

Programme: SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component

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Terms of Reference for a Technical Advisory Project

“Supporting Sustainable Tourism through SCP policy development and implementation in the Pacific: With considerations of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards for destination and for industry”

1. Summary

Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) practices are fundamental to achieving sustainable tourism in the Pacific. By optimizing resource use, reducing environmental impact, and promoting social and economic benefits, SCP helps create a tourism industry that is environmentally responsible, socially equitable, and economically viable. This holistic approach not only enhances the quality of tourism experiences but also ensures that tourism contributes positively to the well-being of destinations and their communities.

The SWITCH-Asia Programme has extended its coverage to the Pacific region marking a significant step in its mission to promoting and delivering SCP as an effective supportive mechanism for transformative actions towards sustainability. This will require understanding the potential for collaboration with national and regional partners working towards similar goals in various priority sectors, including tourism.

This Technical Advisory (TA) is developed based on the request of the Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) to the SWITCH-Asia (Pacific) Policy Support Component (PSC) for assistance on the following next steps identified to improve existing or developing national standards towards sustainable tourism, based on consultations with SPTO member countries in the Pacific:

1. To support the transition in the region towards SCP and Circularity in the Tourism sector, in line with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards for destination and for industry.
2. To support policy makers and the private sector in the tourism sector in terms of providing policy review, reforms, and capacity building.
3. To support SPTO to help guide the implementation process by defining pathways/roadmaps with time dimension leading to achieving major goals of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards.

2. Background

Through the EU Green Deal and Global Gateway, the EU is committed to supporting the transition of countries to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and circular economy while promoting sustainable consumption and production (SCP) practices.

As part of this engagement, the SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component (PSC) aims to enhance SCP progress through scaling up and mainstreaming SCP policy in 42 countries, spanning from the Middle East to South Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and the

Pacific (“target region”). The SWITCH-Asia PSC builds on the SWITCH-Asia programme’s long and successful track record of providing technical assistance. It also links with the SWITCH-Asia grants component and connects with EU Delegations (EUDs)’ programmes and priorities. The programme’s flexible and on-demand interventions, its mandate to foster cooperation, strengthen networking and building a platform for exchange, make the PSC well positioned to meet the needs of the target region in addressing the triple planetary crises and meeting international commitments, including the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

As mode of operation, the PSC liaises with and advises national governments and regional organisations and networks in the target region. Typically, it engages countries in regional and multi-country approaches on scaling up SCP policy and implementation, delivering technical advisory, knowledge exchange, and building capacities of regional institutions. Its key points of intervention are SDG 12 and SCP-related goals progress and support, integrating SCP into NDCs and climate-related actions, regional stakeholder engagement, with a particular attention to business and industry representatives, and communicating on SCP progress.

The PSC team works in close exchange with the Consortium Partners (GOPA and NIRAS), DG INTPA Unit C3 in Brussels (Programme Manager), as well as in continuous contact with the target regions’ EU Delegations (EUDs). With a duration of 48 months from 1 January 2023, the PSC consists of a team of Key Experts (KEs) focusing on different aspects of implementation, including policy advisory, knowledge exchange and stakeholder engagement. In support thereof, and with ambition of developing regional capacities, Non-Key Experts (NKEs) are mobilised for long-term (> 12 months) and short-term assignments.

3. Description of the assignment

3.1 Context of the assignment

The Pacific Countries face significant challenges due to their vulnerability to climate change, biodiversity and habitat loss, ecosystem degradation, pollution, waste, and other threats. These countries require strong regional and global commitments to address these challenges through transformative actions and solutions for the transition to sustainable development.

Tourism is a crucial driver of economic development in the Pacific region, providing significant income through job creation, foreign exchange earnings, and infrastructure development. It stimulates local economies and supports SMEs. Yet, tourism development in the Pacific faces unique challenges due to the large distances between islands, which complicates transportation and logistics. The dependence of supply chains on external imports further exacerbates these challenges, increasing costs and environmental footprints. The impact of tourism in the Pacific must be carefully managed. The region’s delicate ecosystems are vulnerable to degradation from increased human activity, pollution, and resource overuse. At the same time, requirements from the side of the tourism enterprises for a quality food, may contribute to development of the local supply chains and, thus, to healthier diets in the countries. Sustainable tourism practices are essential to balance economic benefits with the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, ensuring the long-term viability of both the industry and the environment.

The key priorities for the Pacific Region and its constituent countries are intricately linked with the imperative of proficient resource management and resilient economic growth. SCP transition has become increasingly important globally and there is recognition of a shared responsibility, including in the Pacific community to achieve sustainable, resilient, and inclusive growth through the tourism sector. All stakeholders in the tourism value-chain have a role to play to ensure that products and services leads towards sustainability.

The Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), as the mandated body for tourism in the Pacific, provides support to its 20 member countries in the Pacific in the areas of marketing, research and sustainable development. The SPTO plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism across the region by providing resources, training, and support for implementing sustainable tourism standards. One of the Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO)'s key strategic priorities as articulated in its Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024 is to promote the sustainable tourism planning and development in the Pacific region.

In October 2021, the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework (PSTPF), which sets out the vision, policies and actions needed to transform tourism to be more sustainable and to provide greater benefits for communities, was endorsed by the Council of Tourism Ministers in the Pacific. Goal 1 of the Framework emphasises the need for the tourism sector to be guided by well informed, agreed, and implemented policies and standards that provide direction for the development and management of sustainable tourism, supported by necessary legislation and regulations.

In support of the framework, the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Industry and Destination Standards was developed and endorsed to provide guidance to the SPTO and its member nations to work towards improved sustainability in tourism. The standards were based on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's (GSTC) criteria and adapted to reflect relevant and local issues on tourism across the region.

The Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard for destinations and industry aim to:

- provide direction and guidance to develop and implement national sustainability standards for SPTO member countries by acting as a benchmark for each destination and the tourism industry to assess current performance, and to progressively build upon in areas requiring further development over time
- support member countries and their tourism sector in becoming more sustainable through public and private sector partnerships and action
- create awareness and encourage visitors to travel responsibly.

The standard has been designed for Pacific nation destinations as well as tourism enterprises. The policies and actions that support the criteria apply to all tourism stakeholders. The Standard has been designed to cater for countries that are well advanced in sustainable tourism practices as well as for countries who are in the early stages of planning and implementation.

Countries in the Pacific region have started to implement the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Industry and Destination Standards through a variety of strategies and actions aimed at promoting sustainability, protecting natural and cultural heritage, and ensuring that tourism benefits local communities (see examples of the national tourism initiatives in the box).

Box. Examples of the national sustainable tourism initiatives

- Fiji's Green Growth Framework integrates sustainable tourism with broader national sustainability goals.
- Samoa's Tourism Development Plan includes a focus on sustainable tourism, with initiatives to protect natural and cultural heritage and support community-based tourism.
- Vanuatu has developed a National Sustainable Tourism Policy that outlines strategies for minimizing environmental impacts and maximizing social and economic benefits.
- Cook Islands Tourism Development Strategy (CITDS) was launched in 2022, which aligns with national and regional sustainable development goals (SDGs) and outlines a roadmap for regenerative tourism over the next five years.
- Palau has implemented the Palau Pledge, requiring visitors to commit to environmentally friendly behavior.

Successful implementation of the Standard will require commitment of ongoing financial and technical resources at both national and regional levels, mobilisation of which will require coordination and collaboration on all partners and stakeholders to advance the vision for sustainable tourism through a series of policies and actions. Support is needed to assist SPTO and Pacific member countries to further adopt and implement these tourism standards towards a more sustainable and resilient tourism industry that benefits both the environment and local communities, while promoting economic growth.

3.2 Contribution to programme objectives

The EU and the Pacific States share a common interest in addressing global challenges, particularly on addressing climate change, protecting the environment and enhancing ocean governance. The EU is committed to provide support on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Pacific.

The SWITCH-Asia Programme extended its coverage to the Pacific region marking a significant step in its mission to promoting and delivering sustainable consumption and production (SCP) as an effective supportive mechanism for transformative actions towards sustainability. This will require understanding the potential for collaboration with national and regional partners working towards similar goals in various priority sectors, including tourism. By engaging closely with these partners, SWITCH-Asia seeks to enhance sustainable practices concerning resource use and to foster the development of SCP and circular economy focused on priority sectors in the region.

SCP practices are fundamental to achieving sustainable tourism in the Pacific. By optimizing resource use, reducing environmental impact, and promoting social and economic benefits, SCP helps create a tourism industry that is environmentally responsible, socially equitable, and economically viable. This holistic approach not only enhances the quality of tourism experiences but also ensures that tourism contributes positively to the well-being of destinations and their communities. It will also benefit development of sectors such as local food and beverage and construction sector that could diversify economic activities and enhance quality of life for the population of the countries.

Greening the tourism sector in this context stands for SCP and resource efficiency by reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), reducing water usage, improving solid waste management, implementing sustainable management of natural resources used in the production or provision of services, reducing the ecological footprint of the value chains and making them more competitive.

Greening the tourism value chain involving all stakeholders and behavioural changes by tourist stakeholders through SCP are of importance to contribute towards the implementation of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards. Support is needed to facilitate this transition and in supporting SPTO to assist member countries to align their national tourism policies and standards. This will require contextualising with the country level needs through an assessment, which will review their national existing standards or lack thereof, present the challenges on implementation, and provide recommendations towards policy creation or reforms.

On the situation in the countries, the standards feeding in business registration processes are not strongly linked in most of the countries so there is a need to review licensing requirements and national policies and raising awareness of government agencies. SPTO recognises that certification programmes need to be considered holistically by countries, noting the financial commitment this requires and encourages the need to establish robust standards and supporting policies as a priority.

Capacity building is also needed, either to policy makers, businesses, and stakeholders relevant to the National Tourism Organisations, who are administering the standards and coordinating with the industry. This will also require support from regional institutions and development partners in supporting Pacific countries on the implementation of the framework and application of the standards.

SPTO is continuously collaborating with supporting partners such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) in conducting capacity building focusing on the socio-culture aspect to sustainable tourism and with the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) on the sustainability criteria related to the phasing out of single use plastics in the tourism industry.

Further support is needed for policy makers and the private sector in the tourism sector in terms of providing policy review, reforms, and capacity building. The SPTO has requested the SWITCH-Asia Pacific PSC in supporting the transition in the region towards resource use and circularity in the Tourism sector, in line with the Pacific sustainable tourism standards for destination and for industry.

This Technical Advisory (TA) is developed based on the request of the SPTO to the SWITCH-Asia (Pacific) PSC for assistance on the following next steps identified to improve existing or developing national standards towards sustainable tourism, based on consultations with SPTO member countries in the Pacific:

1. To support the transition in the region towards SCP and Circularity in the Tourism sector, in line with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards for destination and for industry.
2. To support policy makers and the private sector in the tourism sector in terms of providing policy review, reforms, and capacity building.
3. To support SPTO to help guide the implementation process by defining pathways/roadmaps with time dimension leading to achieving major goals of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards.

3.3. Overall Objective

The overall objective of this TA is **to accelerate and scale up the adoption of appropriate, national sustainable tourism policies in the purview of SCP and CE approaches in selected countries in the Pacific. This will be done by facilitating implementation of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards.**

Specific Objectives

- 1) Enhance understanding and interest in the potential of SCP and CE as strategies towards sustainable tourism as reflected in the PSTS criteria.
- 2) Identify the potential, opportunities and challenges of integrating SCP and CE aspects, policies and actions, in the tourism sector in selected Pacific pilot countries.
- 3) Co-create policy recommendations to support the transition in the region towards SCP and Circularity in the Tourism sector, in line with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards for destination and for industry.

Specifically, the following outputs are foreseen:

1. Policy review of national tourism policies and regulation.
2. Capacity building activities to policy makers, businesses and service providers in the tourism sector.

3. Defined pathways/roadmaps for SPTO with time dimension leading to achieving major goals of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards.

3.4. Activities

Through this TA, support from SWITCH-Asia Pacific PSC to SPTO is foreseen to be established in two phases: planning and development; and implementation stage.

Scoping and Planning - phase 1

The scoping and planning phase aims to arrive at a common understanding on how SPTO could support Pacific countries apply the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards. A scoping assessment will be conducted to provide an overview on the current policies, with focus on standards, on sustainable tourism, supported by the stocktaking and mapping previously conducted by SPTO. Individual and group consultations with experts, governments, and stakeholders will be held to verify the mapping and analysis conducted to prepare and define pathways/roadmaps to apply the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards in selected countries, focusing on the application of SCP and CE approaches in the tourism policies and standards. This stage is aimed to get the 'buy-in' from the countries that will lead to identifying actions of the phase 2 of the TA.

Contribution to development of pathways for development and applying of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards - Phase 2

This phase aims to support the implementation of activities defined in the scoping and planning phase.

SWITCH-Asia PSC will provide initial support on the scoping and planning phase 1 and activities by providing the technical expertise and logistical support needed to implement the following activities:

The following activities are structured in 5 clusters following with the referred outputs.

3.4.1 Activity 1 –Planning workshop

An input discussion note will be prepared for the initial brainstorming and planning meeting. An initial brainstorming and planning meeting will be conducted to present the technical advisory (TA) and to consult with SPTO, potential partners such as the Pacific Asia Tourism Association (PATA), the GSTC, and other key stakeholders on the proposed activities under the TA.

Outputs: Input discussion note, planning workshop report, and inception paper (August - September 2024)

3.4.2 Activity 2 - Scoping Assessment

A stock-taking and mapping of national policies in the countries will be conducted based on the assessments and reports previously prepared by SPTO to be verified and updated through desk research and individual consultations. Specific focus on the relevant standards will be observed.

Outputs: A regional scoping assessment, updated country profiles, and country briefs (September – October 2024)

3.4.3 Activity 3: Regional Experts' workshop

The findings from the scoping assessment and country profiles and briefs will be presented in the experts' workshop to identify, assess, frame the opportunities and challenges, and derive

recommendations in preparation of the in-country pathways/roadmaps to apply the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards in selected countries, focusing on the application of SCP and CE approaches in the tourism policies and standards.

Outputs: Background documents and workshop report (October/November 2024)

3.4.4 Activity 4: In-country consultations (3)

The background documents for the in-country consultation will be prepared based on the scoping assessment and results of the regional experts' workshop. In-country consultations (3 countries) will be conducted to prepare the pathways/roadmaps on applying the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards in their policies, focusing on the application of SCP and CE approaches in the tourism policies and standards.

Outputs: Consultation reports, (3) National Pathways/roadmaps leading to achieving major goals of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards. (November – December 2024)

3.4.5 Activity 5: Preparation for Implementation Phase

The results of the Scoping and Planning Phase 1 will help prepare for the Implementation Phase 2 rolling out the pathways/roadmaps to be implemented in selected countries. Online consultation with the countries will be conducted to validate suggested ways forward.

Outputs: Concept Note for the Implementation Phase rolling out the pathways/roadmaps based on the results of Phase 1; validation workshop (online). (December 2024)

3.5 Timeline (Scoping and Planning - phase 1)

Activities	2024				
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1. Activity 1: <i>Planning workshop</i>					
2. Activity 2: <i>Scoping Assessment</i>					
3. Activity 3: <i>Regional Experts' workshop</i>					
4. Activity 4: <i>In-country consultations (3 countries)</i>					
5. <i>Preparation for Implementation Phase</i>					

3.6 Technical Support and Incidental Budget

The team of experts will be composed of two regional experts who will bring their expertise to all countries in the region and one SCP expert for each country where technical advisory will be provided. The team will consist of:

- (i) **Tourism Development Expert** having the technical expertise on tourism policies and standards who will prepare the regional scoping assessment and support country experts in preparation of the country mappings, as well as assessing impacts and possible policy options
- (ii) **SCP/Circular Economy Expert**, with a strong understanding of SCP and CE application potentials in the Pacific, who will provide the technical expertise in mainstreaming SCP and CE in the policy assessments and advisory, capacity building and knowledge management activities.

Pilot countries will be identified, where enabling factors are present such as policies and measures on sustainable tourism and are interested to collaborate, that will be willing to be involved in the TA. The SPTO suggested pilot countries as follows: Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa and French Polynesia.

3.7 ToR table

Objectives	Deliverables	Activities	SNKE 1 input	SNKE 1 WDs (up to)	SNKE 2 input	SNKE 2 WDs (up to)
<p>Enhance understanding and interest in the potential of SCP and CE as strategies towards sustainable tourism as reflected in the PSTS criteria.</p> <p>Identify the potential, opportunities and challenges of integrating SCP and CE aspects, policies and actions, in the tourism sector in selected Pacific pilot countries.</p> <p>Co-create policy recommendations to support the transition in the region towards SCP and Circularity in the Tourism sector, in line with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards for destination and for industry.</p>	D1. Input discussion note, planning workshop report, and inception paper (August- September 2024)	A1. Planning workshop An input discussion note will be prepared. An initial brainstorming and planning meeting will be conducted to present the technical advisory (TA) and to consult with SPTO, potential partners such as the Pacific Asia Tourism Association (PATA), the GSTC, and other key stakeholders on the proposed activities under the TA.	Prepare the draft input discussion note, concept note and agenda with SPTO and SWITCH-Asia team; Lead the Planning workshop with SPTO and SWITCH-Asia Team; Prepare the inception paper.		Contribute on the SCP and CE elements into the draft input paper; Participate in the planning workshop; Assist in drafting of the inception paper	3
	D2. Regional scoping assessment, updated country profiles, and country briefs (September – October 2024)	A2. Scoping Assessment A stock-taking and mapping of national policies in the countries will be conducted based on the assessments and reports previously prepared by SPTO to be verified and updated through desk research and individual consultations. Specific focus on the relevant standards will be observed.	Design the assessment framework; Prepare the country profiles, country briefs and the regional scoping assessment; Conduct bilateral consultations (online) if needed; Preparation for editing and publication of outputs.		Support the data collection and provide an assessment of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards with an SCP and CE lens and include this as part of the scoping assessment; Conduct bilateral consultations (online) if needed.	20
	D3. Background documents and workshop report	A3. Regional Experts' workshop Background documents will be prepared. A regional experts' workshop will be	Prepare the background documents and		Review the background document,	5

	(October/November 2024)	conducted to present the findings of the assessment and to discuss preparation of the in-country pathways/roadmaps to apply the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards in selected countries.	lead the regional experts' workshop; Draft the workshop report.		prepare presentations and lead discussion on SCP and CE approaches in the tourism policies and standards	
	D4. Consultation reports, (3) National Pathways/ roadmaps leading to achieving major goals of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards. (November – December 2024)	A4. In-country consultations (3 countries) In-country consultation will be conducted to prepare the pathways/roadmaps on applying the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standards in their policies, focusing on the application of SCP and CE approaches in the tourism policies and standards.	Prepare background documents, concept note and agenda for the in-country consultations; Co-facilitate the consultations and conduct presentations; Prepare the reports		Co-design the background documents, concept note and agenda for the in-country consultations; conduct presentations on SCP/CE Facilitate discussions; Prepare reports.	15
	D5. Concept Note for the Implementation Phase rolling out the pathways/roadmaps based on the results of Phase 1; validation workshop (online). (December 2024)	A5. Preparation for Implementation Phase Prepare for the concept note to implement Phase 2 in rolling out the pathways/roadmaps to be implemented in selected countries. Online consultation with the countries will be conducted to validate suggested ways forward.	Draft the concept note in consultation with SPTO, SWITCH-Asia Team and partners based on the results of the TA Phase 1.		Provide inputs to the concept note to be drafted and participate in the meetings with SPTO and SWITCH-Asia Team.	5
Total per expert						48
TOTAL						

3.8 Profile required for experts (qualifications and skills; general professional experience; specific professional experience)

Senior Non-Key Expert 1 (SNKE): Tourism Development expert (Position has been filled)

1. A master's degree or higher in business and finance, economics, political science, public policy, environmental management or similarly relevant education certified by qualified university or additional 3 years of relevant professional experience;
2. More than 5 years of work experience in the areas SDGs, global and national governance issues, policy and advocacy;
3. Proven work experience in successfully designing and leading research, policy support and engagement efforts focusing on sustainable tourism and related topics and issues;
4. Experience in working in Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) and collaborating with regional and national organizations and stakeholders;
5. Experience in conceptualising and hosting stakeholder consensus building initiatives, engagement workshops and collaborative projects;
6. Excellent writing and oral communication skills; and
7. Excellent English proficiency.

Senior Non-Key Expert (SNKE) 2: SCP and CE expert

1. A master's degree or higher in business and finance, economics, political science, public policy, environmental management or similarly relevant education certified by qualified university or additional 3 years of relevant professional experience;
2. More than 5 years of work experience in the areas of SCP, circular economy, low emission development strategy, SDGs, global and national governance issues, policy and advocacy;
3. Strong familiarity with the tourism sector, their sustainability agenda and challenges;
4. Proven work experience in successfully designing and leading research and engagement efforts on SCP related topics and issues;
5. Experience in conceptualising and hosting stakeholder consensus building initiatives, engagement workshops and collaborative projects;
6. Excellent writing and oral communication skills; and
7. Excellent English proficiency.

4 Location and duration

4.4 Starting date

01 August 2024

4.5 Foreseen finishing date or duration

31 December 2024

4.6 Location(s) of advisory project

On location during the in-country consultations; otherwise, home-based. Possible travel may occur for regional gatherings.