

Annex 2



Framework for a Multiyear Programme following Blue days conference held in Tahiti in June 2015

Development of marine species-based ecotourism in the Pacific Islands

VISION

'By 2020, the Pacific is recognized as a leading destination for marine ecotourism - a conservation tool for the marine environment, local cultures and sustainable socioeconomic development'

Definition¹

Coastal and marine ecotourism is a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism. It includes recreational activities involving travel away from one's place of residence which have as their main goal interaction with the marine environment and/or the coastal zone. It focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, and is ethically managed to be low-impact, non-consumptive, and locally oriented in terms of control of resources, benefits, and scale. It typically occurs in natural areas, and should contribute to the conservation or preservation of such areas².

10 themes

- ☐ **Theme 1:** Demand, supply and needs assessment in the Pacific Islands region
- ☐ **Theme 2:** Planning and structure of marine ecotourism
- ☐ **Theme 3:** Design of 'high-quality' products
- ☐ **Theme 4:** Research, monitoring and evaluation
- ☐ **Theme 5:** Marine ecotourism as a conservation tool
- ☐ **Theme 6:** Sustainable economic development and commitment of local communities
- ☐ **Theme 7:** Traditional knowledge and local cultures
- ☐ **Theme 8:** Environmental awareness and cultural education
- ☐ **Theme 9:** Capability-building
- ☐ **Theme 10:** Promotion of sustainable marine ecotourism in the Pacific Islands region

¹Fennell, D. A. (2008). *Ecotourism: an introduction (3rd ed.)*. London New York: Routledge.

Orams, M. (1999). *Marine Tourism: Development, impacts and management*. London, New York: Routledge.

²Ecotourism, as we have defined it at the Blue Days Event, could also be extended to other forms of tourism (sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, agritourism, cultural tourism) and practices (sport fishing, yatching traditional sailing,...) and synergies could be sought as long as they support the programme implementation in the Pacific Islands Region.

Theme 1: Demand, supply and needs assessment in the Pacific Islands region

Objective 1: Understand current and likely future trends and demands for marine ecotourism in the Pacific Islands Region

- Action a. Undertake market and competitor analyses to assess the current and likely future demands for marine ecotourism

Objective 2: Understand current and likely future needs of communities and their objectives for marine ecotourism in the Pacific Islands Region

- Action a. Undertake community socio-economic assessments to understand community aspirations and expectations for marine ecotourism

Objective 3: Understand current and likely future vulnerability, resilience and capacity of ecosystems and species to support marine ecotourism in the Pacific Islands Region

- Action a. Develop and strengthen scientific studies and management programmes, including best practice guidelines, for marine ecotourism activities and apply tools for measuring promoting and monitoring ecosystem to ensure resilience at all levels (local, national and regional); e.g. Reef Health Index or similar report card system
- Action b. Determine ecosystems and species carrying capacity through scientific studies and apply the precautionary principle to support resilience systems in the Pacific Islands Region

Objective 4: Develop an inventory of the current and future potential of marine ecotourism product supply opportunities and gaps in the Pacific Islands Region

- Action a. Develop an inventory of tourism products available in the Pacific Islands Region
- Action b. Identify gaps and predictions for future
- Action c. Identify iconic and unique products for marine ecotourism

Theme 2: Planning and structure of marine ecotourism

Objective 1: Develop a common programme for ecotourism in the region, led by SPTO and SPREP, with regional organizations membership

- Action a. Convene a working group or other mechanism of bringing together regional agencies and sustainable tourism organizations to define the comparative advantage of each regional actor and develop a common platform and approach to ecotourism development in the region, including a shared strategy
- Action b. Develop a five year programme and secure funds to support its implementation
- Action c. Integrate ecotourism in regional development and conservation policies and approaches

Objective 2: Identify mechanisms to encourage and support collaboration between regional, national and local stakeholders, including facilitation of cross government agency discussions in the planning of marine ecotourism

- Action a. Identify all stakeholders at regional, national and local level and establish a collective impact approach
- Action b. Identify and engage local champions who can facilitate the collaborative process
- Action c. Integrate ecotourism into national development and conservation planning, policies and approaches

Objective 3: Assess existing information, strategy, frameworks and planning tools related to ecotourism at global, regional, national and local levels, develop new tools where needed, and make all information and tools easily accessible

- Action a. Establish an online portal/database for all information, strategies, plans, tools, networks, products and opportunities, including information on trends and developments that relate to ecotourism in the region
- Action b. Commission an assessment of existing ecotourism-related research, policies, plans, activities, products and destinations (including environmental and cultural), tools including planning frameworks, regulations, codes of conduct, guidelines, training programmes, certification programmes, marketing strategies, best practice, networks and impacts to provide guidance and policy support on the online database and in corresponding publications.

Theme 3: Design of 'high-quality' products

Objective 1: Develop high-quality marine ecotourism products which allow tourists and communities alike to enjoy and learn about biodiversity, culture, and contribute to local development

- Action a. Develop standards, certifications and practices that reflect sustainable, cultural and environmental place/location-based resource use
- Action b. Explore and scope good practices in order to establish local accreditation programmes developed in partnership with communities and cultural groups; and provide the necessary means to achieve this including through South-South cooperation
- Action c. Develop a regional brand positioning for ecotourism and explore how to promote this through existing channels with SPTO and at trade events

Objective 2: Identify, promote and enable authentic community-owned culture and value-driven products focused on iconic species and cultural knowledge and practices

- Action a. Enable interested communities to lead their own unique product development 'based on demand', that is driven from internal values and that protect intellectual and cultural knowledge and rights
- Action b. Assist communities to present and market products that are attractive and acceptable to international visitors but maintain cultural integrity and value to the communities
- Action c. Allow local stakeholders to explore what is meant by ecotourism and the expectations (positive and negative) of visitors to facilitate development appropriate high quality products and services

Theme 4: Research, monitoring and evaluation

Objective 1: Strengthen our knowledge of the current status of marine species and environments, cultural knowledge, ecotourism opportunities, markets and impacts

- Action a. Collect, analyze, share and use baseline in close collaboration with local communities, national institutions and stakeholders
- Action b. Ensure regular surveys of key species and activities

Objective 2: Strengthen existing participatory processes for stakeholders to support research, monitoring and evaluation

- Action a. Establish local and regional networks with appropriate feedback loops
- Action b. Explore opportunities for sustainable financing

Theme 5: Marine ecotourism as a conservation tool

Objective 5: Make culture and conservation drivers for marine ecotourism particularly for emblematic marine species

In the short-term

Action a. Bring the outcomes of this meeting to the attention of Tourism, Environment, Fisheries and Culture Ministers in the Pacific Islands region by:

- Introducing an ecotourism agenda item at Tourism Ministers Meeting, Papeete October 2015 (SPREP to request SPTO)
- Proposing an ecotourism-specific paragraph in Communiqué for the Pacific Island Leaders Forum Meeting 2015, in September in PNG
- Including ecotourism as an Agenda item/side event for SPREP Meeting 21-25 September
- Including ecotourism as an Agenda item at the 3rd Pacific Ministers of Culture meeting in May 2016 at the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts
- Providing reports to CBD and CMS

In the long-term, local scale

Action b. Using lessons learned from community-based activities such as LMMAs, turtle monitoring schemes, MPAs and other conservation mechanisms:

- Promote the training of community monitors/representatives in basic monitoring techniques, including compliance with existing rules
- Provide training for monitors in guiding and hospitality
- Encourage government agencies and donors to support ecotourism-based conservation through training programmes and scholarships

At the long-term, regional/international scale

Action c. Create the right conservation framework for emblematic species that include:

- Connecting ecotourism, conservation mechanisms such as MPAs and regional initiatives
- Integrative tools such as SPREP Marine Species Plan; PIFS: especially the Pacific Oceanscape Framework; Regional Tourism Strategy; Regional Youth Development Framework; Regional Culture Strategy; Donors (World Bank, EU, Asia Development Bank/ operators/supporters)
- Best Practice guidelines: CROP Agencies, NGOs, Government Tourism, Environment, Fisheries

Action d. Measure and adaptively manage the success of appropriate ecotourism activities to promote emblematic species conservation

- Develop an index for ecotourism including:
 - The status and trends of key species
 - Financial benefit to communities
 - Success of compliance
 - Educational programmes
 - Tourist feedback
 - Resident feedback
 - Cost-benefit analysis

Theme 6: Sustainable economic development and commitment of local communities and private sector

Objective 1: Marine ecotourism shall be considered a tool for sustainable development which brings opportunities that benefit communities and private sector in a way that does not allow economic benefits to take precedence over cultural, environmental, and developmental aspirations

Action a. Examine benefit sharing systems where national, provincial and community level tourism benefits may be fairly and equitably enjoyed

- Action b. Undertake visioning and planning exercises with communities and private sector on how to sustain and maintain the community and industry tourism growth (over the short, medium and long term) that does not diminish the integrity and values of the local area, including considerations on the scale of growth
- Action c. Undertake research on the carrying capacity of the local context for various types of sustainable tourism
- Action d. Develop regional strategic action plans over the long term that include numbers, timeframes and local agency oversight for specific locations

Objective 2: Balance top-down and bottom-up approaches for high-quality product ecotourism management that recognizes the need for regulation but is built on community aspirations and values

- Action a. Examine case studies that balanced regulation
- Action b. Target development of high-yielding products that avoid putting excessive pressure on natural and social resources

Objective 3: Communities and private sector are engaged in a continuous process of product development from idea to certification that includes authentic cultural activities

- Action a. Tourism development and high quality products include and incorporate community and private sector views and consultation before approvals or permits are granted by Government
- Action b. Work within governments on certification processes to ensure that cultural decision-making paradigms are well considered

Theme 7: Traditional knowledge and local cultures

Objective 1: Develop an inventory of traditional knowledge including knowledge related to marine species, developed through community participatory approaches

- Action a. Undertake a scoping exercise at the regional level to identify what information exists, including relating it to work currently being undertaken as part of other conventions such as the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Convention on Biological Diversity and ensuring information is shared with and informed by stakeholders across different sectors
- Action b. Work with coastal communities on local traditional knowledge mapping to enhance their ability to share information between generations and with visitors as appropriate; and to develop eco-cultural tourism products that reflect their values and aspirations

Objective 2: Ensure that in activities developed around traditional knowledge cultural integrity, appropriateness and local guardianship of traditional knowledge are maintained

- Action a. Develop or adapt and implement codes of conduct or other tools based on existing country commitments (Nagoya Protocol, CBD, Traditional Knowledge Acts) and the Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected areas 2014-2020 to ensure respect for and continued guardianship of traditional knowledge.

Theme 8: Environmental awareness and cultural education

Objective 1: Integration of environmental and cultural education in ongoing programmes for all stakeholders

- Action a. Develop processes and initiatives within local communities and private sector and agencies for reciprocal growth and understanding of environmental and cultural values
- Action b. Identify, promote and adapt good practices for environmental, cultural and ecotourism education for the Pacific

Objective 2: Strengthen mechanisms for information-sharing and networking

- Action a. Develop regional networks to share and implement best practice and resources
- Action b. Identify tools to empower communities and private sector in the development and sustainability of ecotourism

Theme 9: Capacity-building**Objective 1: Ensure that capabilities of the stakeholders involved in the tourism and environmental sector are enhanced through technical assistance and that training and the industry is enhanced through community knowledge and cultural appreciation in a reciprocal relationship**

- Action a. Partner with the Pacific Vaka initiatives to promote the understanding and efforts of ecotourism
- Action b. Engage communities and private sector in marine conservation while promoting traditional knowledge and cultural practices of ocean navigation and revival of cultural expressions
- Action c. Sensitize communities and tourism industry as a whole to tourism and ecotourism where relevant
- Action d. Plan and implement regular training of guides and other professionals
- Action e. Integrate and connect documents such as the Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas across relevant sectors with key stakeholders to ensure their implementation and coordination of regional and national efforts
- Action f. Establish local level community-based /private sector partnerships and mentoring schemes e.g. hosting by indigenous communities/tourism industry engaged in ecotourism; internships and seconding between countries and/or communities

Theme 10: Promotion of sustainable marine ecotourism in the Pacific Islands region**Objective 1: Ensure that the SPTO marketing strategy is informed by the supply, demand and needs assessments for marine ecotourism**

- Action a. Strengthen links between key sectors (CROP Agencies, Government Tourism, Environment, Fisheries, etc...) to promote a common vision for marine ecotourism in the region

Objective 2: Utilise regional and national initiatives for the protection of the marine environment and preservation of culture and traditions to promote the Pacific Islands region as a unique sustainable destination

- Action a. Develop a shared marketing strategy at national and regional levels for marine ecotourism and conservation initiatives
- Action b. SPREP and SPTO to collaborate including with other CROP agencies and country representatives, to develop a detailed strategy promoting marine ecotourism in the region