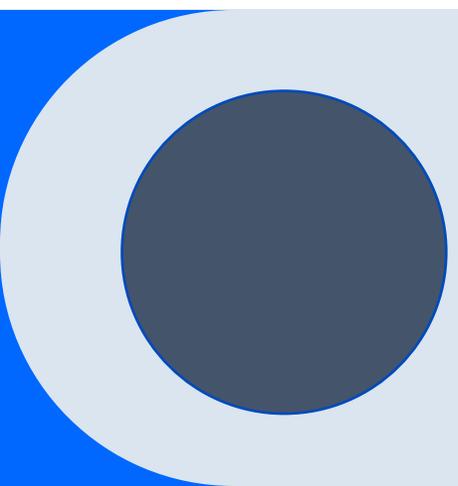




# **Sustainable Tourism Product Development in the Pacific Islands**

Presentation for the PIC-Japan Glocal Tourism Network



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# Agenda

- i. The UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific
- ii. Research and Publications
- iii. The Sustainable Tourism Product Development Opportunities in the Pacific Islands
- iv. Key Findings and Regional Recommendations
- v. Tourism Stories Pacific
- vi. Summary

# UN World Tourism Organization



- Founded **1 November 1975**
- Headquarters in **Madrid, Spain**
- United Nations Specialized agency with :
  - 159 Member-States,**
  - 6 Associate Members**
  - 2 Observers**
  - 500 Affiliate Members**
- Regional Offices:
  - Middle East: *Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*
  - Asia & Pacific: *Nara, Japan*
- As an UN-specialized agency, it is entrusted to promote responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism
- An International Organization that promotes tourism as a driver for economic growth, inclusive development, and environmental sustainability

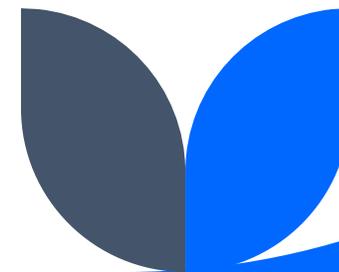
# UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP)



The UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and Pacific (RSOAP) is tasked to promote and develop sustainable tourism to contribute to economic development and international understanding in the Asia Pacific region.

Established in 1995, the office is currently located in Nara, Japan. RSOAP activities include:

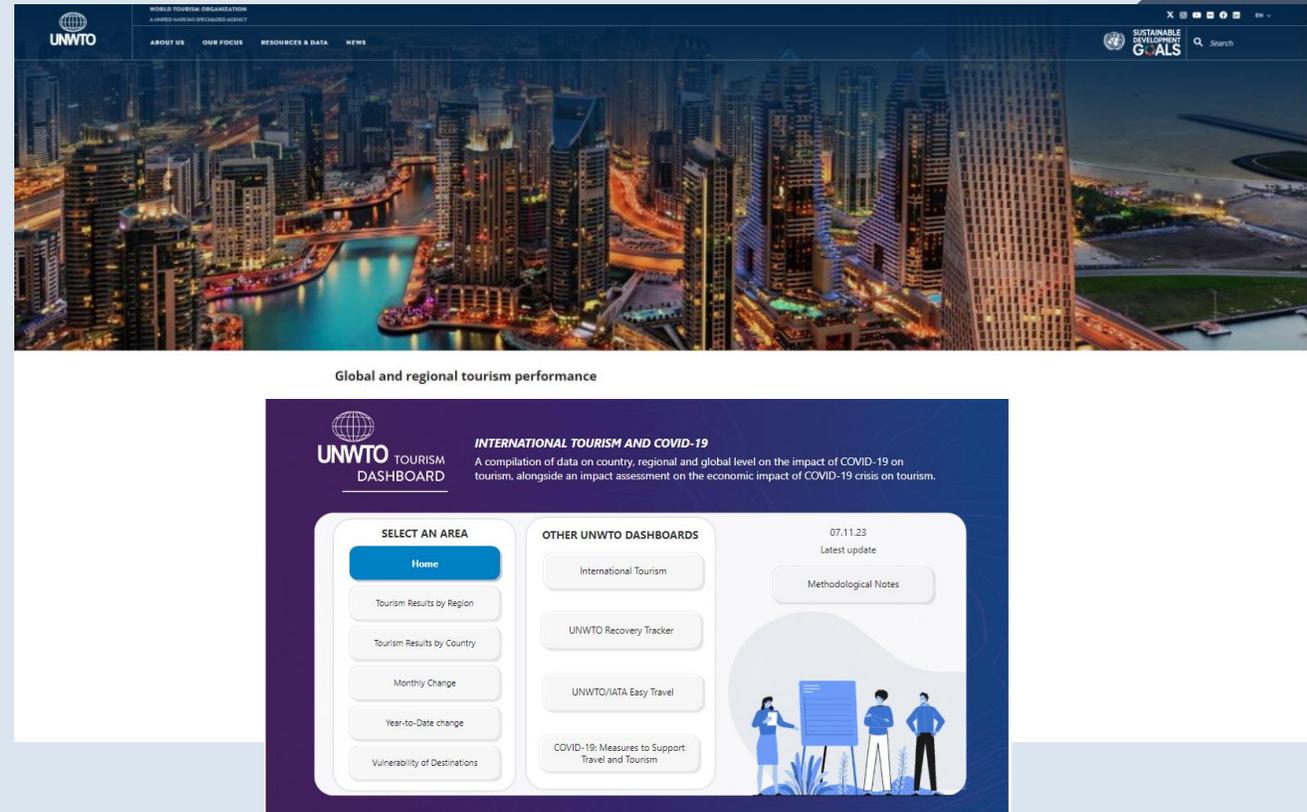
- Research & Technical Cooperation
- Promotion of UNWTO Initiatives and Activities
- Partnership Building



# Resources and Publications



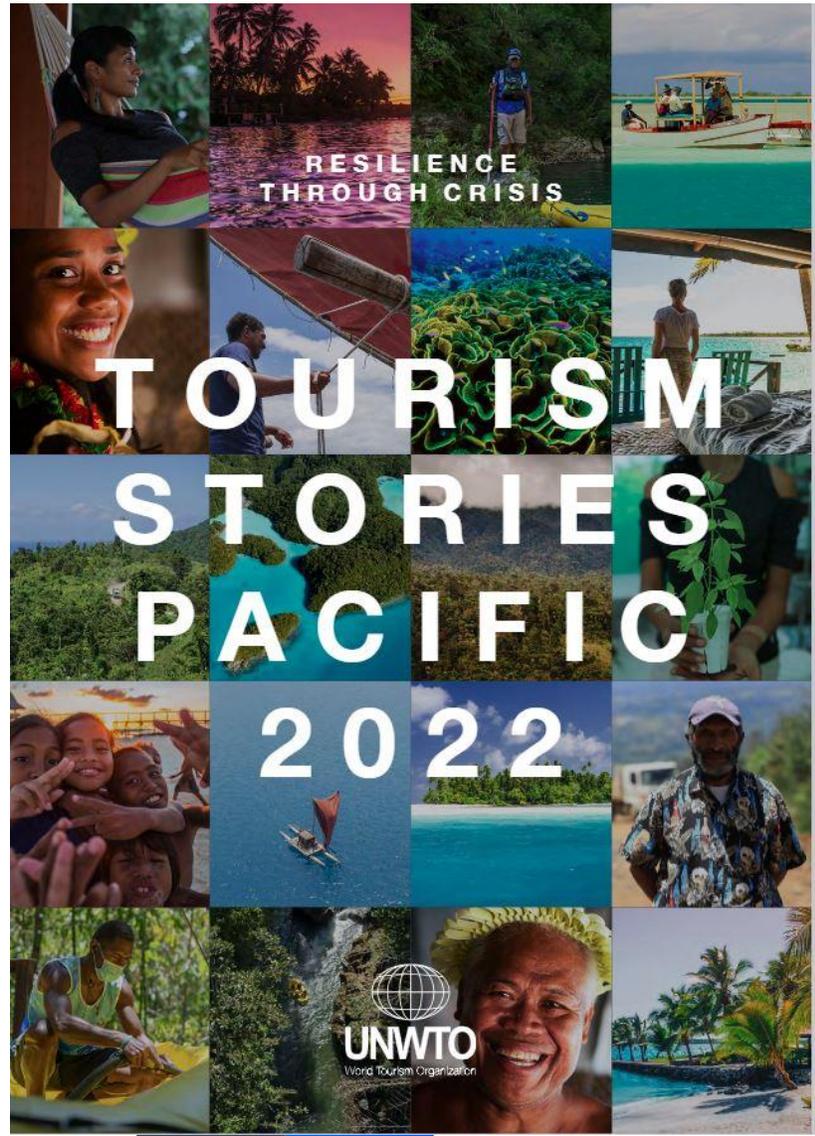
The UNWTO E-library is an online service from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) offering an unparalleled coverage of research and information in the area of tourism and is available to our Member States, Affiliate Members, subscribers, and the general public.



The UNWTO Tourism Data Dashboard provides statistics and insights on key indicators for inbound and outbound tourism at the global, regional and national levels.

# Pacific Island Research and Publications

Tourism  
Stories  
Pacific:  
Resilience  
Through  
Crisis



Sustainable  
Tourism  
Product  
Development  
Opportunities  
in the Pacific  
Islands

# Introduction to the Study

*Sustainable Tourism Product Development Opportunities in the Pacific Islands*



This research aims to provide knowledge, recommendations, and case studies on synergies between tourism growth and tourism product development in the Pacific Islands. This study aims to:

- Analyze efforts done in product development prior to COVID-19;
- Identify opportunities for product development and make recommendations that promote local entrepreneurship initiatives and community engagement in Pacific Island States;
- Provide good practice scenarios from across the region and other island states, and lessons learned from them;
- Encourage intraregional collaboration and benchmarking among Pacific Island destinations.



# Introduction: Sustainable Product Development in the Pacific Islands

- Introduction
- Asia Pacific overview
- Pacific islands dashboard
- Tourism challenges & opportunities for the Pacific Islands

## 11 Country Chapters

- Situation analysis
- Good practice case lessons
- Product development Opportunities

## Regional Recommendations

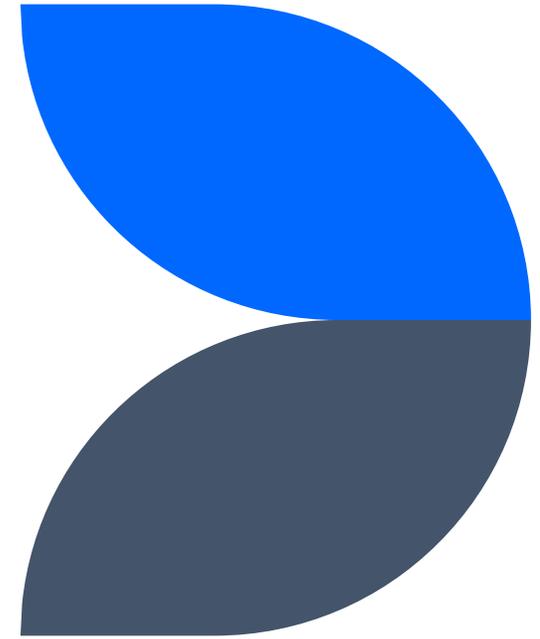
## Appendices

- Comparison of good practice cases
- Comparison of Pacific Island product development opportunities
- Product/Market Matrices for selected Pacific islands



**SUSTAINABLE  
TOURISM PRODUCT  
DEVELOPMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES  
IN THE PACIFIC  
ISLANDS**

# Key Findings



**Figure 1.3:** Tourism SWOT – Pacific islands

- A key finding from this study is the opportunity to increase efforts at the regional level in supporting tourism product development.
- There is considerable opportunity for cross-learning between Pacific Islands, as well as cost-effective regional development of standardized solutions to common challenges faced.

### STRENGTHS

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- Abundant natural and cultural tourism resources
- Capable tourism champions in developed destinations
- Regional cooperation
- Traditional resilience

### OPPORTUNITIES

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- Proximity to high growth Asian visitor markets
- Foster product champions for niche development
- Differentiate soft adventure between destinations
- New mega events to capitalize on infrastructure
- Community-based sustainable tourism pricing strategies and centralized booking systems
- Regional support for product development

### WEAKNESSES

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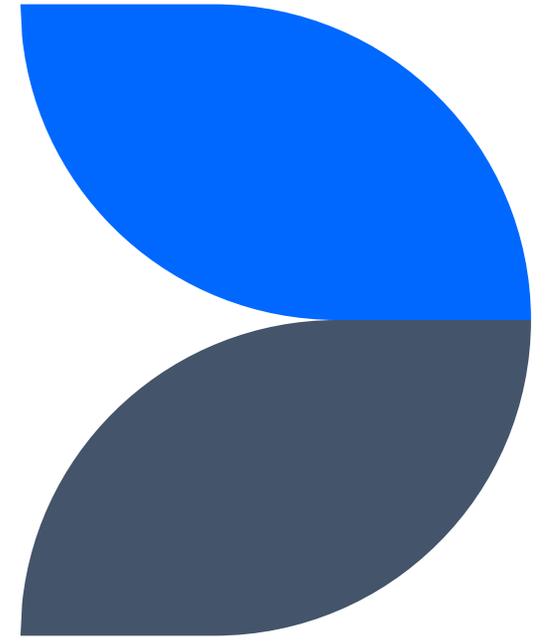
- Remoteness (small island states)
- Underdeveloped tourism infrastructure and industry in emerging destinations
- Lack of data to measure sustainability of tourism development
- Lack of in depth research to guide product development
- Insufficient human resource development

### THREATS

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- Loss of air connectivity
- Environmental degradation
- Loss of human resources from emigration
- Natural disasters and epidemics
- Social and cultural impact
- Climate change

# Country Chapter: Fiji



# FIJI



- Fiji is the leading tourism destination in the Pacific.
- Most inbound tourism operators in Fiji report potential for visitors with special interests like scuba diving, kayaking, trekking, birdwatching, heritage and historical tourism
- Fiji is also an aviation, tourism and trade hub for the Pacific



**Figure 2.2:** Tourism SWOT – Fiji

### STRENGTHS

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- Strong tourism brand recognition
- International connectivity as Pacific Hub
- Strong cruise product
- High economic impact from tourism
- Government support from tourism and enabling policies
- Variety of accommodation types
- Variety of natural and cultural attractions
- Modern infrastructure
- Multicultural diversity

### OPPORTUNITIES

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- New markets and products/niche experiences
- Move towards sustainability
- Mega events and sports tourism
- Increasing MSME participation
- North Asia market
- Increased opportunity for locals to reach management positions

### WEAKNESSES

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- Uneven labour distribution in job available for between local and expatriates
- High seasonality
- Economic dependency on tourism
- Need for stronger legislative and regulatory frameworks
- High costs for local operators

### THREATS

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- Climate change impacts on business
- Profit leakage to foreign investors
- Vulnerability to natural disasters
- Natural disasters and epidemics
- Social and cultural impact
- Reliance on foreign aid

# Good Practice Case Lessons

## **SINGAPORE'S HERITAGE BUILDING PROTECTION**

Singapore saw the potential value of building preservation as a distinctive national identity, which would in turn support the formation of a multi-cultural national identity and assist in other national objectives such as promoting awareness of history, cultivating mutual understanding between communities, supporting enterprises, providing diverse housing options and supporting tourism.

## **PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S VOLUNTOURISM GUIDELINES**

Papua New Guinea (PNG) conducted an initial assessment into the development of voluntourism. The main objective was aligning the design and implementation of community-based tourism programs.

Guidelines were created to identify local communities suitable for voluntourism.



# Product Development Opportunities

## FLY-CRUISE ITINERARIES

Fiji's solid cruise products and its location to other Pacific islands provide a strong argument for a regional cruise base and expansion of fly-cruise options.

Through public-private partnerships, Fiji can develop regional cruise facilities.

## SPORT MEGA EVENTS

Mega events have a long lead time from bidding for events to hosting, which can allow for timely investment in facilities necessary to ensure Fiji has the capacity to attract the right sporting events, which yield high returns for the tourism industry.

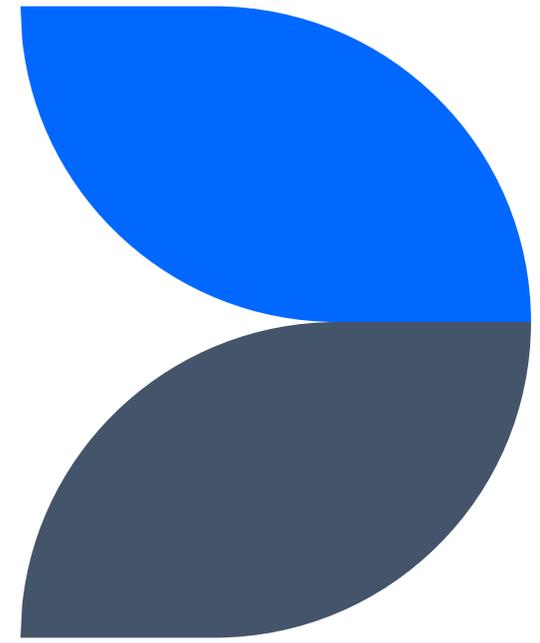
## REPURPOSE HERITAGE BUILDINGS

Market-orientated incentives and policies could encourage novel re-use of structures as commercial outlets, civic and cultural venues, or entertainment premises,

This would in turn create a sense of place and identity in such buildings, bringing an additional element to the heritage product offering in Suva



# Regional Recommendations



# Recommendations

## Human Resource Development

Foster entrepreneurs as role models that inspire tourism entrepreneurship and promote secondment programs for companies and organizations engaged in advanced initiatives based on Pacific Rim region

## Soft Adventure

Expand activities that enjoy land-based nature that do not require large-scale infrastructure investment. Destinations specialize in soft adventure activities that play to their strengths to differentiate tourism products.

## Regional Partnership for Mega Events

Some PICs countries have infrastructures to host large-scale events. There is an opportunity to collaborate with Australia and New Zealand particularly for mega events to capitalize on their network.



# Recommendations

## Sustainable Market Development to Support Product Development

Implement in-depth research on the source market of North Asia when developing tourism products.

Focus particularly on Niche market/  
Special Interest Guide on information on customer profiles, specialist media, events, and associations.

## Utilize Existing Air Services

Expand activities that enjoy land-based nature that do not require large-scale infrastructure investment.

Destinations specialize in soft adventure activities that play to their particular strengths to differentiate tourism products.

## Community-based Tourism Product Pricing Strategies

While price for community-based-tourism is often fixed price, it is recommended to diversify the content of tourism product and price according to the needs of individual markets. Looking at dual pricing for domestic and international tourists, training on price strategies & setting and centralized booking systems.



# Recommendations

## Build Polynesia Cultural Product Awareness

There is an opportunity to use cultural products to enhance awareness and understanding that Polynesia is different, and therefore inspire further visitation to the Pacific Islands. This requires a collective marketing effort

## Specialist Tourism Product Development Function for Small Islands States

Small Island State national tourism organizations may struggle to allocate specialized resources beyond promotion. Utilize aid agencies and experts in tourism product development.

## Pension Funds as Investors in Tourism

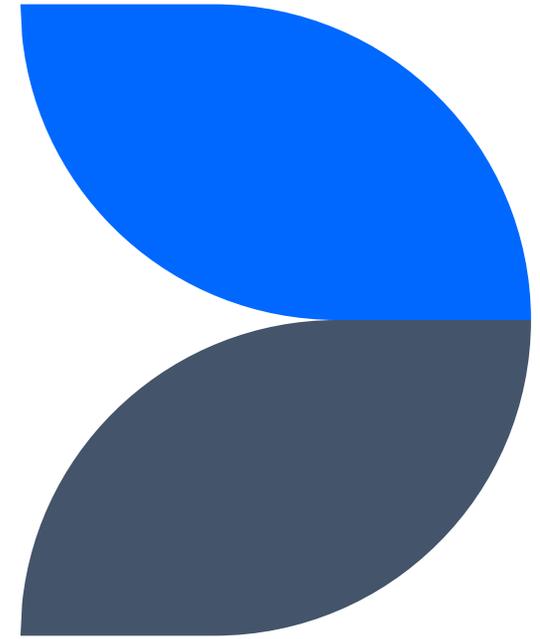
Over the last decade a couple of Pacific national pension funds have emerged as major investors in regional tourism infrastructure. There is an opportunity to prepare guidelines for Pacific Pension Funds on tourism investment.

## Prioritize Actions

Some tourism strategies developed for smaller Pacific Island nations with development agency support have a large number of product development recommendations. These can overwhelm the limited local resources available for implementation, so set priority on actions.



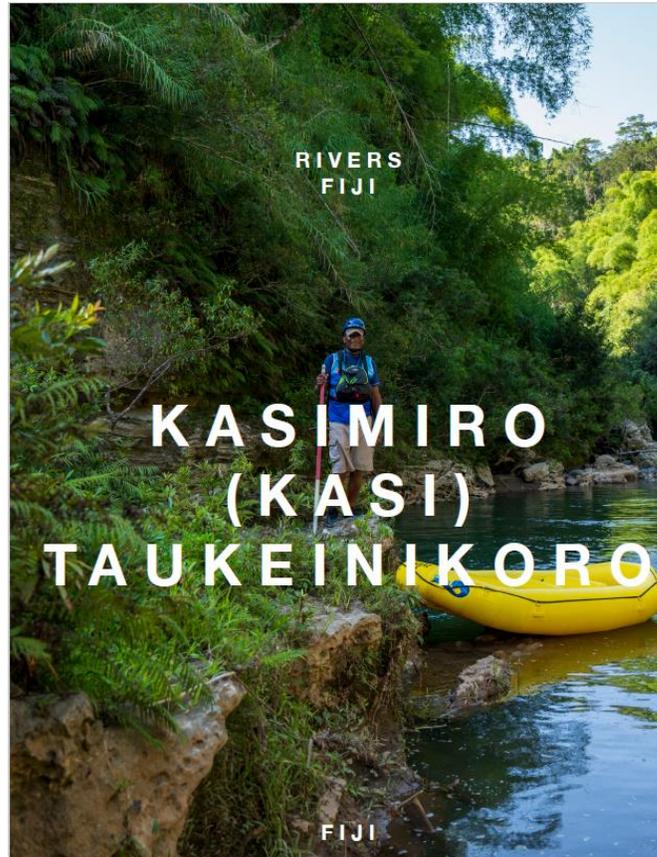
# Tourism Stories Pacific





# RIVERS FIJI

- Rivers Fiji embraces ecotourism by adhering to principles that assist in promoting sustainable tourism and responsible travel around the globe.
- Rivers Fiji has worked with local communities to establish and replenish forests alongside the Navua River, while its team also educates local communities on the long-term health and well-being benefits of conserving the forest.
- Together with private companies, established the **Upper Navua Conservation Area (UNCA)**. This is a 17-kilometer conservation corridor that will not be threatened by future logging or gravel extraction, maintaining the pristine nature of the canyon, and natural capital for the indigenous landowning groups that border the area.
- Developed a Conservation Area Management Plan that guides Rivers Fiji, the landowners and NLTB in sustainable tourism.
- In addition to the establishment of the UNCA, all Guides receive "leave no trace" training including conservation briefings related to our programs and the continued health of their ecosystem.
- Information is communicated to guests via pre-trip briefings and impromptu discussions throughout the trip.



**Kasimiro Taukeinikoro was instrumental in helping to bring everyone together to preserve this special part of Fiji – creating a 615 hectare protected wilderness.**



Rivers Fiji director Kasimiro Taukeinikoro was instrumental in helping to bring everyone together to preserve this special part of Fiji – creating a 615 hectare protected wilderness, spread across 24 kilometres of river, with a 200 metre wide forest buffer on each side. This area is home to some of Fiji's rarest endemic plants and animals, including at least three that are endangered.

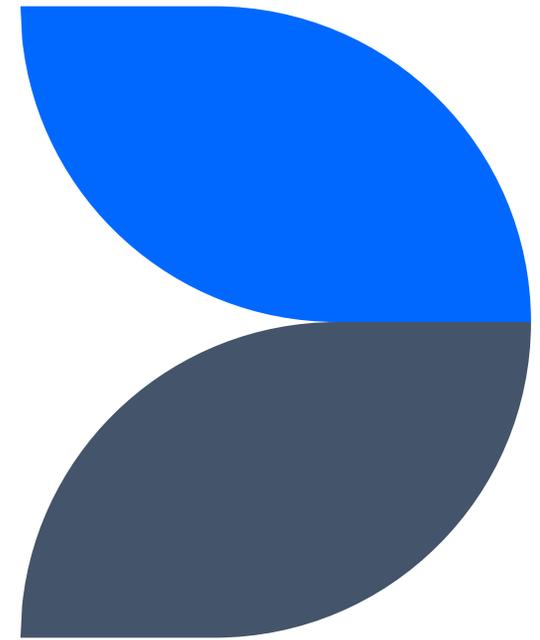
The arrangement had worked perfectly. Remote communities received an income from the rafting business, and locals from the villages trained to become river guides, while the protection of the area ensured food and water sources stayed pristine.

Listen to Rivers Fiji Tourism story when they helped reach remote villages deep in the Navua river terrain for a vaccination push during the COVID-19 pandemic, through this link:  <https://youtu.be/qCPfn6bshWs>

# Summary

- Through these two research publications focused on the Pacific Islands, UNWTO hopes to continuously collaborate and advocate for knowledge sharing for sustainable tourism for small island states.
- The “Sustainable Tourism Product Development Opportunity in the Pacific Islands” focused on the five pillars of product development: government policy, private-public partnership, small to medium enterprises and entrepreneurial development, community engagement, and carrying capacity.
- The Regional focus of the research study is a recommended approach for cost-effective regional development in the Pacific, addressing common challenges faced.
- The variety of tourism stories depicted in the “Tourism Stories Pacific: Resilience Through Crisis” provides each story with a unique perspective, bringing to light key moments when each storyteller had to face unprecedented challenges of their own and found inspiring ways to adapt to crisis for the sake of their tourism business, their staff and families, and their community and environment as a whole.

# Exchange Session





# Thank you

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