge market. They said that it is approximately $70 million annually and, of course, needs support also from Tourism Fiji. So how can you ensure when we look at the objective of the organisation is to ensure that these benefits are spread out throughout the country. Yachting can also benefit rural areas and islands where yachties can go and spend time there, and of course, enhancing economic opportunities in rural areas.

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Just continuing with what honourable Chairman has stated. I can see here that you had in 2017 had Industry Day. I can see that it was held in Pacific Harbour, Nadi and Savusavu.

We had highlighted the concern raised by the out-of-normal tourist destinations; we had said Labasa and Rakiraki–Tavua area. They have their fair share of hotels or international brands, but they are also a mix of small properties, homestays, et cetera. Do you see an opportunity to hold a future Industry Day in these areas? A lot of these people do not really understand Tourism Fiji, what benefits are available by coordinating with Tourism Fiji, and what avenues they can pursue to benefit from Tourism Fiji. Can you highlight if you plan to consider these more isolated destinations?

MR. V. MAGAN.- I will start to answer the Industry Day and there are a number of questions that have been posed. For the Industry Day venue, what we were trying to do is to get maximum number of people into one room, and the capacity to hold that maximum number of people and we are talking about 300, or maybe a little less or a little more, between 250 to 300 people. We started looking at the places where the venue can cater for that and that is mostly between Coral Coast and Nadi. Also, for the smaller parts of Fiji, we do go ahead and hold some *talanoa* sessions, or we keep them updated through Industry Day.

In this Industry Day, we invite everyone across Fiji to participate. Formerly, we used to do a Super Week where SMEs or MSMEs were coming in, and that was where we were hearing them or supporting them in different ways. We also work with Investment Fiji. We support each other where we are bringing up the hotels, usually you will hear that most times, the hotel rooms needs to be upgraded. So for Industry Day, why we are only keeping it in these areas is just for crowd covers.

The second thing is like, that year we have tested two or three places to go, but the turnout at all those places was quite low. This year, what they have done is the Board is moving to certain places, like they went to Savusavu, Labasa and they have been meeting the stakeholders there already. That is happening now.

Can I jump into honourable Kumar's point? One of the things you mentioned — all the suggestions have been taken. We will try to put all these things into our annual report. For your information, these are definitely covered through our Service Level Agreement (SLA), and when we report quarterly, we do report. Yes, I totally agree. We need to explore more on our annual reports. So moving forward, we will try to provide maximum information in there.

HON. P.D. KUMAR. - Just a comment. Yes, the Service Level Agreement is always there. Based on your service level agreement, how much you achieve then the grant is released; we understand that. But this is your annual report, so you need to showcase, not only what you have done, but really value for money. As taxpayers of this country, people would like to see how that money was spent and how you doubled or tripled the benefits for the public. That kind of information needs to be there.

One thing I noted from your report, your focus is more on gross visitor arrival and earnings data; just that. But the Bureau of Statistics has developed this TSA, which you have also mentioned in the answers that you have given. TSA provides a deeper picture of tourism's true economic contribution — whether it is job, whether it is buying of a local produce, and how different sectors are gaining from the tourism number that is reaching Fiji. It give a very in-depth picture. I suggest that some of that information needs to be looked at when you are reporting, so that you can justify your objective — the purpose why Tourism Fiji was established. You need to go back and keep questioning why you are there. What was the reason why Tourism Fiji was established? That is the purpose you have to deliver; deliver on that objective.

Now, if I look at Tourism Fiji Report 2015 — I know it is a bit old now — but I see there is legal expenses of $54,492 on Page 39. Do you know why this kind of fee was involved?

MR. D. SINGH.- I am not too sure, but I can provide the details later if that is okay.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Then again, when we go through all the other reports, I can see that the legal fee has reduced now. Similarly, I have also seen other receivables and advances have also come down. But in certain years, the amount was pretty high. Can you explain to me why there is a large sum of money owed to Tourism Fiji? For example, participation fees owed Fiji Excellence Award — which is $75,000 — refundable taxes, and again Sydney office participation fees are owed. It is all listed there. So if you can just explain to the Committee.

MR. V. MAGAN.- Mr. Chairman, participation fee is, for example, I will explain a little bit to help us understand better. Tourism Fiji might have budgeted for one booth in certain consumer shows or any of the trade shows. We call out the expression of interest to which hotel or tourism provider is willing to participate in these shows if there are people going in there. That is when we buy additional space for those events. Therefore, that is the time we issue invoices to the suppliers. That is definitely recoverable within three months.

The point here is that we have to invoice them quite early before the event, like three or four months earlier. The receivables part will always be there. Participation in different countries if you will see, for example, sometimes we charge on a higher scale, like US$8,000 to US$12,000 US or Australian dollars. It looks like one supplier is owing us FJ$20,000 or FJ$25,000, that is why the amount looks bigger. But the cost in certain countries to run trade shows is quite expensive. That is why they are sitting in receivables. But as of now, I can confirm everything is recovered. We hardly have ever gone into a spate of bad debts.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Any doubtful debts?

MR. V. MAGAN.- Doubtful, sometimes it does become. Some properties might be facing some issues, but overall, we give them a little bit of time to recover, some properties are struggling. That is when we work with them and phase it out in certain instalments but we do recover for sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, are there any other questions you would like to raise?

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, through you, through our discussions last week, we looked at our overseas markets for tourist arrivals. We had discussed within the properties that we visited and had discussion was the possibility of attracting China and India as a population base, because they have a big population. Then there was the question of direct flights and the impact on Fiji Airways as the national airline. I understand that China has a rule that they will need to fly in after a year of signing an agreement.

My question that I had in mind, we see that both China and India provide special chartered flights. They fill up their charter flights, Sri Lanka benefits a lot from this, and even Taiwan benefits out of this and other remote, undiscovered areas in Southeast Asia. Has Tourism Fiji had discussions on these special chartered flights, or is there an opening available looking into the future?

MR. V. MAGAN.- Mr. Chairman, I am not a marketing expert, but I think I know the answer. We have explored. We have done this with industry members as well. Rosie Holidays has come on board, Fiji Airways was on board so we have done charter flights direct from China as well. We tried to align it with their New Year's time, and it has been successful. It is quite challenging as well but we have explored.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Are there any other issues that you would like to raise?

I just have a question relating to board members. Do they sign any declaration if they have any conflicts of interest?

MR. D. SINGH.- The Board members are required to sign a conflict of interest register. That has been the practice, at least since I have been there. We have the agenda items, and then it is circulated to them before and then they must declare whether they have an interest in a particular agenda item. That is noted, signed off, and a record kept.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- When was this introduced?

MR. D. SINGH.- The conflict of interest register itself was introduced in about 2025. That was when there was directorship training, and then they proceeded to have it this way. The Tourism Act itself says that when there is a conflict of interest, it must be recorded on the minutes. We are just reviewing the position on whether these were actually done on the minutes itself. But for now, I know that there is a clear practice that you must declare every agenda item, or if you have an interest, you must declare it before the meeting. And that is in a separate document — a conflict of interest register.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I understand that you had an action plan - Fiji Tourism 2021 Action Plan. Did you have an action plan to promote tourism?

MR. D. SINGH.- I was not there at the time, but I do recall seeing the Fiji Tourism Plan 2021. That is correct.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- So 2021 has passed, and now we are in 2026. What other plans do you have? And was any mid-term review done on the 2021 plan?

MR. V. MAGAN.- I can only find out that information and come back. I do not want to comment anything on that. I am not too sure about it. I do recall that there were plans then we jumped onto other plans, some of the things that have been highlighted to us. We have got a corporate plan; our new corporate plan still is intact but with the new Board and the new CEO, we are revising and making it better.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Is there any possibility of including a community tourism action plan?

MR. V. MAGAN.- We will go back to the CEO and provide some narrative around it.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I am just posing this question because this would be one of our recommendations.

MR.V. MAGAN.- Yes.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Since we have visited all the communities and they feel that they are not really benefiting much from Tourism Fiji – that kind of support they require. So based on that, we will be making a recommendation that whatever plan you prepare, there should be a portion, a part in your plan that should focus on community. As I said, when you bring in tourists, it should benefit the locals as well. It may not be providing just rooms but other activities which tourists can enjoy and that can plug, I know there is a big debate in the tourism sector, whether it is leakage or retention means no difference to a great extent. But the point I am trying to raise here is how do you plug that? You can only plug that if you have more of our communities involved in the tourism sector. So the proposal we will try and consider is this community-based action plan.

MR. D. SINGH.- Honourable Member, if I could just make a couple of comments. We note that, we accept that completely. With respect to the Tourism Action Plan 2021, there were a large number of issues discussed in it about the terms of achieving sustainable development goals and long-term planning, with Tourism Fiji itself, in its financial statements, it is going towards discussing those SDGs. Of course, the extent to which we are compliant or following that, we would have to review and come back to you.

Point taken about sustainability and having these communities represented. The Tourism Act 2026 has also described processes within that about how we must go towards more sustainable, eco-friendly, community-oriented ones which is I think a good time because the market that we have seen, everyone is now moving towards going away from that resort-like feel and going towards more community-driven processes and visits. So I think it is a really good opportunity for us to dial down on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You mentioned about sustainability. One of the issues that came out in our discussions in the North and also in the Western Division is rubbish disposal. It is one of the major issues. In Labasa, the operators there are saying that it is a major issue and when they go out into the sea — plastic, diapers are floating out there, and of course, in the Rakiraki and Tavua area. We expect Tourism Fiji to be talking with other stakeholders, including the Ministry of Tourism, to ensure that we address some of these impending problems.

MR. V. MAGAN.- If I may add a comment. Sustainability, we are definitely promoting. Before I answer, I would just like to re-highlight, Tourism Fiji is trying to retain their line of just doing destination marketing. While we are definitely connected with many other communities, and some of the areas we definitely need to touch base on are sustainability, environment, and climate change. But we try to work with them and still be in our line to promote destinations. In here for sustainability, environment, or the rubbish issue, we definitely need to work with other ministries to ensure that they take up their part, while we remain in our line and help them promote whatever they are doing. In that way, we are going to reach out to the right people who would be seeing, "okay Fiji is moving ahead by being much more cleaner than they were."

Regarding tourism communities, I would just like to add, we have always supported communities. If you would have seen some of our major assets that we use to promote, such as Navala Village or community-based kids. So we are definitely putting them on our list and they are the face of Tourism Fiji's promotions all the time.

In the same space, we are also doing niche marketing. Niche marketing is specialised marketing, such as yachting, sports and adventure, and we have always been there. What we are planning is definitely to make it bigger. The proposals have gone into our budgets as well. Therefore, I am hoping — fingers crossed — we will get the budget, we will get bigger and better, and we will need your support to help give us ideas and suggestions. We will be taking these things on board and looking into them.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Now that you are talking about the budget, considering the slowdown in the global economy, and of course, there are countries that are heading towards recession, Fiji's economy is also slowing down. There is less money to be given to everyone. For example, your budgets remain the same or even if the budget is reduced, what innovation are you going to bring in so that you can still try and get the tourism number as before? In other words, doing more with less.

MR. V. MAGAN.- Sure, I will try to answer that question. Again, this is more of a CMO or CEO question, but I think what we consistently do at Tourism Fiji is continue re-strategising. We continue seeing the factors where we are present to promote Fiji, and in that way, we try to get the numbers. What we are focusing on now is not just visitor arrivals, because we can have the same number of arrivals, but our yields are quite high. So we are looking at the high-end market, MICE market is one of those ones that we are looking at, where one booking 300 people in hotels, transfers and all the other businesses are benefiting from them. We are re-strategising in that way instead of just being called a family destination, we are a luxury destination, now we can handle a major level of events here as well. That is what we have reached as of now, and in the future, definitely we are again working on it.

MR. D. SINGH.- If I may just add, we are also looking at, for example, our large markets and understanding if there are issues or how to better capitalise on those markets. For example, if it is Australia or New Zealand, do we need to put more efforts? Is there a conversion issue? How do we go around resolving that? So we are also trying to study these markets and get the best out of them as well while promoting all the mechanisms that CFO has talked about.

MR. V. MAGAN.- Just one last bit that I would like to add. While we have offices across the world as well, we have to have them because we market people, and people are our strength in promotions. Secondly, we also close offices if we see that there is no potential or no direct flight, that is why the numbers have decreased. So we do make some hard calls on those areas as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, are there any other questions?

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, if I may, during our visit to the North, there has been discussions about the Na Vualiku Project. We understand that there is a huge loan that has been granted, about US$200 million (FJ$400 million). In our discussions in Savusavu and Labasa, there seems to be a disconnect in the information surrounding Na Vualiku Project. Is Tourism Fiji involved, or have they been involved in discussions on this project? Can you expand on that?

MR. V. MAGAN.- Sure. Again, this is a CEO question, but I think I have the answer as well. I will try my best.

Na Vualiku Project is more related to the Ministry of Tourism, and we definitely will go with them to promote once it is ready, or we will talk about the journey as we are going along. But actively, what is happening there — perhaps you can raise the question with the Ministry of Tourism, they will give a better detail.

HON. P.D KUMAR.- As I said, the broader vision of Tourism Fiji where the local communities can benefit, particularly when we have low peak season. How are you promoting Fiji as a wedding destination for our diasporas? I do not see much coming out, particularly low peak season, where even the locals would be interested in knowing in advance what kind of packages are available. I understand the different discussions we had with hotels. They said they are doing it on their own, but nothing as a big banner where we can get our diasporas to come back and hold weddings for their children. Are you looking at the wedding destination? How are you working with the hotels because the spend is there, even the locals can spend, but there is nothing much coming out of it as a package; more interesting packages.

MR. V. MAGAN.- So the niche marketing, I would say, we are back into that, and last year and this year, we are growing in the same niche, just to ensure that we are supporting the whole tourism industry on that niche portion. That is again part of the proposal for the next financial year. If we get it, we are going hard on it. We definitely need industry support. If I may recall — and this is purely recall information — there were some challenges in terms of the registration side of it, but I am not too sure of the details. I will find out more and send the information across. But the plan is definitely there, so niche is the other segment that we are going to strongly grow.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- When you say niche, who does research into up and coming markets and advising stakeholders and operators? Who does that research? Is it the Ministry of Tourism?

MR. V. MAGAN.- Most of the information that we gather and we work on is during the *talanoa* sessions or the Industry Day sessions and we see the level of interest or the advice coming from the industry as well. Based on that, we start working on it. Niche is not where we are spending millions, but we will now try to create trade events or space where they will be coming and selling their packages.

However, overall, Tourism Fiji still works on trade partnership side, where they work with the hotels to connect with the right people overseas, and where they are promoting their products.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I just noted that in 2017–2018, this fund for a global brand, revitalization with not a brand revitalisation with Saatchi & Saatchi of New Zealand. What was the impact of that branding?

MR. V. MAGAN.- Let me explain. The brand health check was just to find out if our brand tagline was working, or was it still in demand or people were still connected to it. We first did the research, and once we got the confirmation that the tagline was still resonating with who Fiji is, that is when we went ahead.

The global brand revitalisation was a photo shoot plan that Tourism Fiji usually does. That is where they reached out to corners of Fiji and get the best assets, and those are the assets that we use for all of our promotional activities. Those are like little two different things - one is a brand health check, the other is a photo shoot. Once the brand health check was confirmed, that is when we went to build our assets again.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- How much was paid to that company?

MR. V. MAGAN.- $1.6 million.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- What is the effectiveness of that exercise, if I could ask?

MR. V. MAGAN.- We get world-class assets. Once we have world-class assets, we give it to all our partners to promote Fiji and that is what we use in our global brand across the world. That is the level of service we need.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Did you change the brand after that?

MR. V. MAGAN.- For those years, we did not change the brand. After that year, I think back in 2022, we again had the brand check. When we called out the tender, we elevated from "Where Happiness Finds You to "Where Happiness Comes Naturally".

MR. CHAIRMAN.- That was in 2022?

MR. V. MAGAN.- Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- It was not based on that exercise undertaken by that firm?

MR. V. MAGAN.- The brand health check happened, at that time, "Where Happiness Comes Naturally" was working. Post-COVID, we had changed and elevated to Connect Fiji with a Feeling, that is why it was called "Where Happiness Comes Naturally". Happiness is the keyword here, and naturally is basically telling that Fijians are happy people. Naturally, they are happy people.

MR. D. SINGH.- I think there was also research around the area which said that it is normally good to refresh the brand every three or four years. With COVID happening, people going back and understanding, it is better to be connected with others and finding that relationship, it was necessary, I guess, for Tourism Fiji to move away from that tagline to "Where It Finds You Naturally", to kind of bring everyone together on that front.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- But from the Committee perspective, and from the governance and financial point of views, every spend has to be justified, particularly when branding changes frequently and a very large sum of money is involved. That means you will be changing almost everything to portray that brand. It is a huge cost. It is not just paying Saatchi & Saatchi that $1.6 million, but the whole works that goes around it. How do you justify these frequent changes in branding? Do you take numbers to prove that this particular branding under this branding, this many visitors, this many spend or this many markets against another brand. How do you justify the expenditure?

MR. V. MAGAN.- So let me just start, the brand, "Where Happiness Finds You", I believe it was around 2012 and 2013. It lived for four years and then we did the brand health check just to see if the tagline was working. We did not go ahead and change the brand because someone was proposing it. We did a brand health check. Basically, it was a brand audit.

After that, we said, "this brand is still working." Therefore, we continued with that brand for another four years. This brand did not change for the last eight years. After eight years, we said, "OK, now let us connect with the feeling." That is when we found, we had a little bit of a twist on two words, but it changed the whole feeling. We promote the difference of Fiji in comparison to the whole world is, Fijians are happy people. That is what we were trying to portray. It is hard to portray the feeling on a digital platform, but we still have that challenge to go through. Therefore, tagline, something that people read once and remember — those were the things we were looking at.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.-There was another comment we received from stakeholder visits during our Western and Northern tour. There were comments like: while you are promoting this brand "Where Happiness Finds You" or "Where Happiness Comes Naturally", when people reach Customs and Immigration, they do not feel it. That experience is not there. We want to give our visitors all that experience, starting from their booking, right entering Fiji Airways flight, and then when they come to the borders, and then, of course, when they sit in the taxis or any other transport and going to the hotels. Hotels are doing a wonderful job. As soon as you reach there, the whole ambience changes, you feel good about it. But these are people who are travelling long hours, coming to our shores, but they do not get that warmth. Are you planning to do some work around that area so that it supports the branding you are trying to promote?

MR. D. SINGH.- We will have to really check how much work is being done. What I can say is, for certain experiences of certain people coming in, we have personnel on the ground who assist them to make sure they are not facing issues with Customs. I know the CFO has also, on many occasions, gone at 1 a.m. or 4 a.m. to make sure these issues are resolved. If there are issues with equipment or anything of that sort, the CFO has personally been there and tried to make sure that that process is smoothened out so that they are able to come and enjoy Fiji the best they can.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- That issue came up about how ordinary people are made aware of the brand. When we have a brand "Where Happiness Finds You", how do you sensitise this so that everyone is aware of it? That is perhaps one of the things Tourism Fiji should undertake — making people aware, including school children. A guy walking on the road with a cane knife — he too has to have that awareness of the brand; to live and breathe the brand.

MR. V. MAGAN.- If I may, we also have that dream, the ultimate dream for everyone in Fiji to live and breath Fiji, the warmth that we portray. However, it is still a challenging thing. What we do is, with the small team in Tourism Fiji, not even 60 members, we still try to walk across all different types of communities. The staff are going around, giving speeches in different places, schools and that is where we are portraying messages. The universities are visiting us. We are introducing a graduate trainee programme where we might be taking these things on board as well. We are trying, we are trying a lot, but there are certain things that we can do only and certain things we cannot do.

In defence of your comment, yes, I totally agree, there are certain stages where we need to work with stakeholders. For example, AFL and Immigration — where we need to ask, how do we ensure that taxi drivers, porters, or immigration officers put a smile on their faces? I am not sure whether they will be doing it, because that is a borderline security issue as well.

I was also thinking our journey when we have travelled. That beautiful feeling when air hostesses or pilots greeting people as they are getting on. And then we have people who checking in routinely, they still say *bula*. As soon as you enter the airport after the plane, when you see people singing, that is such a beauty, whether it is 4 a.m. I have gone through on social media as well where people always have comment the journey, at least up to the Immigration level, how they have felt welcomed, they felt at home. These are the lines we have — Welcome Home, Fiji, People, Naturally Happiness - all these things, that is how we are marketing and connecting.

MR. D. SINGH.- If I may just add, I think the beauty about Fiji is that everyone is naturally warm. So our tagline actually fits right into that space. Speaking about the cane farmer, speaking about schools — there is a lot of movement about people making donations to schools, getting to know them. That is translating across.
So while they might not know "Where Happiness Finds You Naturally", inherently they live and breathe that spirit. That really comes across in the experiences.

Yes, I do agree there is a lot of room to collaborate and make sure there is a lot more awareness on this, and it is really brought out to the front from just being something that is inherently with them to something that they embody as a tagline.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to sincerely thank our colleagues from Tourism Fiji. We thank you for your time, and of course, for travelling all the way from Nadi this morning. If we have any further questions, we will be sending them to you.

MR. D. SINGH.- Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing us to come and make the submissions. We really appreciate the opportunity and the ability to serve Fiji.

The Committee adjourned at 1.35 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 1.45 p.m.

Interviewee/Submittee: Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation

In Attendance:

(1) Ms. Salaseini Daunabuna	Permanent Secretary
(2) Ms. Jacinta Lal	Director of Tourism
(3) Ms. Annie Kwansing	Manager Policy & Standards

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, members of the media and the public, secretariat, ladies and gentlemen, a very good afternoon to you all and it is a pleasure to welcome everyone to this public hearing session. At the outset, for information purposes, pursuant to Standing Order 111 of the Standing Orders of Parliament, all Committee meetings are to be open to the public. Therefore, the submission meeting is open to the public and the media and will be aired live on Parliament's channel through the *Walesi* platform and live-streamed through Parliament's *Facebook* page. For any sensitive information concerning the submission that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the Committee either in private or in writing. Do note that this will be only allowed in a few specific circumstances, which include:

- national security matters;
- third-party confidential information;
- personnel or human resource matters; and
- meetings whereby the Committee deliberates on all issues before it develops its recommendations and reports.

I wish to remind honourable Members and our invited submittees that all comments and questions to be asked are to be addressed through the Chair. Also be mindful that only the invited submittees should be allowed to ask any questions or give comments to the Committee. This is a parliamentary meeting and all information gathered here is covered for under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act and the Standing Orders of Parliament. Please note that the Committee does not condone libel or slander or any allegations against any individual who is not present today to defend themselves.

In terms of other protocols of this Committee meeting, please be advised that whilst the meeting is in progress, movement within the meeting room will be restricted. There should be minimal use of mobile phones.

(*Introduction of Committee Members)*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, with us this afternoon are the representatives from the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, which the Committee has invited to provide their submission on the 2015, 2016 (1st January to 31st July 2016) to July 2017 and August 2017 to July 2018.

It is important that the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation to appear before the Committee to provide firsthand clarification on issues arising from the Tourism Fiji Annual Reports 2015 to 2018 including matters relating to financial management performance, governance and strategic direction. This engagement enables the Committee to verify information, assess the effective use of public resources and better understand the Ministry's oversight role in ensuring that Tourism Fiji delivers value to the tourism sector and the broader economy, thereby strengthening transparency, accountability, and informed parliamentary oversight.

With this brief introduction, I now take the time to invite our submission guests to provide briefly on how you are working with Tourism Fiji; the major features of your collaboration. Following that, we will be asking you questions that we might have.

(Introduction of officials from the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation)

MS. S. DAUNABUNA.- Bula vinaka Mr. Chairman and honourable Committee Members. We are grateful that this afternoon we are able to address three of Tourism Fiji's Annual Reports, I believe it is three or four - 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018. We understand that during that period, there were a few administrative and operational challenges that Tourism Fiji was faced with, in particular, in terms of compilation of documents to be able to feed into their annual reporting. The key thing for them was largely external, and we are grateful that we have been able to put forward their annual reports and we admit, it was done quite late in 2023.

Moving forward, we have been working very closely with them in terms of bringing up to speed the other pending annual reports. We note that the Auditor-General's Office has also put forward the financial statements for these years, which present a fair representation of the records and the finances as at that time, and based on information they were able to collate, following the unfortunate external events that were external to Tourism Fiji. We are here today and we are more than happy to address any issues from the annual report.

But largely we work very closely with Tourism Fiji, as you would know, they are the marketing arm that relate to the Ministry and work closely with us. They are largely funded by grant through the annual financial budget of Government, and we also work very closely with them in terms of monitoring and oversight as they report directly to Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The Committee went around to the Northern and Western Divisions, visiting tourism stakeholders and operators. While in the Northern Division, we also met up with the project management of the Na Vualiku Project. Perhaps we will also raise with you our concern on that project and how it is being operated. Do they have any sort of board or management committee where the management reports to that committee made up of people like you and other stakeholders?

MS. S. DAUNABUNA.- Mr. Chairman, under the Na Vualiku Project, part of its operating framework is to have a project steering committee. So the project steering committee is co-chaired by myself and the Permanent Secretary for Finance. At any time where one is not available, then the other will be able to chair the sessions. The committee is comprised of representatives from within and outside Government. We have representation from the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Commerce and Business Development, the Ministry of Women, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development, and also iTaukei Land Trust Board is in our steering committee as well as our implementing agency partners. The fact that the Na Vualiku Project is also infrastructure projects, our two implementing agencies are Fiji Roads Authority and Airports Fiji Limited. They also sit with us in the project steering committee and the committee is mandated to meet at least two times within a financial year, and the reports are also provided to the World Bank; the outcomes of those meetings.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- There was some concern raised by stakeholders in the North regarding how the project is operating. Rather than working with existing players, it is introducing new modalities, for example, the sewerage at Savusavu. We heard from an operator at Nawi Island, they are unable to sustain the sewerage from the system there. Why is Na Vualiku not working with existing players?

MS. S. DAUNABUNA.-Mr. Chairman, for that project itself, it is quite a structured implementation process. However, at each stage of the implementation, for example, in terms of wastewater, sewerage, rubbish disposal, there are already components of project that will address these. Within those components, the consultants that are brough on board, they work very closely with the communities to be able to see what the best practice model in each of the different locations is, bearing in mind that, we are looking at Savusavu, Labasa and Taveuni in terms of these matters. We are working very closely to see how we can build partnership where the local communities are also part of that process.

We hear the concern you are raising Mr. Chairman, in fact, through the project which we are directly overseeing, we also have been able to relocate the project teams to be based directly in Savusavu, so that we are also able to have more team members outside of Suva rather than at headquarters.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We will also be raising the issue of Na Vualiku with the honourable Speaker so that an appropriate inquiry will be undertaken.

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, through you, I just wanted to do a follow-up on the meetings that we have held in Vanua Levu and around the tourist areas in Viti Levu. There seems to be certain areas in Vanua Levu like Labasa, in Viti Levu in Ra towards Rakiraki. These areas have operating hotel properties, tours and similar activities that is earmarked for tourism. One of the issues that they have raised is the availability of information and connection to Tourism Fiji in their development plans. Is there a possibility that these areas, I think they call themselves "Suncoast" in Ra and in Labasa, the centre or focus attention to them, especially if funding is stretched, just information being delivered to them, so that they understand the happenings and where they can go to for assistance?

MS. S. DAUNABUNA.- Mr. Chairman, we will take on board the feedback that has been put forward. At the outset, from the Ministry, we always go out to do these very close consultation with key tourism stakeholders. We are aware that in Ra, we have the Suncoast Tourist Operators. They have always been part of most of the consultations that we carry out, and certainly some of the policy documents that we have produced, for example, the National Sustainable Tourism Framework (2024–2034) which is the ten-year sector plan that we are currently implementing from 2024 to 2034, our tourism policy, and also the Tourism Act that was just recently passed by Parliament. We have had consultations in these tourism pocket areas, especially in the Suncoast area. However, we are now aware that in terms of Tourism Fiji, there is that request if they can be also included with future development plans, and we will certainly pass that along to Tourism Fiji.

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, just a follow up question, through you, I think the bigger properties in these areas are more aware, I think I am talking about local operators - small Airbnb, small inns and small accommodations that are available. Maybe this is where that discussion is coming from.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I think the moment of truth is when independently someone else assesses the work and that was the role of the Committee when we went out. We wanted to understand the effectiveness. During that process, our consultation with various hotels (big, small), community-based, different sporting sector that we have within the tourism arena, various association we met, and we got the feedback. One of the areas, which is of concern, it is like a catch-22 situation, we have Tourism Fiji which says, "yes, we can promote divers if they meet all the regulations" - I understand that – they need to meet all the regulations. But then, when you speak to the divers, they are not even aware of what regulations they are supposed to meet – meeting the standards and reaching that level where they can be promoted by Tourism Fiji.

Regulation is something that was also raised by the yachting sector as well. They need not only guidance but also sort of handholding so that they meet all the compliance and any bottle neck which is within the system, needs to be cleared. These were some of the concerns they raised. My question is to what extent are you engaged with the community projects, because some of the places we went, Airbnb and other places, it needs to be upgraded. We do not want to go into an area where they are marketing Fiji through, not through Tourism Fiji but on their own accord, but we do not want to give that bad image. So, to what extent is the Ministry of Tourism engaged with the community so that you can improve or enhance the experiences?

MS. S. DAUNABUNA.- Mr. Chairman, at the moment the Ministry, as you would know, we largely do not have an operating legislation until recently, which was through the Tourism Act that has just been passed by Parliament. Within that Act, it allows the Ministry to be able to work with the tourism enterprises to see how we can set standards, and to also help and guide them through processes of maintaining those standards.

There are also mechanisms that will come into play in terms of directly linking with Tourism Fiji, not only on marketing at a national level but also marketing, that also goes right down to the community level. At the moment, arrangements in terms of community operators are quite loose. So, the hope is that through the legislation, there will be a structured format in which all operators are able to identify the standards they need to maintain and how they would work closely with other operators in terms of marketing and assistance that they can get.

The Ministry will be taking on a different role that we have at the moment, and that will be through that legislation, and it is a role that we are very much looking forward to because it will help us to have a legal mandate to be able to work directly with communities as well. However, Mr. Chairman, that is not to say that we are not doing what we can at the moment. We do conduct community awareness, and we have a team in the office that works with different pockets of community to see where the challenges and assistance is needed and that is where we are currently operating.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, another area of concern is communication. We were in Labasa and we met the association and even in Savusavu. They would like to have the numbers, how many tourists are visiting Labasa or any other part and what they would like to do kind of information so that it is not just for marketing but also for them to prepare the products that can be marketed. So that kind of information they do not have. What are your plans to assist our people in preparing those products because there is a demand or potential for that area to grow. Because they do not have the number, how many tourists visited, what age group, what is their spend, where did they stay, et cetera?

MS. S. DAUNABUNA.- Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned, we have our office in Savusavu through the Na Vualiku Project. Our team in the office, they conduct community awareness and information sharing. This sort of data we can very much make available because we also do the collection of International Visitor Survey (IVS) data that we collect in the office, and the results of this, we would be more than happy to also socialize that within the community.

There is a lot of focus now in Vanua Lavu because one of the key things is to see how we can grow the numbers and the figures at the moment have indicated, I believe visitor arrivals are about 4 percent of the total number that reach Fiji; only 4 percent actually go right to Vanua Levu. So, within the

Na Vualiku Project, we are working very hard to see how we can move those numbers beyond that single digit. And also, we have on board a communications person so we would be able to see how we can disseminate this information better.

HON. K.V. RAVU.- Mr. Chairman, back to the Na Vualiku Project, it was reported that investment of US$61 million has already been utilized. Could you share details on the utilization of that amount, especially highlighting the concern about space development?

MS. S. DAUNABUNA.- Mr. Chairman, $61.5 million that would be reported, in terms of phase one; the funding envelope is $US61.5 million. We are currently still in phase one and, Mr. Chairman, if you will allow, we can provide through a written submission the utilisation to-date, but we have not reached that figure yet but it is still sitting within phase one of the project.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Okay.

MS. S. DAUNABUNA.- Phase one covers a six-year timeline, so the project from 2024, we are now sitting in year 2026, about two to three years in, but we can provide the utilisation to-date of the amount for phase one.

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, "Where Happiness Finds You" is a tagline that Tourism Fiji had based their sales and marketing pitch in the previous years. Through our discussions and consultations within the industry, there is a concern on the continuity of "Where Happiness Finds You". So, when you board Fiji Airways from Los Angeles to fly to Fiji, you find happiness as you board the aeroplane. Then after 12 hours flight, there seems to be a lull in the happiness when you arrive at the airport in Nadi. Then you are transported through transportation to the hotel and happiness finds you again as you enter the gate of that hotel where "*bula*" is shouted everywhere and they smile around the reception area in the hotel.

I know that this is not a particular agency that is responsible for it, it is a whole of Fiji concept. I just wanted to ask the Ministry of Tourism, is there any effort to try and advertise this within our population especially the frontline in the borders? I think we have had this experience when you come out of a long flight and walking into the arrival, that first impression will dictate whatever you will enjoy in the rest of the 14 days. Is there any effort by the Ministry of Tourism or Government as a whole to give out some kind of discussion on this with the various agencies and also companies that are involved in the transportation greetings within the airport and from the airport to the hotels?

MS. S. DAUNABUNA.- Mr. Chairman, I will make an attempt to answer that and see if our Director of Tourism has anything to add. Within Tourism, one of the key things that helps to drive activities is marketing. At the moment, our marketing tag has transitioned from "Where Happiness Finds You" to "Where Happiness Comes Naturally". At the moment, that is their current tagline – "Where Happiness Comes Naturally".

The idea behind this is that in Fiji, wherever you go, people are always happy, whether you are at the airport, whether you are in the airplane, or whether you are visiting communities, we are naturally happy people. The idea is also to see how that can resonate with communities. Naturally, there is that connection when you visit Fiji. For the Ministry, we rely very heavily on Tourism Fiji in terms of marketing this message, and we also play our part when we do our community awareness sessions in terms of relaying to them what is our current tagline, not only in communities, but also in pockets of consultations that we do for different activities that come under the Ministry.

We understand that visitor experiences and also visitor choices of travel is fluid as well. It can change from one day to the other, and marketing taglines are very helpful to be able to just maintain who we are as a destination and what we are trying to portray. Certainly, the Tourism Act that I have also highlighted also gives us the ability to be able to do these sorts of awareness sessions on a much-structured scale, to putting messages out and seeing how we can help communities to drive the marketing tag for the country. We have those connections, Mr. Chairman, and we try our very best to work closely with Tourism Fiji to drive the message that they use in terms of their marketing tagline. Our director will just speak very briefly to this as well.

MS. J. LAL.- Through you Mr. Chairman, I recall before when I joined Government a little bit over 10 years ago, there was a Fijian hosts customer service training programme that over the years sort of lulled as well because all these agencies, example, Fiji Revenue and Customs Service, they too became more sophisticated and started introducing their own customer service training, especially at the front line at the airport.

But as PS has mentioned, under the Tourism Act, there are provisions for training that the Government can support. This is basic soft skills as well - showing up on time, how to dress appropriately, how to greet, do not always have to shout *bula*, some of those nuances that we are starting to look at. We have done some pilots, for example, we have been doing the tour guide training around Fiji. Some of them are taxi operators, some would be handling the crews, so really bringing them in and talking about some of these customer service skills and they run in partnership with institutions such as Rosie's Academy, who are professionals in this space. We hope to roll out this more permanently and look at all those gaps or plugs within that chain. We might not be able to reach all the taxi operators in all their forms, but that is the aim going forward and really working with Tourism Fiji in that area.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- When we were discussing with Tourism Fiji earlier about the products not to be developed, I think it is quite relevant also. Who developed the products and also disseminate the information to the stakeholders so that they can take up some of the tourism products that are there? Maybe that is under the Tourism Act, that will be part of your role also, because that is one of the issues that was raised by some of the operators. They need to be informed that these are trends going on in other countries, markets, products, et cetera. Can you enlighten us on that?

MS. S. DAUNABUNA.- Mr. Chairman, I will also speak briefly to this and invite Director or Manager if they have anything else to add. For destination development, definitely it sits well with the policy-making arm, which would be the Ministry. For us, the Act gives us some provisions to be able to take this further, to develop the products that we would need for Fiji and which would be most relevant to us as a country. At the moment, some developments has been done through Tourism Fiji as well. Development from one side and then marketing on their side as well for Tourism Fiji.

I will just see if our Directors anything else to add historically, how we have been doing destination development because I speak to the Act because for now, some of the things that we have seen that would work best for us are now captured within the legislation, and we hope to be able to strengthen that further moving forward.

MS. J. LAL.- Through you Mr. Chairman, with destination management in general, historically, it has not been very focused. We usually worked on an ad hoc basis, for example, at that one time, Suva wanted to develop an association, but you had to follow the Companies Act, what branding, what would Suva be unique to? So similarly in other areas, that was absent.

One of the things we want to do going forward is under the Act is, give recognition number one to destination management organisations. For example, Savusavu Tourism Association, there is a Taveuni Association, Macuata, Suncoast to be able to work with them more directly, and to make sure that they have a say in what they want their region to be promoted as. So, Suncoast has got, as you mentioned, Sir, the members, it is more towards diving, windsurfing, snorkeling and building brands that are unique to that area and then marketing it.

Similarly, with Vanua Levu, it has its own. And under the Na Vualiku Project, we will pilot the destination management for Savusavu, Labasa and Taveuni and even the mechanism, how would that work? Would it be another Tourism Fiji? Is it under Tourism Fiji? Would they report to the provincial councils? How would that look like? Would they be eligible to receive funding? What the parameters would be?

From product development, again, we have just in the recent years started with Access to Finance Programme where we work directly with the grassroot communities. One of the areas we have recently worked on is with the MDF in Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and iTaukei Trust Fund Board is preparing a *vanua*-based tourism framework. Before you reach the regulatory side, number one, you have to have a committee within your own provincial or village boundaries. Everyone has to agree whether you want tourism or not, because not everyone would want tourism, and then getting the *mataqali's* blessings, so starting there and then going to the regulatory. We do recognise that in terms of product development and making sure, as honourable Premila had mentioned, the regulatory side of things is another. They might be aware, but to be able to be compliant is a whole other thing that we hope to work more closely with across all the regulators that are in Fiji from OHS, we know that liquor licencing is now being reviewed, so that it is easier for the community-based enterprises to come into the formal sector.

Under the Tourism Act, there is a provision for community and indigenous micro-tourism enterprises where they might not be compliant with everything at the same time, but we will give them recognition, meet some minimum standards to be able to allow Tourism Fiji to promote them as well once they are near-market ready.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you PS and our colleagues from Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, on behalf of the Economic Affairs Committee, we would like to thank you sincerely for making time and meeting with the Committee this afternoon. If there are any other further questions that we might have, we will email you. So, thank you very much.

The Committee adjourned at 2.21 p.m.

ANNEX 4

SITE VISITS/MEETINGS – NORTHERN & WESTERN

EAC Programme – Northern Division (3–5 June 2026)

Date	Time	Activity	Location
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	8:50 AM	Pick-up from Labasa Airport and travel to Savusavu	Labasa Airport
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	10.30AM	Meeting with the Sugar Cane Farmers/Growers	Seqaqa, Dos Office
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	1:00 PM	Meeting with Hoteliers / Savusavu Tourism Association	Grand Epic Hotel Conference Room
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	2:30 PM	Meeting with Na-Vualiku Programme	Level 3, JKS Building, Main Street
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	3:45 PM	Assembly for shuttle transfer to Nawi Island	Waitui Marina
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	4:00 PM	Site visit meeting	Nawi Island
Thursday, 4 June 2026	8:30 AM	Meeting with Savusavu Chamber of Commerce	Savusavu Chamber Office
Thursday, 4 June 2026	12:30 PM	Meeting with Labasa Chamber of Commerce & Macuata Tourism Association	Hotel North Pole Boardroom

Friday, 5 June 2026	10:00 AM	Meeting with FSC Officials	Fiji Sugar Corporation Boardroom
Friday, 5 June 2026	11:30 AM	Meeting with NDP	Commissioner's Boardroom
Friday, 5 June 2026	12.30PM	Meeting with the Sugar Cane Farmers/Growers	FSC Boardroom
Friday, 5 June 2026	4:35 PM	Drop-off for return flight to Suva	Labasa Airport

EAC Programme – Western Division (7 - 11 June 2026)

Sunday, 7 June 2026

Time	Activity	Venue	Location	Notes
2:30 pm	Pick-up begins	Nausori	Nausori	Travel preparation
3:30 pm	Departure to Rakiraki	—	Nausori to Rakiraki	Road travel
Evening	Check-in	Tanoa Rakiraki Hotel	Vaileka, Rakiraki, Ra, Fiji	Accommodation
7:00 pm	Meeting with Tourism Stakeholders	Nanumi Au Eco Tourism	Rakiraki, Ra, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report

Monday, 8 June 2026

Time	Activity	Venue	Location	Notes
10:30 am	Site visit/meeting	Dream View Villas	Volivoli Road, Rakiraki, Ra, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report
11:45 am	Site visit/meeting	Duadua Beach Resort **AND** Site Tours to Air BnBs around.	Volivoli Area, Rakiraki, Ra, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report
4:30 pm	Stakeholder Meeting	Smart Apparel Board Room	Vaileka, Rakiraki, Ra, Fiji	RA Chamber of Commerce, Business Houses, RA Tourism Association

---

Tuesday, 9 June 2026

Time	Activity	Venue	Location	Notes
10:30 am	Site meeting	Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) HQ	Rarawai, Ba, Fiji	FSC 2024–2025 Annual Report

11:30 am	Site meeting	Sugar Cane Growers Council HQ	Rarawai, Ba, Fiji	SCGC 2022 Annual Report
1:00 pm	Site meeting	South Pacific Fertilizer Office	Lautoka, Fiji	FSC & SCGC Reports
3:00 pm	Site meeting	First Landing Beach Resort & Villas	Vuda Point, Lautoka, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report (with First Landing & Vuda Marina stakeholders)

Wednesday, 10 June 2026

Time	Activity	Venue	Location	Notes
8.30 am	Site Meeting	Fiji Airways	Fiji Airways	Tourism Fiji Annual Report
9:30 am	Site meeting	Denarau Marina Conference Room Marinas, Commercial Boat Operators and Yacht Agents.	Denarau Island, Nadi, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report

12:00 pm	Site meeting	Sheraton Fiji Golf & Beach Resort (Conference Room)	Denarau Island, Nadi, Fiji	Meeting with Marriott Hotel Group – Tourism Fiji Annual Report
2:40 pm	Site meeting	Tourism Fiji Boardroom	Nadi, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report

---

Thursday, 11 June 2026

Time	Activity	Venue	Location	Notes
10:30 am	Site meeting	Shangri-La Yanuca Island Resort	Yanuca Island, Coral Coast, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report
12:00 pm	Site meeting	Hideaway Beach Resort	Korolevu, Coral Coast, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report
1:15 pm	Site meeting	Tambua Sands Beach Resort – Coral Coast Initiatives	Korolevu, Coral Coast, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report

Savusavu – Tourism Stakeholder Meeting – Grand & Epic Hotel (3 June 2026)

The Committee, during its consultation with tourism sector stakeholders in Savusavu – Grand & Epic, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted concerns regarding inadequate infrastructure capacity, particularly airport limitations, which continue to restrict tourism growth in the Northern Division.

- They raised the need for improved supporting infrastructure, including transport systems, roads, and marina facilities to support increased visitor demand.

- The Committee noted calls for the development of a Northern international airport as a critical enabler for tourism expansion.

- Concerns were raised regarding limited regional promotion and the perception that the Northern Division is undermarketed compared to other destinations.

- The Committee noted requests for greater transparency in Tourism Fiji's marketing strategies, including budget allocation and performance outcomes for the Northern Division.

- Stakeholder highlighted barriers to accessing funding, including limited awareness of available opportunities, lack of proposal-writing skills, and risk of unequal access favoring established operators.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding insufficient outreach and information dissemination to rural communities on funding and development opportunities.

- Capacity and skills gaps in rural areas were identified, particularly in tourism operations, business development, and agribusiness integration.

- The Committee noted the need for strengthened integration between agriculture and tourism, including support for agri-tourism initiatives and development of local supply chains.

- Concerns were raised regarding weak coordination among government agencies, stakeholders, and communities, leading to fragmented initiatives and inefficiencies.

- The Committee noted the importance of improving communication channels and establishing a coordinated framework for tourism development in the Northern Division.

- Stakeholders emphasized the need for targeted training programs and partnerships to build local capacity and support emerging tourism operators.
- The Committee noted that while there is strong potential for tourism growth in the Northern Division, this is constrained by infrastructure gaps, limited marketing focus, and capacity challenges.

Savusavu – Na Vualiku Tourism Programme (3 June 2026)

Committee, during its consultation on the Na Vualiku Programme, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that the Na Vualiku Programme is a World Bank–financed initiative aimed at strengthening tourism development in the Northern Division over a 10-year period, currently in its initial phase focusing on planning and pilot implementation.

- The Committee noted that the programme seeks to address barriers to tourism growth through infrastructure development and capacity building.

- Concerns were raised regarding existing infrastructure gaps, including road access, airport capacity, and visitor facilities, which continue to affect tourism growth and accessibility.

- The Committee noted planned infrastructure upgrades, including improvements to roads, airports, urban centres, and visitor facilities, with emphasis on resilience and sustainability.

- Concerns were raised regarding environmental management issues, particularly poor waste disposal practices, informal dumping, and impacts on rivers and marine ecosystems.

- The Committee noted the need for improved solid waste and wastewater management systems to protect natural resources and tourism assets.

- The Committee noted support provided to MSMEs and community tourism operators through training, infrastructure assistance, and technical support to enhance business capacity and visitor experience.

- Concerns were raised regarding limited technical, financial, and business skills among local operators, particularly in rural and community-based tourism initiatives.

- The Committee noted the development of a long-term Integrated Tourism Master Plan to guide sustainable tourism growth in key areas of the Northern Division.

- Stakeholders emphasized the need to promote high-value, low-impact tourism while protecting natural resources and ensuring local participation and benefits.

- The Committee noted challenges related to domestic connectivity, including high travel costs and limited transport options affecting both visitors and local tourism activities.

- Concerns were raised regarding weak coordination among stakeholders, including government agencies, municipal councils, and the private sector, resulting in fragmented implementation.

- The Committee noted issues relating to limited urban planning capacity and poor town presentation, impacting the overall tourism environment and visitor experience.

- It was noted that there is a need to improve community awareness and understanding of tourism revenue distribution and economic benefits.

- The Committee noted that strengthening infrastructure, enhancing coordination, improving environmental management, and building local capacity are critical to the successful implementation of the programme.

- Overall, the Committee noted that while the Na Vualiku Project presents significant opportunities for sustainable tourism development, its success will depend on effective planning, stakeholder collaboration, and timely delivery of infrastructure and support initiatives.

Nawi Island – Site Visit (3 June 2026)

The Committee, during its site visit and consultation at NAWI Island Resort, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that NAWI Island Resort represents a significant private sector investment contributing to tourism development in the Northern Division, with strong demand across marina and tourism facilities.

- The stakeholder expressed concern regarding the Na Vualiku Project, noting that there appears to be insufficient emphasis on critical infrastructure development required to support long-term tourism growth in the Northern Division.

- The stakeholder noted that a centralized sewage treatment system for the whole of Savusavu should be considered as a priority infrastructure investment, rather than fragmented approaches to wastewater management. Nawi has offered sewage connection for Savusavu to their private sewage treatment plant.

- The stakeholder advised that four major resort investors have indicated their willingness to partner with government to extend the Savusavu Airport runway to accommodate larger aircraft and improve air connectivity into the Northern Division.

- The stakeholder expressed concern that the current focus of the Na Vualiku Project appears to be limited to terminal improvements, with insufficient attention being given to runway expansion and broader aviation infrastructure needs.

- The stakeholder highlighted a lack of transparency and adequate disclosure regarding the scope of works, project priorities, and implementation progress under the Na Vualiku Project.

- The stakeholder expressed concern that a significant portion of the approximately USD $200 million project funding may be directed towards consultancy services, assessments, and planning activities, rather than tangible infrastructure outcomes.

- The stakeholder noted that proposed initiatives such as beautification works, including the development of six lookout points, rehabilitation of dump sites, and the construction of a marina walkway, may provide limited economic value when compared with investments in strategic infrastructure.

- The stakeholder recommended that project resources be prioritised towards high-impact infrastructure projects, including airport expansion, jetty upgrades, road improvements between Savusavu and key tourism destinations, and maritime connectivity infrastructure serving Taveuni and surrounding areas.

- The stakeholder recommended greater transparency, stakeholder engagement, and regular reporting on project expenditures, deliverables, and outcomes to ensure accountability and value for money.

- It was noted that the Northern Division continues to demonstrate untapped tourism potential despite being historically under-invested compared to other regions.

- The Committee noted that limited air connectivity remains the primary constraint to tourism growth, with insufficient flight capacity affecting access to the region.

- Concerns were raised that while there is significant private capital available for investment, development is being delayed due to uncertainty regarding infrastructure, particularly airport capacity.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding the implementation of the World Bank–funded tourism project, including limited stakeholder consultation with industry operators and local communities.

- Concerns were raised regarding the apparent misalignment of project priorities, with excessive focus on studies and small-scale initiatives rather than high-impact infrastructure development.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding financial efficiency, including significant expenditure on consultancy services with limited visible infrastructure outcomes.

- Issues were raised regarding governance and oversight, including lack of clarity on decision-making processes and the influence of external partners in funding allocation.

- The Committee noted additional infrastructure gaps, including poor road connectivity, inadequate waste management systems, and limited tourism support facilities.

- It was noted that existing private sector capacity, such as waste treatment facilities, remains underutilized due to lack of coordination with government.

- The Committee noted that limited accommodation capacity and infrastructure are constraining both international and domestic tourism growth.

- Stakeholders expressed strong willingness to engage in public-private partnerships, particularly in relation to airport development and tourism infrastructure.

- The Committee noted the need for improved stakeholder engagement through structured and continuous consultation with private sector operators and communities.

- Concerns were raised regarding weak alignment between policy planning and on-the-ground realities, affecting the effectiveness of tourism development initiatives.

- The Committee noted the need to prioritise high-impact infrastructure, particularly airport expansion, road upgrades, and waste management systems, to unlock tourism growth.

- It was noted that strengthening governance, transparency, and accountability mechanisms is critical to ensuring value for money and effective project implementation.

- Overall, the Committee noted that while there are strong private sector interest and opportunity for tourism growth in the Northern Division, progress is hindered by infrastructure bottlenecks, limited coordination, and inefficiencies in project execution.

Savusavu – Chamber of Commerce (4 June 2026)

The Committee, during its consultation with the Savusavu Chamber of Commerce and local stakeholders, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted a decline in economic activity, with reduced business performance attributed to rising fuel costs, decreased consumer spending, and shifts in transportation behaviour.

- Stakeholders highlighted that while the economy is not collapsing, businesses are under increasing pressure due to slowing economic conditions.

- The Committee noted that tourism in the region remains seasonal and vulnerable to external factors, including weather disruptions, with limited spillover benefits to the wider local economy.

- Concerns were raised that weak linkages between tourism operators and local businesses limit economic benefits, with tourists often remaining within resort facilities.

- The Committee noted the presence of community-based tourism; however, it lacks coordination and broader inclusion within the tourism value chain.

- Significant infrastructure constraints were identified, including limitations in airport capacity due to a short runway, restricting tourism growth and connectivity.

- The Committee noted the need for improved transport and connectivity infrastructure, including roads, jetties, and port facilities.

- Concerns were raised regarding urban planning challenges, including limited space for town expansion and inefficient public transport infrastructure.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding outdated and environmentally unsuitable waste management systems, with strong calls for a modern landfill solution.

- Concerns were raised regarding Na Vualiku Project, including perceived misalignment between project priorities and local needs, with excessive focus on low-impact projects and consultancy services.

- The Committee noted limited stakeholder consultation and lack of transparency in planning and implementation of Na Vualiku Project.

- Stakeholders highlighted the decline in the agricultural sector despite its strong potential, citing lack of innovation, training, and incentives.

- The Committee noted the need for economic diversification beyond tourism, including revitalisation of agriculture and export-oriented production.

- Concerns were raised regarding governance and coordination challenges among government agencies, municipal councils, and stakeholders, resulting in ineffective implementation.

- The Committee noted the importance of strengthening stakeholder engagement, ensuring meaningful participation of local businesses and communities in development planning.

- It was noted that prioritising high-impact infrastructure, including airport expansion, transport systems, and waste management, is critical to supporting economic and tourism growth.

- The Committee noted the need to improve integration between tourism and local businesses to enhance broader economic benefits for the community.

- Overall, the Committee noted that the key issue facing the region is not the lack of funding, but misaligned priorities, weak coordination, and ineffective implementation of Na Vualiku Project.

Labasa – Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Association (4 June 2026)

The Committee, during its consultation with the Labasa Chamber of Commerce, Macuata Tourism Association, and tourism stakeholders, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

Na Vualiku Project Discussion

- The Committee noted concerns regarding limited stakeholder engagement, with Na Vualiku project where communities are often excluded from consultation and decision-making processes.

- Concerns were raised regarding Na Vualiku project in regard to weak coordination between government agencies and local stakeholders, resulting in a disconnect between national-level planning and local implementation realities.

- The Committee noted dissatisfaction with the Na Vualiku project, particularly the lack of transparency, unclear governance structures, and limited public reporting on funding and outcomes.

- Concerns were raised regarding the over-reliance on external consultants, high consultancy costs, and underutilisation of local expertise and institutions.

- The Committee noted that current project priorities appear misaligned, with excessive focus on minor infrastructure rather than critical investments such as roads and transport connectivity.

- Stakeholders expressed concerns regarding lack of local ownership of projects, with communities feeling excluded despite being directly affected by development outcomes.
- The Committee noted operational issues, including the absence of a dedicated Na Vualiku project office in Labasa, because Macuata is bigger than Savusavu in Tourism activities.

- Recommendations were noted to strengthen governance through formal consultation mechanisms and improved coordination between government, local institutions, and stakeholders.

- The Committee noted the need to improve project management, including establishing a dedicated project presence in the Northern Division and ensuring transparency in funding and implementation.

- It was noted that reducing dependency on consultants and prioritizing local expertise would enhance efficiency and ensure more practical outcomes.

Tourism Fiji Discussion

- The Committee noted that while there is strong stakeholder support for tourism development in the Northern Division, there are significant concerns regarding governance gaps, weak consultation, and misaligned development priorities.

- It was noted that the Northern Division has substantial untapped tourism potential, particularly in eco-tourism, cultural heritage, and niche high-value markets such as diving and adventure tourism.

- Stakeholders emphasized the need to develop a distinct Northern tourism identity focused on high-value, low-volume tourism rather than replicating mass tourism models.

- Stakeholders highlighted emerging opportunities, including eco-tourism corridors, cultural tourism, and domestic tourism expansion.

- The Committee noted systemic issues including weak stakeholder engagement, lack of coordination, poor transparency, limited marketing visibility, and absence of a cohesive regional tourism strategy.

- Stakeholders emphasized the importance of developing a Northern-specific tourism strategy, strengthening branding, and increasing representation in national marketing initiatives.
- The Committee noted the need for Tourism Fiji to strengthen capacity development, including training, data systems, and improved access to funding for local stakeholders.

General Discussion

- Significant infrastructure constraints were identified, particularly poor road connectivity between Labasa and Savusavu, as well as limited air and sea transport access.

- The Committee noted that infrastructure development remains the most critical enabler for tourism growth and broader economic expansion in the region.

- The Committee noted the need to prioritise high-impact infrastructure investments, including roads, transport access, and supporting utilities.

- Overall, the Committee noted that an Inquiry into Na Vualiku Project needs to be undertaken to address governance weaknesses, improving infrastructure investment, and strengthening stakeholder inclusion are critical to achieving sustainable tourism development in the Northern Division.

Labasa – Acting Commissioner for Northern & Team Meeting (4 June 2026)

The Committee, during its consultation with the Office of the Commissioner Northern Division, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that the Northern Division comprises a wide geographic area with dispersed rural populations, where economic activities are primarily driven by agriculture, fisheries, and forestry, with growing contributions from tourism and the service sector.

- It was noted that the Division contributes significantly to the national economy; however, there remains heavy reliance on primary industries with ongoing efforts toward diversification.

- The Committee noted ongoing infrastructure development initiatives, including improvements in roads, water supply, energy access, and telecommunications, aimed at supporting economic growth and service delivery.

- Concerns were raised regarding persistent infrastructure gaps, particularly in rural road access, telecommunications coverage, and water supply systems, with many communities relying on informal arrangements.

- The Committee noted challenges relating to weak coordination across government agencies and development programmes, resulting in duplication of efforts and inefficiencies.

- Concerns were raised regarding inadequate prioritisation of large-scale infrastructure, with resources often fragmented across smaller initiatives with limited long-term impact.

- The Committee noted the need to improve value addition within key sectors, particularly agriculture, to address loss of revenue due to limited processing and packaging capabilities.

- It was noted that rural communities possess significant untapped economic potential; however, they require improved access to finance, infrastructure, and markets to fully participate in economic development.

- Concerns were raised regarding social challenges, including illicit activities and the need for alternative livelihood opportunities to support community resilience.

- The Committee highlighted concerns regarding lack of alignment between externally funded development programmes for example, Na Vualiku project with national or local priorities. It was also noted that there is a lack of strong oversight steering committee to include Commissioner Northern to drive world bank funded projects.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding the sugar industry, including uncertainty in cane supply, declining farmer participation, and potential impacts on national production and export performance.

- It was noted that strengthening engagement with farmers and ensuring stability in the sugar supply chain is critical to sustain the sector.

- The Committee noted the need to improve transport and logistics systems, including consideration to expand rail-based transport and to explore private sector participation.

- It was noted that prioritising high-impact infrastructure investment, particularly in roads, water, and connectivity, is essential to unlock economic growth in the region.

- The Committee noted the importance of promoting value addition, improving market access, and strengthening supply chains to enhance economic returns from local production.

- The Committee emphasized the need to support rural livelihoods through diversification and income-generating opportunities, including public-private partnerships.

- Overall, the Committee noted that while the Northern Division demonstrates strong economic potential, achieving sustainable development will require improved coordination, targeted infrastructure investment, and strengthened rural economic transformation strategies.

Nanumi Au Eco Village – Rakiraki – Sunday, 7th June 2026

The Committee, during its site visit to the Nanumi Au Eco-Tourism Initiative, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that Nanumi Au Eco Village is a community-based eco-tourism initiative that promotes sustainable development, cultural preservation, and local income generation through a shared-value model benefiting village members.

- It was noted that the initiative supports inclusive economic participation, with direct involvement of local women and men in tourism activities, contributing to employment creation and reduced rural-urban migration.

- The Committee noted that the project offers authentic cultural and environmental tourism experiences, including traditional practices and nature-based activities linked to local ecosystems.
- The Committee noted strong and growing demand for the initiative; however, this is constrained by limited infrastructure, including accommodation capacity and visitor facilities.

- Concerns were raised regarding inadequate infrastructure, including the lack of dedicated facilities for cultural demonstrations, limited visitor amenities, and need for expansion of accommodation and activity spaces.

- The Committee noted that the initiative is largely self-funded, with limited access to external financing, restricting its ability to scale operations despite demonstrated potential.

- Concerns were raised regarding restrictive grant eligibility criteria and limited access to higher-level funding support for community-based tourism projects.

- The Committee noted challenges in accessing funding programmes due to eligibility limitations and lengthy waiting periods for reapplication.

- The Committee noted the strong emphasis on environmental sustainability, including waste reduction practices and conservation of natural resources such as mangrove ecosystems.

- Concerns were raised regarding broader community waste management challenges that may affect environmental sustainability and tourism development.

- The Committee noted limited marketing and visibility of the initiative, with reliance primarily on online booking platforms and limited national promotion.

- The Committee noted the potential for development of community-based tourism clusters, where local operators collaborate to enhance visitor experience and economic benefits.

- Recommendations were noted to improve access to flexible funding arrangements and increase financial support for scalable, community-driven projects.

- The Committee noted the need to prioritise infrastructure investment, including eco-friendly accommodation, cultural facilities, and visitor support infrastructure.

- It was noted that strengthening national marketing and promotion of rural eco-tourism initiatives would enhance visibility and visitor numbers.

- The Committee emphasized the importance of supporting capacity development, including training in business management, marketing, and service delivery for community operators.

- The Committee noted some unique tourism experiences available in Rakiraki, including diving activities in the Bligh Waters area, and emphasized the need for these attractions to be more effectively marketed and promoted to enhance the region's visibility and tourism appeal.

- Overall, the Committee noted that the Nanumi Au Eco-Tourism Initiative represents a strong model for sustainable, community-based tourism, with significant potential for expansion if supported through targeted funding, infrastructure development, and policy alignment.

Dream view Villas – Rakiraki – Monday, 8th June 2026

The Committee, during its site visit to Dream view Villas in Rakiraki, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted increasing tourism development in the Rakiraki area, including villas, resorts, and small-scale accommodation, reflecting growing investor confidence and potential for the region as an emerging tourism destination.

- It was noted that the region has strong potential for diversified tourism products, particularly marine-based and recreational activities.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding accessibility constraints, with travel to Rakiraki requiring long road journeys from major entry points such as Nadi and Suva.

- Concerns were raised regarding road conditions and traffic inefficiencies, including excessive speed humps and poor traffic management, which contribute to extended travel times.

- The Committee noted the need to improve transport connectivity through alternative options such as domestic air services and ferry connections to enhance accessibility and visitor convenience.

- It was noted that long-haul travellers experience transit fatigue due to extended travel times, affecting overall visitor experience and satisfaction.

- The Committee noted the need to develop staged travel experiences, including stopover arrangements, to improve overall tourism experience.

- Concerns were raised regarding infrastructure planning challenges, including inefficient traffic management systems and lack of pedestrian safety measures.

- The Committee noted significant untapped opportunities in experiential tourism, including marine and coastal activities, which remain underdeveloped and under-promoted.

- It was noted that tourism development in the area is fragmented, with limited coordination among stakeholders and absence of an integrated development approach.

- The Committee noted the importance of strengthening stakeholder coordination to ensure aligned development and maximise regional tourism potential.

- Recommendations were noted to prioritise improvements in transport and accessibility, including exploration of domestic flights and ferry services.

- The Committee noted the need to upgrade road infrastructure and improve traffic systems to enhance efficiency and safety.

- It was noted that development of marine and experiential tourism products would strengthen Rakiraki’s competitiveness as a destination.

- The Committee emphasized the importance of integrated and sustainable tourism planning, balancing infrastructure development with environmental and community considerations.

- Overall, the Committee noted that while Rakiraki demonstrates strong tourism potential, addressing accessibility, infrastructure, and coordination challenges will be critical to unlocking sustainable growth in the region.

Dua Dua Resort – Rakiraki – Monday, 8th June 2026

The Committee, during its site visit and consultation at Duadua Resort, noted the following concerns and observations:

- The Committee noted that Duadua Resort is a locally driven tourism and hospitality enterprise offering diversified services, including accommodation, authentic cultural cuisine, and event hosting, contributing to local economic activity.

- It was noted that the establishment caters primarily to the domestic market, with regular community-based activities such as local markets, weekend events, and social functions, strengthening its role as a community hub.

- The Committee noted ongoing efforts to expand tourism offerings, including the introduction of recreational and eco-tourism activities aimed at enhancing visitor engagement.

- It was noted that the business incorporates sustainable practices, including use of solar energy, water recycling systems, and efficient resource management.

- Concerns were raised regarding limited government support and insufficient incentives for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises, impacting their ability to grow and compete.

- The Committee noted structural challenges within the tourism sector, particularly for SMEs facing competition from larger, established operators.

- Concerns were raised regarding limited access to finance and investment opportunities, with a need for more diversified and flexible funding options.

- The Committee noted gaps in marketing and promotion, with limited support to enhance visibility of locally owned tourism businesses.

- Broader economic concerns were noted, including rising operational costs, particularly fuel prices, affecting business sustainability.

- The Committee noted issues relating to declining productivity in key sectors such as sugarcane farming, alongside challenges including an ageing workforce and reduced output.

- Concerns were raised regarding inefficiencies in resource utilisation and increasing reliance on external support, potentially affecting productivity and innovation.

- The Committee noted the need for improved workforce training, enhanced skills development, and mindset shifts to support entrepreneurship and productivity.

- It was noted that targeted investment in infrastructure and policy support is essential to support the growth of local tourism enterprises.

- The Committee noted the importance of developing niche tourism markets, leveraging digital marketing, and promoting underutilised natural attractions to strengthen the tourism sector.

- Overall, the Committee noted that while Duadua Resort demonstrates resilience and innovation, broader systemic improvements in policy support, financing, and infrastructure are necessary to unlock sustainable growth and maximise economic benefits.

Nanumi Eco Tourism / AirBnB – Rakiraki – Monday, 8th June 2026

The Committee, during its site visit to the Nanumi Au Eco-Tourism Initiative, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee visited during day to see the operation of Nanumi Au Eco Village and Village based Air BnBs as an emerging community-based eco-tourism.

- The Committee noted the need to formulate appropriate regulations for community-based tourism projects.

Ra Chamber of Commerce – Rakiraki – Monday, 8th June 2026

The Committee, during its consultation with the Ra Chamber of Commerce, CEO – Rakiraki Town Council, FDB Official, Cane Farmers and stakeholders in the Suncoast (Rakiraki) region, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that the Suncoast region has experienced gradual economic development over the years and possesses significant natural, cultural, and tourism potential.

- It was noted that the region is under-promoted despite strong opportunities in eco-tourism, agro-tourism, community-based tourism, and cultural heritage experiences.

- The Committee noted the importance of integrating tourism development with agriculture to create diversified income streams for farmers and rural communities.

- Stakeholders highlighted the need to strengthen linkages between tourism operators and local agricultural producers to support farm-to-table supply chains.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding limited marketing and visibility of the region, including inadequate representation in national and international tourism promotion initiatives.

- Concerns were raised regarding infrastructure constraints, including poor road access, limited utilities, inadequate signage, and weak connectivity affecting tourism growth.

- The Committee noted institutional gaps, including limited presence and engagement by Tourism Fiji in the region and perceived disconnect between national strategies and local needs.

- Concerns were raised regarding lack of transparency in tourism funding allocation and limited visibility of regional investment outcomes.

- The Committee noted capacity and skills gaps in the tourism sector, including shortage of trained personnel and limited access to technical support for MSMEs.

- Stakeholders highlighted challenges faced by farmers, including price instability, weak bargaining power, and limited access to consistent markets.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding limited access to financing and slow funding processes, affecting business development and expansion.

- Concerns were raised regarding weak coordination among government agencies and the need for more structured stakeholder engagement mechanisms.

- The Committee noted the need to develop a dedicated Suncoast tourism development strategy to position the region as a recognised destination.

- It was noted that increased investment in regional marketing, infrastructure development, and digital connectivity is essential to unlocking tourism growth.

- The Committee noted the importance of strengthening support systems for MSMEs and community-based tourism, including improved access to funding and technical assistance.

- The Committee emphasized the need to expand training and skills development programmes to build local capacity in tourism and entrepreneurship.

- It was noted that improving data transparency and accountability in tourism investment is critical to ensure effective planning and resource allocation.

- The recommended development of an airstrip in Rakiraki is to improve accessibility and transportation connectivity for tourists visiting the region, thereby supporting tourism growth and enhancing the destination's attractiveness to visitors.

- The Committee encouraged the Rakiraki Association and the Chamber of Commerce to establish a formally registered Suncoast Tourism body to strengthen coordination, representation, and advocacy for tourism development within the Suncoast region.

- Overall, the Committee noted that tourism development in the Suncoast region must be inclusive and community-driven, ensuring that economic benefits are widely shared across local communities and sectors.

First Landing Resort – Vuda – Tuesday, 9th June 2026

The Committee, during its consultation with tourism stakeholders in the Vuda area, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that the Vuda area is an emerging tourism hub with growing investment and development, including resort expansion, marina facilities, and potential wellness and medical tourism projects.

- It was noted that the region has experienced strong post-COVID recovery, with increased visitor demand and revenue growth, indicating resilience within the tourism sector.

- The Committee noted the significant tourism potential of the Vuda coastline, including opportunities for cultural and heritage tourism development.

- Stakeholders highlighted the need to diversify tourism offerings, including development of cultural attractions and heritage-based initiatives to enhance the visitor experience.

- Concerns were raised regarding environmental risks associated with large-scale industrial developments, particularly the proposed waste-to-energy project, and its potential impact on tourism and national reputation.

- The Committee noted the importance of protecting tourism zones from incompatible industrial activities and ensuring environmentally sustainable development practices.

- The Committee noted the need for a comprehensive national waste management strategy to support sustainable tourism and environmental protection.

- Concerns were raised regarding the need for improved coordination among Tourism Fiji, government agencies, Fiji Airways, and industry stakeholders to ensure cohesive tourism development and marketing strategies.

- The Committee noted the importance of strengthening data collection, reporting, and analysis to support evidence-based decision-making within the tourism sector.

- It was noted that a balanced marketing approach is required, combining digital strategies with targeted promotion of niche tourism segments such as yachting, cultural tourism, and community-based experiences.

- The Committee noted the importance of market diversification, while maintaining focus on traditional markets such as Australia and New Zealand, and recognising the contribution of domestic and visiting-friends-and-relatives (VFR) tourism.

- Concerns were raised regarding the need to protect Fiji’s tourism brand, particularly in maintaining its image as a safe and welcoming destination.

- The Committee noted that service quality and overall visitor experience remain critical factors influencing tourism success, including airport services, transport, and customer interactions.

- It was noted that strengthening service standards and promoting hospitality initiatives would enhance Fiji's competitiveness as a tourism destination.

- Overall, the Committee noted that while the Vuda area demonstrates strong potential for tourism growth, achieving sustainable development will require improved coordination, environmental protection, strategic planning, and enhanced service delivery.

Fiji Airways – Wednesday, 10th June 2026

The Committee, during its consultation with Fiji Airways and Tourism Fiji, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that Fiji Airways has significantly increased airline capacity; however, this growth is not fully aligned with accommodation capacity, resulting in missed tourism revenue opportunities.

- It was noted that limited hotel room supply and high accommodation costs are constraining the sector's ability to fully capitalise on increased visitor demand.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding Fiji's declining price competitiveness compared to other destinations, particularly in accommodation and food and beverage costs, affecting affordability for key markets.

- Stakeholders highlighted shifting market trends, with traditional markets such as Australia and New Zealand showing stagnation, while higher-value markets such as the United States demonstrate growth.

- The Committee noted the importance of strengthening and sustaining key source markets while expanding into higher-value and emerging markets.

- It was noted that collaboration between Fiji Airways and Tourism Fiji has improved, particularly in joint marketing campaigns, data sharing, and coordinated promotional activities.

- The Committee noted that current stopover policies are restrictive and do not adequately encourage transit passengers to extend their stay in Fiji.

- Concerns were raised regarding the limited utilisation of stopover tourism as a growth opportunity to increase visitor spending and engagement.

- The Committee noted a disconnect between Fiji's strong international tourism branding and the actual on-ground visitor experience, particularly in areas such as airport services and frontline interactions.

- Concerns were raised regarding inconsistent service quality across the tourism sector, which may impact visitor satisfaction and repeat tourism.

- The Committee noted that community-based tourism remains underdeveloped and lacks sufficient marketing, digital integration, and support to scale effectively.

- It was noted that external risks, including negative media coverage and potential travel advisories, pose significant threats to tourism demand and destination reputation.

- The Committee noted the need to expand accommodation capacity, particularly in mid-range and budget segments, to meet diverse market demand.

- It was noted that addressing pricing sustainability and improving value-for-money offerings are critical to maintaining competitiveness.

- The Committee noted the importance of enhancing data-driven decision-making to guide market prioritisation, marketing investments, and tourism strategies.

- The Committee emphasized the need to strengthen service culture across the tourism sector, including implementation of nationwide service excellence initiatives.

- It was noted that strengthening coordination between government, Tourism Fiji, Fiji Airways, and industry stakeholders is essential to ensure cohesive policy implementation and sector growth.

- Overall, the Committee noted that while the tourism sector shows strong recovery and potential, addressing structural constraints in pricing, capacity, service delivery, and policy coordination is critical to sustaining long-term growth and competitiveness.

Port Denarau – Marinas – Wednesday, 10th June 2026

The Committee, during its consultation with stakeholders in the marina and yachting sector at Port Denarau and Vuda Port, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that the yachting and marina sector contribute significantly to the economy, generating substantial revenue and attracting high-value visitors with extended stays.

- It was noted that the sector supports widespread economic benefits, with visitor spending distributed across maritime and rural communities.

- The Committee noted that the yachting sector represents a high-value, low-volume tourism segment, with spending levels significantly higher than traditional tourism visitors.

- Concerns were raised regarding limited recognition and support for the sector within national tourism frameworks and policies.

- The Committee noted insufficient marketing support for the yachting industry, with Tourism Fiji primarily focused on air arrivals and mass tourism markets.

- It was noted that industry stakeholders are currently funding international marketing efforts independently, despite contributing to national tourism promotion.

- The Committee noted misalignment of tourism performance indicators, with current focus on visitor numbers rather than visitor value and economic contribution.

- Concerns were raised regarding regulatory challenges, including complex and inconsistent processes across agencies, which hinder industry growth and investment.

- The Committee noted issues relating to lengthy approval processes, particularly for marine infrastructure development and expansion projects.

- It was noted that weak coordination among government agencies contributes to inefficiencies and operational challenges for industry stakeholders.

- The Committee noted untapped opportunities for growth, particularly in the superyacht charter market and potential to position Fiji as a regional maritime tourism hub.

- Concerns were raised regarding negative perceptions and misconceptions associated with the sector, which may create unnecessary regulatory burdens and impact its reputation.

- The Committee noted the need to recognise the yachting sector as a strategic component of national tourism development.

- It was noted that dedicated marketing support and targeted promotional strategies are required to enhance global visibility of Fiji's marine tourism offerings.

- The Committee emphasized the importance of improving coordination among agencies and streamlining regulatory processes to support industry growth.

- The Committee noted the need to review and simplify policy and regulatory frameworks, including provisions relating to vessel entry, operations, and stay durations.

- It was noted that shifting towards a value-based tourism approach, focusing on high-spending and low-impact visitors, will enhance sustainability and economic returns.

- Overall, the Committee noted that with improved policy alignment, marketing support, and regulatory reforms, the yachting and marina sector has strong potential to expand and contribute further to sustainable tourism development in Fiji.

Port Denarau – Commercial Boat Operators – Wednesday, 10th June 2026

The Committee, during its consultation with boat operators and stakeholders in the marine, diving, and yachting sector at Port Denarau, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that the marine and yachting tourism sector represents a high-value segment of the tourism industry, contributing significant economic benefits despite relatively low visitor numbers.

- Concerns were raised regarding fragmented and outdated border and regulatory frameworks, with multiple agencies operating without effective coordination, resulting in inefficiencies and delays.

- The Committee noted inconsistencies in clearance procedures, visa processing, and fee structures, which increase operational costs and negatively impact the visitor experience.

- Concerns were raised regarding the absence of dedicated institutional representation for the marine tourism sector within government structures.

- The Committee noted that engagement between stakeholders and government agencies remains fragmented, limiting effective policy development and sector support.

- It was noted that the economic contribution of the marine sector is under-recognised, with current tourism metrics focusing mainly on visitor numbers rather than value and expenditure.

- The Committee noted that marine and yachting visitors generate significant local spending, tax revenue, and broader economic contributions that are not adequately captured in national statistics.

- Concerns were raised regarding insufficient and misaligned marketing support, with limited promotion of marine and diving tourism compared to traditional sectors.

- The Committee noted issues relating to tourism marketing prioritisation, including overemphasis on certain regions and markets while promoting accessible and high potential locations.

- It was noted that Fiji's high-cost structure is affecting competitiveness, particularly for marine tourism operators facing rising operational and regulatory costs.

- The Committee noted workforce challenges, including shortages of skilled personnel such as dive instructors, marine technicians, and vessel operators.

- Concerns were raised regarding limited access to training programmes and funding mechanisms, which constrain workforce development within the sector.

- The Committee noted the significant untapped potential of high-value niche tourism markets, particularly yachting and diving, which attract high-spending international visitors.

- Concerns were raised regarding gaps in border security, surveillance, and coordination, which may affect both national security and the credibility of the sector.

- The Committee noted the need to modernise border management systems, including the introduction of integrated and streamlined clearance processes.

- It was noted that establishing a dedicated marine tourism unit within government would strengthen coordination, advocacy, and policy alignment for the sector.

- The Committee emphasized the importance of enhancing data collection and measurement systems to better capture the economic value of marine tourism.

- The Committee noted the need to strengthen marketing strategies, prioritise high-value markets, and develop targeted promotion for yachting and marine tourism.

- It was noted that improving cost competitiveness, strengthening workforce development, and enhancing public–private collaboration are critical to supporting sector growth.

- The Committee noted that commercial boat operations make a significant contribution to Fiji's economy, generating an estimated $70 million annually and supporting the growth of the tourism and maritime sectors. However, the yachting sector is not promoted the way it should be by Tourism Fiji.

- Overall, the Committee noted that the marine and yachting sector has significant potential for expansion; however, targeted reforms in governance, regulation, marketing, and coordination are essential to fully realise its contribution to the tourism industry.

Sheraton Beach Resort – Denarau – Wednesday, 10th June 2026

The Committee, during its consultation with tourism stakeholders at Sheraton Fiji Resort, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that Fiji's tourism sector has demonstrated strong post-COVID recovery, supported by sustained government investment and effective destination marketing.

- It was noted that Tourism Fiji continues to play a critical role in driving tourism growth, with its operational independence contributing positively to performance and industry outcomes.

- The Committee noted the need to enhance market diversification, including broadening Fiji's tourism narrative to better promote culture, cuisine, and unique local experiences.

- Stakeholders highlighted the need for improved use of market intelligence and consumer data to better target key international markets.

- The Committee noted that the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) segment remains underdeveloped despite its strong potential to generate high-value and repeat visitors.

- Concerns were raised regarding the absence of clear KPIs and structured support mechanisms for the development of the MICE sector.

- The Committee noted emerging reputational risks associated with negative international media coverage, which could affect Fiji's image as a safe and desirable tourism destination.

- It was noted that proactive communication strategies are required to manage perception and maintain brand strength.

- The Committee noted ongoing workforce challenges, including shortages of skilled labour in technical, professional, and managerial roles within the tourism sector.

- Concerns were raised regarding the need to strengthen education, vocational training, and career pathways to build local capacity.

- The Committee noted increasing cost pressures, including accommodation pricing and airport taxes, which may impact Fiji's competitiveness relative to other tourism destinations.

- It was noted that maintaining value for money is critical to sustain demand, particularly in key markets such as Australia and New Zealand.

- The Committee noted that accommodation supply and product diversification may not be keeping pace with growing demand, highlighting the need for expanded offerings across different price segments.

- Concerns were raised regarding policy and structural constraints, including high operational costs and the need for improved coordination across sectors.

- The Committee noted the importance of strengthening collaboration between Tourism Fiji, government agencies, and private sector stakeholders to ensure cohesive development strategies.

- It was noted that major global events, such as the Brisbane 2032 Olympics, present opportunities to position Fiji as a complementary and transit tourism destination.

- The Committee emphasized the need for targeted marketing campaigns to leverage such opportunities and attract long-haul visitors.

- Committee noted concerns regarding the limited promotion of Fiji as a wedding destination and emphasized the need for Tourism Fiji to strengthen its marketing efforts to better position and promote the country within the international wedding, honeymoon tourism market and to attract daisporas .

- Overall, the Committee noted that while Tourism Fiji is performing effectively, sustained growth will require strategic improvements in market diversification, workforce development, cost competitiveness, and cross-sector coordination.

Tourism Fiji – Wednesday, 10th June 2026

The Committee, during its consultation with Tourism Fiji, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that Tourism Fiji plays a central role in destination marketing and has contributed significantly to the recovery and performance of the tourism sector.

- It was noted that Tourism Fiji expanded its role during the COVID-19 period to support product development and industry needs; however, the recent shift back to its core marketing mandate has created gaps in support for SMEs and community-based tourism.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding delays in submission of annual reports, raising issues of transparency, accountability, and compliance with statutory requirements.

- Concerns were raised regarding reputational risks associated with delayed reporting, despite recent improvements in systems and internal processes.

- The Committee noted that Tourism Fiji has strengthened internal systems, including digitisation and data management; however, public confidence needs to be restored through timely reporting and transparency.

- The Committee noted limited outreach and engagement with rural communities and SMEs, with many stakeholders indicating exclusion from tourism benefits.

- It was noted that there is no comprehensive database of market-ready community-based tourism products, limiting effective promotion and integration into the tourism value chain.

- The Committee noted weak coordination and fragmentation among key agencies, including Tourism Fiji, the Ministry of Tourism, and other development bodies, resulting in confusion among stakeholders.

- Concerns were raised regarding inequitable distribution of marketing benefits, with established tourism hubs receiving greater visibility compared to emerging regions.

- The Committee noted the need for improved transparency in marketing strategies, including clearer communication on budget allocation and prioritisation of destinations.

- It was noted that data-driven decision-making remains limited, with insufficient analysis of return on investment and market performance to guide marketing strategies.

- The Committee noted that infrastructure constraints, including accommodation capacity and connectivity, continue to limit tourism growth and diversification.

- Concerns were raised regarding budget limitations and external constraints, including high marketing costs and limited airline connectivity, particularly in emerging markets.

- The Committee noted the need to strengthen governance and ensure timely submission of all outstanding reports to restore accountability and public confidence.

- It was noted that roles and responsibilities across tourism-related agencies must be clearly defined to improve coordination and service delivery.

- The Committee emphasized the importance of strengthening support for SMEs and community-based tourism, including training, advisory services, and improved market access.

- The Committee noted the need to enhance communication and outreach to ensure stakeholders understand opportunities and can effectively participate in the tourism sector.

- It was noted that adopting data-driven marketing strategies will improve allocation of resources and enhance returns from priority markets.

- The Committee highlighted the importance of promoting inclusive tourism growth, ensuring that benefits are distributed across all regions, including rural and underdeveloped areas.

- Overall, the Committee noted that while Tourism Fiji remains a key driver of tourism growth, strengthening governance, coordination, transparency, and inclusivity is essential for long-term sustainability and sector development.

Shangri-La Yanuca Island Resort – Thursday, 11th June 2026

The Committee, during its consultation with tourism stakeholders at the Fijian Resort, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that Tourism Fiji continues to play a key role in promoting Fiji internationally; however, there is a need to strengthen the effectiveness of marketing strategies to ensure sustained growth.

- It was noted that while post-COVID recovery has been strong, growth in visitor numbers is stabilising, requiring more targeted and data-driven approaches to maintaining momentum.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding the need for improved monitoring of marketing performance and return on investment across different source markets.

- Concerns were raised regarding limited representation of certain sectors, including yachting, small operators, and rural tourism enterprises, within national marketing efforts.
- The Committee noted workforce and skills shortages within the tourism sector, particularly due to migration and limited availability of trained professionals.

- It was noted that service quality remains inconsistent, which may affect visitor experience and Fiji's overall tourism brand.

- The Committee noted that Fiji's competitiveness is being affected by perceptions of high pricing, including accommodation and food costs, compared to other destinations.

- Concerns were raised regarding infrastructure and accessibility challenges, including transport connectivity and access to remote tourism locations.

- The Committee noted a continued reliance on traditional markets such as Australia and New Zealand, with opportunities to diversify into emerging markets including India, China, and the Middle East.

- It was noted that tourism products are not sufficiently diversified or tailored to different visitor segments, including luxury, budget, cultural, and experiential markets.

- The Committee noted the need for stronger coordination and engagement among stakeholders, including government agencies, Tourism Fiji, and industry operators.

- Recommendations were noted to strengthen monitoring of marketing performance and improve transparency in the allocation and use of marketing resources.

- The Committee noted the need to expand inclusive marketing to better promote underrepresented sectors and regional destinations.

- It was noted that investment in workforce development, training programmes, and service standards is critical to address skills gaps and improve service delivery.

- The Committee noted the importance of improving price competitiveness and enhancing value for money through better pricing strategies and bundled tourism packages.

- It was noted that upgrading infrastructure and improving connectivity are essential to support tourism growth and enhance visitor experience.

- The Committee emphasized the need to diversify source markets and strengthen airline partnerships to improve accessibility and attract new visitor segments.

- The Committee noted a high level of visitor loyalty to the resort, with many guests returning on multiple occasions. It was further noted that the resort attracts generational family travel, whereby successive generations of the same family continue to visit the destination, reflecting strong customer satisfaction and destination appeal.

- The Committee noted the stakeholder's recommendation for the development and promotion of youth-focused activities and tourism packages to encourage greater participation by young travelers and increase youth visitation to resorts.

- Overall, the Committee noted that sustained growth in the tourism sector will depend on improved coordination, stronger marketing effectiveness, enhanced service quality, and greater inclusivity across all tourism stakeholders.

Tambua Sands Resort – Coral Coast Initiatives Thursday, 11th June 2026

The Committee, during its consultation with the Chair of the Coral Coast Initiative at Tambua Sands Resort, noted the following concerns and observations:

- The Committee noted that while Tourism Fiji promotes Fiji as a collective destination, individual tourism operators are required to undertake their own marketing efforts to promote their respective properties.

- Concerns were raised that key tourism segments, including weddings and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), are no longer being adequately marketed within the tourism industry.

- It was noted that the Coral Coast Initiative will provide a formal written submission to the Committee outlining their concerns and recommendations regarding Tourism Fiji.

Hideaway Beach Resort – Coral Coast Thursday, 11th June 2026

The Committee, during its consultation with tourism stakeholders at Hideaway Resort, noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted that Tourism Fiji plays a central role in promoting Fiji as a global tourism destination, supported by significant government funding to drive sector recovery and growth.

- It was noted that concerns exist regarding uneven regional representation, with areas such as the Coral Coast receiving limited visibility compared to established tourism hubs.

- The Committee noted the lack of a clear and distinctive destination identity for the Coral Coast, despite its potential for cultural and community-based tourism experiences.

- Concerns were raised regarding operational challenges faced by tourism operators, including rising fuel and electricity costs, unreliable utilities, and infrastructure constraints.

- The Committee noted issues relating to water security, energy supply disruptions, and transport limitations, which impact both operational efficiency and visitor experience.

- It was noted that workforce shortages and difficulties in attracting and retaining skilled labour, particularly in remote areas, continue to affect service delivery.

- The Committee noted the industry's heavy reliance on nearby communities for labour, which limits access to a broader and more skilled workforce pool.

- Concerns were raised regarding pricing pressures and growing perceptions of Fiji as an expensive destination, affecting competitiveness in global markets.

- The Committee noted inconsistencies in pricing strategies, particularly during periods of disruption, which may impact long-term market positioning.

- It was noted that domestic tourism serves as a critical stabilising factor for the sector, particularly during off-peak periods and external shocks.

- The Committee noted that the domestic market remains underutilised, especially during peak seasons when targeted marketing could enhance overall performance.

- Concerns were raised regarding limited coordination and collective representation among regional operators, reducing their ability to effectively engage with Tourism Fiji.

- The Committee noted issues within local supply chains, including inconsistency in the quality and reliability of agricultural products supplied to tourism operators.

- It was noted that strengthening linkages between tourism operators and local producers is essential to improve supply consistency and support local economic participation.

- The Committee noted the need to strengthen regional marketing strategies and promote underrepresented areas through targeted campaigns and clear destination branding.

- The Committee emphasized the importance of improving stakeholder engagement and establishing structured regional collaboration mechanisms to enhance industry coordination.

- It was noted that investment in infrastructure, utilities, and workforce development is critical to improving operational efficiency and service standards.

- Overall, the Committee noted that enhancing regional balance, strengthening coordination, and improving infrastructure and workforce capacity are essential to maximising the effectiveness of tourism development and sustaining competitiveness in the sector.