

Perceptions of GEDSI-WASH climate resilient practices in post-Covid Fijian resorts

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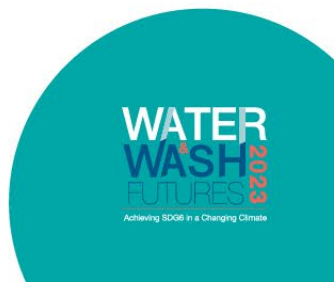
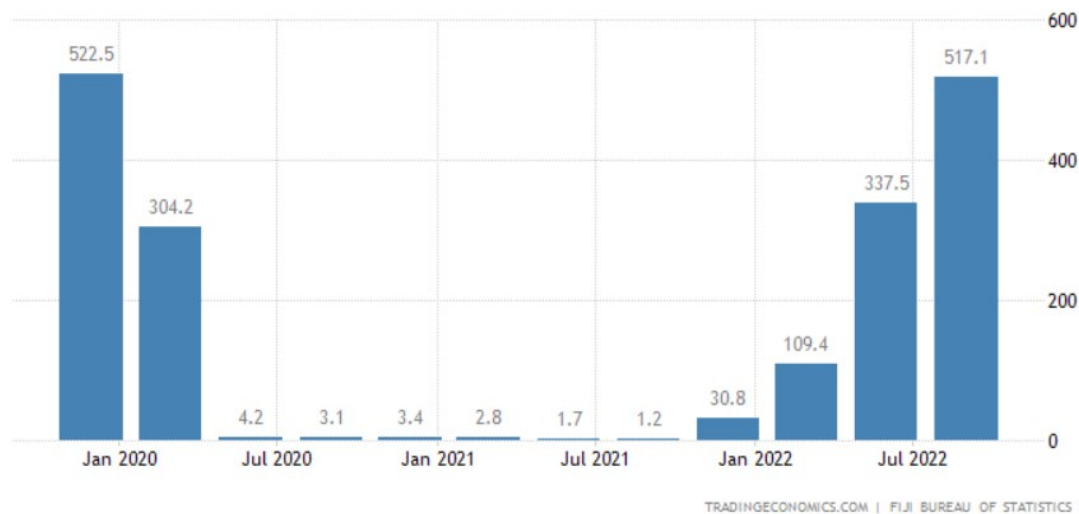
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FIJI, AUSTRALIA



Tourism in Fiji

- Tourism is a critical industry for Fiji (contributing 38% of GDP in 2020) and many Pacific Island Countries
- Hotels and resorts need to ensure guests' trust in health and safety post-pandemic
- Hotels also have a role ensuring the safety of host communities, including WASH access
- Tourism revenues are returning to pre-pandemic levels



Research stages



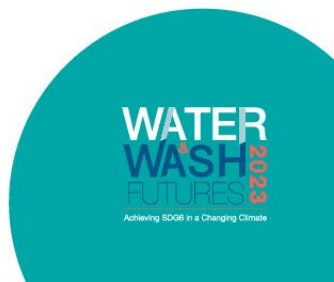
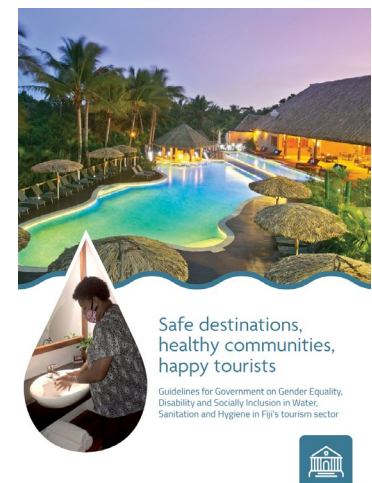
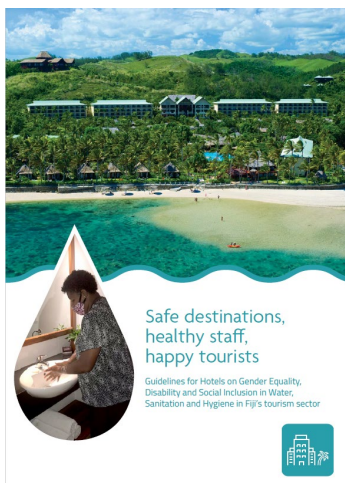
Project and research design & gain stakeholder support

Collect Inclusive WASH data for value proposition and to inform action research

Co-design and testing of Inclusive WASH-at-Work Guidelines

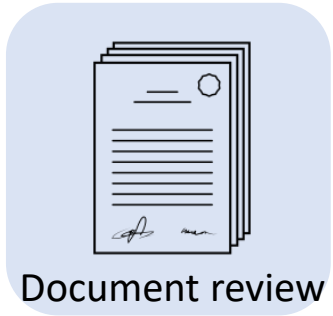
Disseminating findings and endorsement of Inclusive WASH-at-Work Guidelines

Climate resilient inclusive WASH application



Formative Research

We engaged with government, the tourism sector and local communities to document their current WASH knowledge and practices.



To uncover the motivations, risks and barriers that influence the tourism sector's support for Inclusive WASH-at-Work.



Importance of this research to Fiji's long-term development

- Contributes to achieving **National Development Plan and National Water and Sanitation Targets**
- Aligns with the **human rights** of the UN Conventions that Fiji has signed
- Contributes to **achievement of gender equality, disability and social inclusion** (GEDSI / Inclusion)
- Encourages **hotel operator Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** actions
- **Raises awareness** of Inclusive WASH issues and Climate Resilient practices **with key tourism industry stakeholders**: Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association; Tourism Fiji; Ministry of Health; operators; communities
- The tourism and WASH sectors **assist the nation to cope with intensive impacts of climate change**

Tourism in the Mamanuca Island Group



32 water scarce low-lying atoll islands and vulnerable to sea level rise, cyclones and coastal erosion



The Mamanuca Island Group are an important destination, accounting for 17% of all tourism nights in Fiji



Resorts rely on desalination for water supply (high energy and technical capacity inputs)



Resorts are an important generator of employment, especially women, and flow-on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)



Tourists' per person water use is much higher compared to local people

WASH and GEDSI challenges in community

Community water sources (shallow groundwater, rainwater and natural springs) are vulnerable to scarcity and drought

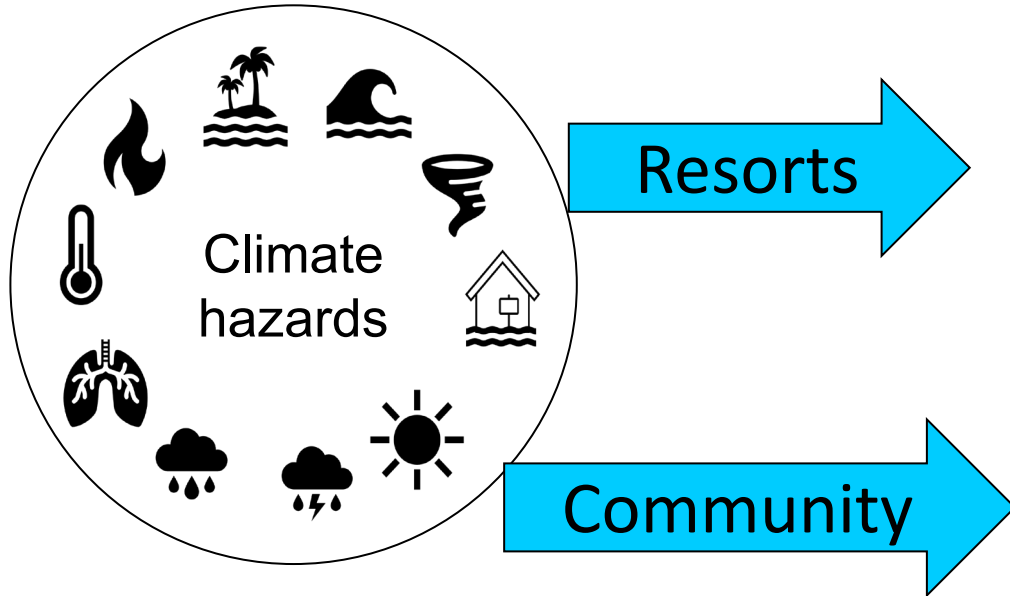
Differential in water access between tourists and local community, with community vulnerable to water scarcity

In times of scarcity community may have to choose between tasks

Women are most affected by water scarcity - because of hygiene and carrying out household duties

“resort workers are paid to maintain proper hygiene practices as opposed to the village setting where it is voluntary and dependent on individuals” – community member

Climate impacts



Climate hazards, particularly sea level rise, cyclones and droughts are increasing water insecurity

Climate impacts

- Loss of beach frontage
- Coral damage
- Infrastructure damage

- Water insecurity (wells dry up / saline / poor quality)
- Infrastructure damage
- Crop failure

Adaptation measures

- Sea walls
- Desalination plants
- Nature-based solutions (e.g. tree and mangrove planting)

- Redundancy in water supply (e.g. rainwater tank)
- Desired solutions: sea walls, mangrove planting



“My biggest concern while on my term here is the weather - it can lead to other major events like cyclones. Not many resorts can survive another blow like that after COVID. [The weather] can also lead to guests to change destinations, and we are likely to lose our market if we get more extreme weather.”

(Resort staff)

Conclusions

- Tourism is a critical source of employment and income
- The Inclusive WASH-at-Work Guidelines provides a useful tool for analysis and progressive improvement to relevant practices
- Climate change is impacting the tourism industry, destination attractiveness as well as water security for local communities
- Inequitable WASH between tourists and gendered inequity within communities
- Locally-driven solutions to increase resilience of infrastructure and livelihoods, including for WASH, are developing – but the tourism industry is better placed to resource these than local communities

Key recommendations

Application of Inclusive WASH-at-Work practices

Hotels could assist communities to become climate resilient via a focus on inclusion

Improve accessibility of support to locally driven initiatives

This presentation is based on “Engaging Corporate Actors for Inclusive WASH Services in Workplaces and Host Communities”, a cooperation of International WaterCentre-Griffith University, University of South Pacific, Institut Teknologi Bandung, and Udayana University.

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