



CENTRE FOR EDUCATION  
DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Centre for Continuing  
& Community Education

FINAL COPY

**COMMUNITY ECOTOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT COURSE**

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## FOREWORD

Traditionally, Pacific Island people have lived a subsistence lifestyle with taboos and practices that ensured sustainability of resource use. However, modernization with all its implications has reduced the quality of life with problems affecting the very pillars of sustainable development. There are many disadvantages that derive from small size, a narrow range of resources, excessive dependence on international trade, high population density, over use of natural resources, relatively small watersheds, costly infrastructure, fragile ecosystems and high levels of endemism.

The Pacific region and the individual Pacific Island Countries (PICs) have made a strong commitment to international efforts to prevent further irreversible environmental change and to promote sustainable development by becoming party to numerous Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) such as the Rio conventions, Barbados Program of Action (BPOA), Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Mauritius Strategy (MS) - all of which emphasize the need for development to be more sustainable, particularly in island nations with limited natural resources and skill base.

One of the major objectives of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) is to mainstream ESD into all levels of education by taking measures equal to the task. In many situations, this involves a re-orientation of curricula to incorporate ESD themes to provide a holistic learning environment. In the Pacific schools and universities, the idea of ESD has been incorporated for a long time but not necessarily under the same label. Our traditional knowledge and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are essentially the result of sustainable island living. The declaration of DESD by the UN gives an opportunity to recommit, revitalize and add value to several of these initiatives.

Community empowerment is an area that has enormous potential for development in the Pacific for the promotion of ESD at the community level and USP is the regional leader in this area being very active through its Continuing and Community Education (CCE) Program. In April 2007, UNESCO, through ACCU, funded a 5 year (2007 – 2011) “Mainstreaming ESD at USP to enhance Education based Capacity Building for Sustainable Development in the Pacific Island Countries” project. The project is jointly implemented by the Pacific Centre for the Environment (PACE) School of Education and the CCE Unit at USP.

The CCE Unit is tasked to implement activities that contribute to an increase in skills and knowledge by designing practical courses in sustainable development to be offered through CCE programmes for local communities in the region. This Training manual is one of three such practical initiatives to be implemented under this program.

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Ms. Helen Po'uliva'ati, South Pacific Travel (SPTO)

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| Government of Fiji<br>Dept. of Tourism            | Fiji Tourism Development Plan, 2007-2016  |
| O'Shannessy. V, Minett. D<br>and Hyde. G          | The Road to Tourism – Skills for the New Professional,<br>Pearson Education, Sydney (2007)                |
| Rainforest Alliance                               | Guide for Sustainable Tourism Best Practices (2007)   |
| SPREP   | Community Based Ecotourism and Conservation in the<br>Pacific Islands – A Tool Kit for Communities (2001) |
| TIES/UNWTO  | International Ecotourism Guidelines (2002)  |
| Weaver.D and Oppermann. M                         | Tourism Management, Wiley, Aust., (2000)  |

## **WEBSITES FOR USEFUL CONTACTS AND FOLLOW UP INFORMATION**

### Sustainable Development and Ecotourism

- [www.rainforestalliance.org](http://www.rainforestalliance.org) (Access their Guide for Sustainable Tourism Best Practices)  
[www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org) (The International Ecotourism Society)  
[www.ecotourismcesd.org](http://www.ecotourismcesd.org) (Centre for Ecotourism and Sustainable Development, USA)  
[www.usp.ac.fj](http://www.usp.ac.fj) (University of the South Pacific)  
[www.cce.cedt.usp.ac.fj](http://www.cce.cedt.usp.ac.fj) (USP Continuing and Community Education Unit)  
[www.crctourism.com.au](http://www.crctourism.com.au) (Sustainable Tourism Research Centre, Australia)

### International and Regional Tourism Organisations

- [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org) (World Tourism Organisation)  
[www.unwtostep.org](http://www.unwtostep.org) (UNWTO's Sustainable Tourism to Eliminate Poverty Program)  
[www.pata.org](http://www.pata.org) (Pacific Asia Travel Association)  
[www.spto.org](http://www.spto.org) (South Pacific Tourism Organisation, aka South-Pacific.Travel)  
[www.fihata.com](http://www.fihata.com) (Fiji Islands Hotel and Tourism Association)

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED AND DEFINITIONS**

**Accreditation** is a process of qualifying, endorsing, and "licensing" entities that perform certification of businesses, products, processes, or services.

**Audit** is a systematic, documented, periodic, and objective evaluation and verification of how well a particular entity (company, product, program, individual, destination, etc.) is complying with a set of standards.

**Benchmarking** is the systematic comparison of performance in a specific aspect, such as energy consumption, with other comparable businesses and the industry's best practices.

**Best practice** is used to designate excellence, the highest quality, or superior practices in a particular field by a tourism operator. It is widely used in many award and certification programs, as well as in academic studies, to designate best in a particular class or a leader in the field.

**Budget** is an estimate of your income and expenses each year.

**Business Plan** describes all aspects of your business: goals & objectives, marketing, management & staffing, operations, financial planning & includes environmental and community management issues.

**Certification** is a voluntary procedure that assesses, monitors, and gives written assurance that a business, product, process, service, or management system conforms to specific requirements. It awards a marketable logo or seal to those that meet or exceed baseline standards, i.e., those that at a minimum comply with national and regional regulations, and, typically, fulfill other declared or negotiated standards prescribed by the program.

**Concession** making land and/or facilities available for another business to use in return for money or other benefits (like a lease)

**Commission** the amount paid to someone who sells your product. Commissions are usually calculated into retail prices.

**Customer Service** looking after the needs of your tourists (guests/clients/customers) and making them happy and safe. Remember, "the customer is always right", meaning without them you do not have a job nor a business!.

**Depreciation** the allowance made in financial calculations for wear and tear. Office machinery (e.g. a computer) loses (depreciates) value over time, as it gets old and well-used. *Depreciation* is the amount your equipment (motors, computers etc) reduces in value each year, OR, the amount you must save each year to replace them when they break.

**Ecotourism** is “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people,” according to The International Ecotourism Society. A more comprehensive definition is “travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strives to be low impact and (usually) small scale. It helps educate the traveler; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities; and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights” *Ecotourism* is where *eco* stands for *ecological* rather than *economic*, although it can provide economic benefits, particularly to local communities. It is an alternative type of tourism which is concerned with maintaining the natural and cultural integrity of certain tourism areas within a natural environment.

**Ecotourism certification** programs cover businesses, services, and activities that describe themselves as involved in ecotourism. They focus on individual or site-specific businesses, have standards that are tailored to local conditions, and are often largely or totally performance-based.

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** is an assessment of the environmental impacts of a proposed tourism activity or project before that activity starts.

**Environmental Management System (EMS)** is part of an overall management system that includes the organizational structure, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes, and resources for determining and implementing the environmental policy. An environmental management system includes tools such as environmental impact assessment, environmental auditing, and strategic environmental assessment .

**Gross Profit** Profit before paying operating expenses incurred by your business, including taxes and interest due on loans.

**Interpretation** is a means of communicating ideas and feelings that help people enrich their understanding and appreciation of their world and their role within it. Common interpretation techniques used in ecotourism include commentary on guided tours, presentations and discussions, drama performance, musical performance, brochures, signs, displays, and audiovisual presentations . *Interpretation* in tourism means helping tourists to understand, appreciate, respect and protect the local culture and environment.

**Joint venture** where two or more parties share ownership of and profits from a business.

**Mass or mainstream tourism** are terms commonly but loosely used to refer to popular forms of leisure tourism pioneered in southern Europe, the Caribbean, and North America in the 1960's and 1970's. It involves the movement of a large number of people (volumes) on nominally standardized packaged tour holidays to resorts and on cruise ships.

**Monitoring** is an ongoing review, evaluation, and assessment to detect changes in the condition of the natural or cultural integrity of a place, with reference to a baseline condition.

**Nature tourism** is travel to unspoiled places to experience and enjoy nature.

**Needs Assessment** is the first step in the project cycle and should be the first step in any project. It is a consultative exercise to determine what you want to do, why you want to do it and what you have to do to achieve your goals.

**Net Profit** Profit after paying operating expenses of your business, including taxes and interest on loans.

**Operating Expenses** The costs to operate your business -rent, electricity, phone, mail, bookkeeping etc.

**Participatory Planning** means that all members of the community participate in the meetings, consultations and discussions about the ideas and recommendations on the planning for their future. They need to feel they have some ownership and control over this process.

**Permit** a written order giving permission to a tour operator or individual to use a place or facility for a fee. Permits contain specific conditions.

**Retail Price** what the tourist actually pays for the end product. The sale price.

**Site Hardening** putting specific infrastructure/Facilities at a tourism site to limit impacts on the environment (such as rubbish bins, or a boardwalk)

**Site Survey:** a way to assess the tourism attractions in your area to see if they are accessible, interesting to tourists, and affordable.

**Small and medium enterprises (SME)** are generally companies that employ less than 25 but more than ten individuals, according to one common criterion. Companies employing less than ten people are generally referred to as micro- enterprises. This definition varies from country to country.

**Stakeholder** has some vested interest in the tourism project – whether this is active (e.g. employment, investor) or inactive (e.g. the tour take place on their land). Even within one village there are many different stakeholders, or groups, including different clans, church groups, youth, women and elders. Each group will have their own interests.

**Standard** is a document approved by a recognized body that provides for common and repeated use of a prescribed set of rules, conditions, or requirements.

**Sustainable development** is that which “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” It entails using, conserving, and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological development processes, on which life depends, are maintained and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be sustained *Sustainable Development* is meant to achieve a balance



between tourism development and the protection of the natural environment for use by future generations.

**Sustainable tourism** is, according to the World Tourism Organization, “envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems.” According to *Agenda 21 for the Travel & Tourism Industry*, “Sustainable tourism products are products which operate in harmony with local environment, community, and cultures, so that these become the permanent beneficiaries”. *Sustainable Tourism* is the type of tourism that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In other words, it promotes the conservation and more efficient use of natural and cultural resources.

**S.W.O.T. analysis** a tool to help identify and manage the strengths (S), weaknesses (W), Opportunities (O) and threats (T) to your business.

**Tour Expense** the costs involved to operate your ecotour business, e.g. tour guide wages, vehicle hire, fuel, food, village entrance fees etc.

**Tourism** is travel undertaken for pleasure or leisure with at least one overnight stay away from home.

**Tourism Attractions:** what tourists may be interested in seeing and doing in your area; including cultural (dance, stories, music, food, ceremony), natural (birds, plants, forest, ocean), historical (relics, buildings, sites), and social (village life, feasts) features.

**Word of mouth** when a tourist tells another potential tourist about their good (or bad) experiences.

### **LIST OF ACRONYMS USED**

SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environmental Program
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
USP	University of the South Pacific
CCE	Continuing and Community Education Unit
SPTO	South Pacific Tourism Organisation
PIC's	Pacific Island Countries
FIT	Free or Fully Independent Traveller
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
SIT	Special Interest Traveller
GIT	Group Interest Traveller
ETAf	Ecotourism Association of Fiji
PIC's	Pacific Island Countries