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# WASH and Tourism in Suva and the Coral Coast, Fiji: Case Study Report



**Research Project: Engaging Corporate Actors for Inclusive WASH-at-Work**

**March 2021**

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## List of Abbreviations

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
F&B	Food and beverage
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEDSI	Gender equality, disability and social inclusion
HLPW	United Nation's High Level Panel on Water
HWWS	Handwashing with soap
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
NCD	Non-communicable diseases
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoWE	Ministry of Waterways and Environment
NZ	New Zealand
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
STBM	Community-based Total Sanitation
STP	Septic Tank Plant
SVGs	Socially Vulnerable Groups
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WAF	Water Authority Fiji

# Executive Summary

Tourism is Fiji's main revenue earner, contributing an estimated 38 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (IFC, 2020). The sector supports over 118,000 jobs and channels spending into local supply chains including agriculture, building and construction, and cultural industries. The COVID-19 pandemic, international travel bans and reduced tourist activity have had devastating economic impacts on Fiji, pushing the country into negative GDP growth. The increasing severity and frequency of cyclones in late 2020 and early 2021 have exacerbated existing social and environmental vulnerabilities. Whilst large hotels act as anchor investments in destinations, the majority of services are provided by the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that depend on tourism for their main source of revenue.

Taking advantage of tourism's key role in Fiji's development, the research project developed a value proposition for hotels to implement gender equality, disability and socially-inclusive (GEDSI) water, sanitation and hygiene at work programs that contribute to sustainable development of the tourism sector and in host communities in Fiji. The value proposition is defined as the ways that businesses can add value to their commercial enterprise by improving WASH practices at work.

The project researched three key questions:

1. What is the value proposition, including the business case, for a GEDSI WASH-at-Work program in the tourism sector?
2. What are effective water stewardship approaches to support the adoption of a GEDSI WASH-at-Work program in the tourism sector?
3. What are the barriers to, and opportunities for, engaging governments and civil society organisations to support the scale-up of GEDSI WASH-at-Work in the tourism sector?

The project team undertook formative research in Suva and the Coral Coast to explore these issues using a range of qualitative research methods. Some of the key formative research findings described in this report note that:

- Larger resort hotels usually have high standards for water access, toilets and hygiene for their guests and staff, with regular training provided through Standard Operating Procedures;
- Water quality and maintenance of infrastructure (sometimes managed by the hotels) are concerns for communities surrounding resorts in the Coral Coast, with water scarcity a concern in the dry season;
- Whilst hotel staff report practicing good hygiene at work, this does not always translate to the home setting or to other community members.
- There are limited facilities designed to be accessible by people with a disability, the elderly, pregnant women or to support women's menstrual hygiene needs.
- Post-COVID-19 preparedness and recovery requires continued education, training and capacity-building initiatives that can address inclusive WASH in tourism, and GEDSI WASH-at-Work in particular.

By facilitating increased mutual understanding and collaboration between hotels, governments and civil society organisations, the project is supporting Fiji to progress Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 6 and 5 in and with local communities. The research findings presented here contribute to a value proposition that provides context-specific guidelines for hotels in the tourism sector to support and deliver a GEDSI WASH-at-Work program. The project used findings to co-design GEDSI WASH-at-Work guidelines with Fijian hotel operators to enable them to consider WASH needs and opportunities in their hotels and local communities.

A range of recommendations have been drawn from the research for government, hotels, the tourism association, communities and all stakeholders, which are presented in section five of this report. These provide policy guidance for government and tourism sector stakeholders to support hotels and tourism operators to provide effective WASH outcomes through a GEDSI WASH-at-Work program.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Summary of the research project

### 1.1.1 Research Objective

The research project focused on the ways in which hotels can implement gender equality, disability and socially-inclusive (GEDSI) Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene at work (WASH-at-Work) programs in Fiji and Indonesia. It worked to develop a value proposition that includes a country and context-specific understanding of why the sector should engage with WASH-at-Work, helpful guidance for GEDSI WASH-at-Work programs in hotels, and policy briefs to enable governments to scale up programs. It is expected that the research will enable greater uptake of GEDSI WASH-at-Work programs that, in turn, contribute to sustainable development of the tourism sector and its host communities, particularly post-COVID-19.

### 1.1.2 Research Questions

Three research questions were developed in order to effectively investigate how actionable guidelines could be created. They are:

1. What is the value proposition, including the business case, for a GEDSI WASH-at-Work program in the tourism sector?
2. What are effective water stewardship approaches to support the adoption of a GEDSI WASH-at-Work program in the tourism sector, and what are the potential WASH benefits to host communities?
3. What are the barriers to and opportunities for engaging governments and civil society organisations (CSOs) to support the scale-up of a GEDSI WASH-at-Work program within the tourism sector?

### 1.1.3 Research Approach

The research project used a mixed method research approach to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Due to cultural preferences for talk and discussion, the project adopted a qualitative methodology to examine how the tourism sector in both countries currently invests in and/or supports WASH-at-Work and in local communities, if at all. Quantitative data was acquired from government stakeholders and relevant sources, such as departments of health, education, public works and tourism associations.

The project was conducted over four research phases:

- Phase 1: Inception: During the Inception phase the project team reviewed literature on relevant topics and conducted initial in-country field trips to engage with government stakeholders, CSOs and local partners.
- Phase 2: Formative research: The project team completed semi-structured interviews with decision-makers (owners and managers of tourism sector operations) and interviews and

focus-group discussions with staff and communities' members to understand barriers to and impacts between WASH-at-work and WASH in communities. Q-method analysis was also conducted to provide quantitative data to identify the importance of WASH in tourism from the perspective of hotel guests, staff and management.

This case study is the central output of the formative research phase.

- Phase 3: Action research: The project team co-designed and piloted a GEDSI WASH-at-Work toolkit with local stakeholders from two case study areas (CSAs). The team will revisit the CSAs to validate the toolkit.
- Phase 4: Consolidation and recommendations: The team consolidated the findings into GEDSI WASH-at-Work guidelines and practitioner notes for policy briefs. Each will be disseminated online and through in-country workshops.

### 1.1.4 Overall Research Outputs

The overall project produced a GEDSI-integrated conceptual framework, a research methodology, and tools to gather data to support the articulation of a value proposition for GEDSI WASH-at-Work in the tourism sector. It examined links between employees' WASH practices in their workplace and those in local communities.

Research outputs informed:

- A value proposition that provides context-specific guidelines and tools for hotels in the tourism sector to support and deliver a GEDSI WASH-at-Work program.
- GEDSI WASH-at-Work guidelines and tools to enable tourism operators to consider their WASH impacts on local communities.
- Policy guidance for government stakeholders to support hotels and the tourism sector to provide effective WASH outcomes through a GEDSI WASH-at-Work program.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Water Stewardship

The concept of water stewardship frames the research because it drives the idea of a value proposition. Current literature demonstrates that businesses can contribute to the alleviation of potential water challenges by adopting a water stewardship strategy that addresses the economic, environmental and social dimensions of water. By adopting water stewardship and addressing their risks, companies may make a positive contribution to improved WASH management and governance and, at the same time, to sustainable development. The contribution of business means adopting values and practices that aim to safeguard long-term availability of clean water and the provision of sanitation for all stakeholders in a watershed (SDG Compass, 2019). The values and practices reflected in the concept of water stewardship provide a means via which hotel operators may devise a rationale and an economic model for a GEDSI WASH-at-Work program.

Definitions of water stewardship are varied. Stewardship is seen as being the responsibility of the state (Calman, 2009), the responsibility of private actors (Morgan, 2018; Hepworth, 2012; Sojamo, 2015) or that effective stewardship requires both state and private actors to work together (Loftus, Smardon, & Potter, 2004). Similar debate occurs in relation to stewardship practices (Hepworth, 2012; Orr & Sarni, 2015; Lange & Shephard, 2014; AWS, 2020) and aims (Calman, 2009; Lange & Shephard, 2014). The common ground is that stewardship is about taking care of something that we do not own (AWS, 2020). This conjoint definition has framed the project's thinking to prevent an unnecessary narrowing of the scope and to avoid an initial focus on the specifics of the who, what or why.

## 2.2 Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) has been integrated into the water stewardship frame because:

- It is required to create a viable value proposition and an innovative and sustainable WASH-at-Work program that is anchored in and addresses the complex societies of Fiji and Indonesia and their tourism sectors as contexts for the research.
- The United Nations guiding principles on business and human rights guide this research project's outcomes (UN, 2018).
- The project is alert to the conceptual and social merit of using the World Bank's International Finance Corporation's definition of social inclusion as people who are 'disadvantaged or vulnerable' due to "factors such as age, ethnicity, culture, [gender diversity], literacy, sickness, physical or mental disability, poverty or economic disadvantage, and dependence on unique natural resources" (IFC, 2012).

Gender is consistently revealed as a critical cross-cutting element for improving access to WASH and for the effective realisation of water as a human right (GWA, 2019; Women for Water Partnership (WfWP), 2019). A range of studies have examined the unequal gendered power relations embedded in the tourism industry (Duffy et al, 2015; Ferguson, 2011; Gentry, 2007; Schellhorn, 2010), but few have investigated the unequal impacts of tourism on women and men, or the gendered impacts of tourism in relation to water (Cole S. , 2017). For example, in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia, "women are responsible for domestic water provision and management" (Cole S. , 2017). However, because women's work is often unpaid, unrecognised and 'naturalised', they live with water privation and pollution. Moreover, women are usually excluded from public discussions, which inform water policy, and from the attention of power-brokers who influence decision-making. In this context, a consequence of the tourism industry competing for water supplies is an increase in the cost of water (Cole S. , 2017), which negatively impacts the households in which women function.

GEDSI also shapes reflection about, and is integrated into, the project's focus on WASH. Water access and WASH programs support the health and sustainability of people in communities that have no

access to safe drinking water nor to proper sanitation. These programs may involve policy, public sector capacity building, community education and awareness (Rozaa, et al., 2013) and the (gender-responsive) budgeting that is required to ensure that commitments and policies that support the WASH needs of women and girls are put into practice (WaterAid Canada, 2017: 20). WASH programmes can also support the protection of water sources through community water partnerships.

WASH is a key conduit to recognise the benefits of GEDSI because, as current literature shows, safe water and adequate WASH behaviours lead to significant gains in health outcomes (WaterAid Canada, 2017). For example, UNICEF notes WASH-in-Schools (WinS) increases student attendance, contributes to dignity, respect and gender equality and significantly reduces hygiene-related diseases. WASH programming has a critical role in raising awareness of gender issues in schools and contributing to improved gender equality by ensuring that girls have access to separate and appropriate washroom facilities, and systems to help manage menstrual hygiene (WaterAid Canada, 2017). Gendered and socially inclusive WASH strategies are essential to improving children's nutritional status and women's nutrition needs, for preventing infectious diseases and ensuring healthy environments and safe food. Consumption of improved water quality can reduce diarrhoea significantly, between 28 and 45 percent depending on the type of water supply (WaterAid Canada, 2017).

Integrated water management works to enable GEDSI by promoting participation and outcomes that address the different yet equal needs, concerns and interests of different genders and socially vulnerable groups (SVGs) (Taukobong et al., 2016).

## 2.3 WASH-at-Work in the Tourism Sector

A key objective in the WASH sector is to provide equitable and universal water and sanitation services and access, thus protecting health and promoting development. An allied objective is to promote behavioural changes essential to realising the full benefits of WASH services. These objectives cannot be met without the full participation of women and members of socially vulnerable groups (ILO, 2016).

Existing WASH-at-Work frameworks consider the role of employers in providing sufficient access to water, sanitation and hygiene services in the workplace, as well as training and knowledge to staff to ensure good hygiene practices which safeguard both staff and guests. WASH-at-Work also considers more broadly the role of businesses to ensure adequate WASH services through supply chains and surrounding communities. However, GEDSI considerations of WASH-at-Work remain relatively unexplored, particularly in relation to socially inclusive engagement and decision-making. Consequently, the project recognises that the value proposition for any WASH-at-Work program in the tourism sector must be shaped by and integrate GEDSI into its design, management and outcomes.

The value proposition for businesses to increase investment in WASH is established, because businesses that invest in WASH have increased productivity (WaterAid Canada, 2017) and an

increased social license to operate (USAid, 2017). However, the literature shows that, even with these proven benefits, there is a low uptake of WASH programs in private businesses, with only a handful of companies signing on to the CEO Water Mandate (CEO Water Mandate, 2012). Research also suggests that WASH programs need to be tailored to their proposed context, as acknowledged in water stewardship approaches that have been developed for multiple sectors, including hotels in the tourism sector (Global Water Partnership, 2014).

The lack of alignment between evidence of positive benefits to businesses and the lack of private sector uptake of WASH programs show that the issues are more complex than providing a simple business case focusing purely on commercial benefits. Rather, research suggests that WASH programs need to be tailored to their proposed context, as acknowledged in water stewardship approaches that have been developed for multiple sectors, including hotels in the tourism sector (Global Water Partnership, 2014). There is, however, a lack of robust monitoring and evaluation of water stewardship frames and WASH programs, with both usually failing to consider the gendered social relations within and gendered impacts on local communities (GWA, 2019).

## 2.4 Enabling Environments for Scale Up

Several factors present in the governance of institutions or systems may affect the ability of a country to implement and scale up any of the findings, recommendations, or outputs of this research. The factors are often referred to as 'enabling factors' or as barriers that may inhibit change within a particular enabling environment. Common elements which allow an assessment of the 'health' of the enabling environment include policies and strategies, institutions and human resources, coordination and planning, regulation, financing (capital and recurrent costs) and monitoring and evaluation (CS WASH Fund , 2017).

The literature review undertaken to assist in the design of the project showed that the Community-Led Urban Environmental Sanitation Planning (CLUES) (EAWAG, 2011) is the most referenced WASH enabling environments framework. However, as the CLUES framework is not specific to WASH-at-Work, it was used as a springboard for analysis in relation to other enabling environment frameworks (Brown & Farrelly, 2009; Farrelly & Brown, 2011; Mukheibir, Gallet, & Howe, 2014; OECD, 2011; Rauch, Seggelke, Brown, & Krebs, 2005; Wang, Walker, & Redmond, 2007; Willetts, Murta et al. 2015) to ensure that a final framework was created to incorporate as much available knowledge as possible. The framework used in this project includes the following six factors:

- Government support: the long-term vision of government and coordination between government partners.
- Knowledge and skills: the skills and capacity of the workforce, as well as the sectoral capability present in-country.
- Political economy: the political will, support and potential risk aversion of the government, as well as the perceived/planned role for the private sector.

- Regulation and enforcement: the existence of regulations and the ability of a sector to enforce those regulations.
- Institutional arrangements: organisational and administrative structures inside organisations, as well as agreements, including cost-sharing and financial agreements between organisations.
- Engagement: engagement between government, communities and organisations.

All these elements need to be considered within a specific GEDSI WASH-at-Work context to understand the broader systems in which relevant stakeholders operate.

## 3 Case Study Area Selection

### 3.1 The Fiji Context

Tourism in Fiji was an expanding industry that became a priority sector for the Fijian government to achieve sustainable economic growth and to reduce the nation's economic dependence on sugar as an industrial mono-crop. The Fijian government employed actions such as increasing and strengthening the tourism sector through inclusive sustainable development growth, where social, economic and environmental aspects of such growth were evaluated and considered throughout the planning or implementation of any project. Whilst strategies to increase tourism in Fiji remain a key government objective, strategic planning has not considered important factors that contribute to the development of sustainable tourism, such as gender equality, broad-based social inclusion, and WASH practices. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, effective WASH practices are now of considerable concern to the sustainability of Fiji's tourism sector.

In early 2020, tourism contributed an estimated 17% of Fiji's GDP and provided direct and indirect employment to an estimated 118,000 people (IFC, 2020). According to the National Fijian Tourism Plan, tourism has been the source of both national and familial income due to its capacity to provide skilled employment; it supports, on average, one-third of Fiji's total labour force (Investment Fiji, n.d). Although tourism in Fiji has contributed significantly to a reduction in poverty, impoverishment remains a key social problem. The remote location of many outlying islands poses difficulties in providing quality education, health and public services such as WASH.

Due to the vital role of the tourism sector in the development of a sustainable economy in Fiji; the government created the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Tourism. The Ministry's Strategic Plan (2018-2023) recognises that tourism is a crucial sector in the Fijian economy as it is the largest contributor to Fijian GDP. The Ministry promotes and strengthens the sector by formulating and implementing policies and plans, such as the Fijian Tourism Plan 2021, to achieve its vision of a \$2.2 billion tourism industry by 2021, with a focus on quality tourism and the creation of links to the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. The National Development Plan also provides strategies to facilitate tourism growth by ensuring its sustainability. The strategies include strengthening the linkage between human resources and the

tourism industry, implementing environmental taxes to conserve and preserve ecosystems and cultural heritage, and investing in tourism-related infrastructure such as roads, ports, water and sewerage systems (Investment Fiji, n.d).

The case study areas (CSA) chosen were Suva and the Coral Coast on Viti Levu. Suva was chosen as a CSA because;

- Like all of Fiji, health issues due to WASH are an issue;
- It has urban and peri-urban settlements (different to the Coral Coast CSA);
- The research team has existing strong relationships with the tourism community;
- Tourism is a major industry in Suva with many operators of multiple scales;
- It is in the Rewa Province on Viti Levu and Central Government is based there.

The Coral Coast was chosen as a CSA because;

- Like all of Fiji, health issues due to WASH are an issue, additionally water scarcity during the dry season is a concern on the Western side of Viti Levu;
- It is rural (different to the Suva CSA);
- The research team has existing strong relationships with the tourism community;
- Tourism is a vital industry for the Coral Coast with many operators of multiple scales;
- It spans the provinces of Serua and Nadroga-Navosa on Viti Levu.

Nadi and the Yasawa group of Islands were also considered but ultimately were not included due to access issues and travel limitations associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 3.2 Water in Viti Levu

### **Suva**

Water shortages on the Eastern side of Viti Levu are associated with failure in the supply system due to the political issues of the country rather than insufficient water resources (SOPAC et al., 2007; SOPAC et al., 2012). The abundance of freshwater in Fiji provides water security to urban and peri-urban populations. The city of Suva obtains its supply directly from surrounding streams, relying on small reservoirs to meet its demand. However, ageing infrastructure, limited maintenance, inadequate training and capacity of staff, plus the illegal taking of water and extended dry periods, result in water disruptions.

Rapid urbanisation is also stressing water resources, not only due to the need to satisfy rising demand, but also due to the discharge of untreated wastewater which is negatively impacting the water quality and coastal estuaries. Discharges are caused mainly by on-site sanitation systems, runoff of nutrients and faecal contaminants from the cattle industry, and soil erosion that increases liberation of metals from sediment (SOPAC et al., 2007). Further, increasing population is placing pressure on sanitation systems; currently, in Suva, the sewerage treatment schemes are operating close to capacity

(Investment Fiji, n.d). The need to improve infrastructure is of critical concern to Fiji's improvement of WASH.

While urban migration for education and employment opportunities has increased in many Pacific cities and towns, the high cost of housing and ongoing conflicts with Indigenous land tenure systems have increased the development of informal/unplanned settlements that lack basic infrastructure. The majority of Suva is covered by a reticulated water and sewerage network operated by the Water Authority Fiji (WAF), with some areas having no access to sewerage and sanitation being provided by septic tanks (DWS, 2017). The largest gaps in reticulation coverage are in informal settlements. The (currently in draft) 2017 National Water and Sanitation policy lists increased investment to improve coverage in informal settlements and vulnerable communities and improving the centralised sewage treatment as key urban water service challenges facing Suva and the rest of Fiji.

### **The Coral Coast**

The Coral Coast is situated on the south-western corner of Viti Levu, an area renowned for its rich coral and marine biodiversity, with ideal tropical weather and low levels of rainfall throughout the year. It is spread over five districts in the province of Nadroga. Outside of the large towns like Sigatoka, which is serviced by WAF, much of the Coral Coast is rural, with each community having decentralised water infrastructure. Due to the constitutional right of access to water and sanitation, the Department of Water and Sanitation must provide water and sanitation infrastructure to each village, however, because of the diversity of system technologies and remoteness of villages, the water supply and sanitation systems are often under-maintained and can fall into disrepair. In this aspect, the tourism industry can have positive impacts on water management in the Coral Coast, with some resorts funding and sometimes maintaining water systems in their host communities, either to improve relations and their social license to operate or, as required by land leasing agreements, as our findings show for The Warwick Fiji Resort and Spa and Naviti Resort Fiji.

Despite the drawcards of natural beauty, there is significant pollution of water resources due to the tourism industry's wastewater. The Ministry of Waterways and Environment (MoWE) (2007) stated there was a relation between the sewage system and high level of nutrients in the water, which tend to increase in front of resorts and population settlements along the Coral Coast. Due to the small catchments with water often flowing into ocean lagoons protected by reefs, the catchment behaves like a miniature closed catchment. Nutrients build up in the lagoons and can lead to algae growth, damaging the reefs that the resorts rely upon to draw tourists. To this end, resorts such as The Naviti Resort Fiji have monthly tests of their river and sea water conducted by The University of the South Pacific (USP) to ensure that the water is not polluted. As such, any water planning in these catchments must use a holistic, ridge-to reef management.

### 3.3 Tourism in Suva and the Coral Coast

#### **Suva**

The capital of Suva is located in Viti Levu. It is the administrative hub where government decisions on policies, regulations, and management of natural resources are made. As Viti Levu and Vanua Levu are the largest islands and main economic bases of the archipelago, their societies provide income stability. As a consequence, the majority of the Fijian population has settled in these two islands.

Most of the land in the Central Division is classified as 'native land', as it is owned by Indigenous communities and divided according to their traditional social hierarchical system. In some cases, it is leased for agricultural or tourism purposes. The Central Division is formed by 26 sub-catchments, of which 15 comprise the Rewa River catchment, the largest river basin in the South Pacific Islands; 3 form part of the Navua River catchment; and 8 other sub-catchments from small coastal rivers. Suva, formed by one coastal sub-catchment, is characterised by narrow valleys and unstable, high bank erosion rates, with low forest coverage which is considered to be at high risk of flooding. Surface water in Fiji is used mainly as the water supply for the major cities or towns as well as for irrigation and industry.

#### **The Coral Coast**

The southern Coral Coast underwent a series of developments in the mid-1900s, enabled by the construction of the Queen's Highway in 1942. This was undertaken by the United States Army and provided the initial portal to further development in the area. The highway also opened the area to the exploration of its potential for tourism. In 1952, Fiji's first resort hotel was constructed in Korolevu, next to the village of Votua. The construction of the Warwick Resort (also near Votua) in 1972 and the Naviti Resort (at Votualailai) in 1974 followed. After this, the Tambua Sands and Hideaway resorts were built in the latter parts of the 1970s to 1980s. The operation of these major hotels in the past decades has further led to the establishment of other small-scale tourism initiatives such as backpacker, ecotourism, dive centres and home-stays. Today, the Coral Coast is Fiji's second largest tourism destination (with over 40 licensed establishments) and accounts for over 150,000 international visitors annually (Ministry of Tourism, 2009). Tourism has been perceived as the lifeblood of the Coral Coast as it has contributed to the development of the various communities mainly through employment, land lease benefits and other tourism related activities (Kado, 2007). However, studies also suggest that tourism is a contributing factor influencing socio-cultural changes within the various districts along the Coral Coast (Kado, 2007; Samy, 1980).

Please see the project Case Study Introduction (1. Fiji Case Study Overview) for further details.

## 4 Results

The data-driven thematic analysis identified eight key themes emerging from the data, which are presented in Table 4 below.

TABLE 1. OVERVIEW OF FORMATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Themes	Statements	Comments
<b>1. Water Supply</b> <i>Hotels and community</i>	<p>“Main supply by WAF. We also have tanks as backups. Disruptions happen after a heavy rainfall, mainly due to burst pipes or blockage. When there are disruptions, the water tank is turned on. It is costly, because apart from the rooms, there are pools.” CC.Operator_FPB_21</p> <p>“Our current water access is from the hotel. Prior to 1973, we used to gather water from a big pond, which was walking distance from the village. The hotel was established in 1973, and that's when we had water in our homes. The maintenance of the water supply to the village is the responsibility of the hotel, as this was in the initial agreement.” CC.Community_FPB_04</p>	<p>All respondents reported that hotels access water from the main water supply provided by the Water Authority Fiji (WAF). Similarly, most hotels have back-up water sources including water tanks and boreholes. Water access and pressure were reported to be quite consistent throughout the year and respondents consider water supply to hotels to be very good.</p> <p>The communities' access to water is considered secure and similar to the hotel, as communities are most commonly connected to the main water supplied by WAF. The main difference is that not all households have back-ups, but some reported to have private water tanks or bore holes.</p>
<i>Pressure</i>	<p>“Near the hotel - water is supplied via main. In the village - from the main, but very poor - low pressure. Yes there are, during the dry season, level of the main supply is low, hence pressure is low. For us, we come and have our shower at work.” S.Staff_FPB_01</p>	<p>Despite secure access with very limited disruptions, water pressure was reported to be low at certain times of the year. Low pressure was reported to be a problem during some of the afternoons and during dry season. One respondent explains the low pressure with the increase in houses. Other issues affecting water pressure were reported to be burst pipes, which happens two to three times within a 6 month period.</p>
<i>Water stewardship</i>	<p>“Prior to 1973, we used to gather water from a big pond, which was a walking distance from the village. The hotel was established in 1973, and that's when we had water in our homes. The maintenance of the water supply to the village is the responsibility of the hotel, as this was in the initial agreement.” CC.Community_FPB_04</p> <p>“Kitchen for food prep, cooking, cleaning, at the bar for washing glasses, laundry, pool and drinks for the cows - neighbouring community cows. We have provided them with drinking water, so the cows don't come into the hotel premises.” CC.Operator_FPB21</p>	<p>A community member recalled the hotel development brought water access to the homes of their village in 1973. It is part of the land lease agreement that the hotel maintains water supply to the community.</p> <p>Several hotels on the Coral Coast support the water supply for communities, including for livestock.</p>
<b>2. Governance &amp; Policy</b> <i>Collaboration and partnership required</i>	<p>“All to work together in good governance.” S.Informant FNM064</p>	<p>Collaboration and partnership networks are well established in Fiji's tourism industry. Respondents highlighted the need for closer collaboration in good governance to ensure no-one is left behind.</p>

<p><i>Communication and consultation on tourism policies</i></p>	<p>“I am not aware of plans – that would be more suited for the owner.” CC.Operator_FPB20</p>	<p>Key informants and hotel operators/managers are aware of tourism legislation, policies and plans however the greater tourism workforce requires more awareness. Some respondents maintained that there are lots of plans but they are not effectively actioned, either because they are considered too hard or require a long term commitment. The data also highlighted little consultation on policies being implemented and enforced.</p>
<p><i>WASH Policy</i></p>	<p>“We don’t have any provincial or local policy that focus on WASH, water and GEDSI however, we have posters indicating the 11 steps of washing hands, signage of how to use the soap dispensers and for what purpose, posters when disposing sanitary pads in the female toilets.” S.Operator_FPB09</p>	<p>Awareness on WASH policies was found to be lower. Most hotel/resort operations have their respective in-house WASH policies, while others who have not, have indicated this as an area to consider increasing awareness of the importance of WASH, especially in the context of COVID-19.</p>
<p><b>3. Culture</b> <i>Culture as tourism attraction &amp; unique identity</i></p>	<p>“Our reputation, which has always been the emphasis on the Bula spirit, the iTaukei culture, which we indigenous people love to showcase and share with others.” CC.Operator_FPB25</p>	<p>Varied cultural beliefs and practices could be leveraged to achieve Fiji’s broader vision for tourism. Cultural practices attract visitors to Fiji as cultural and religious diversity is promoted with unique traditional practices.</p>
<p><b>4. GEDSI</b></p>	<p>“We don’t have any provincial or local policy that focus on access to WASH, water and GEDSI. The idea of having a provincial or local policy for WASH, water and GEDSI is a great idea that our Human Resources team could look into. S. Operator.” FPB09 “There are no toilets specifically for the disabled-we don't get many guests with disabilities here.” CC. Staff. FPB06</p>	<p>Government policies and their requirements for public/community and hotel WASH facilities were in place, but the implementation of policies addressing the specific needs of people with a disability and other socially vulnerable groups can be improved. The WASH in Schools programmed was referenced, and the intersection between hotel operations, provincial and local government policy, and initiating a GEDSI WASH-at-Work program was considered beneficial.</p>
<p><i>Disability</i></p>	<p>“The idea of having a provincial or local policy for WASH, water and Gender, Equity, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) was a great idea that the Human Resources team could look into.” S. Operator. FPB09</p>	<p>Hotel operators stated that they did not have any provincial or local policy that focused on access to WASH, water and GEDSI. Data show that few facilities were designed to be accessible by people with a disability, the elderly, pregnant women, children or to support women’s menstrual hygiene needs. Among many hotel operators knowledge of government policies and their requirements for public/community and hotel WASH facilities to address the specific needs of people with a disability, limit their ability to fit within the International Labour Organisation’s WASH-at-Work framework and to enact its requirements. Members of disability advocacy groups confirmed that hotels do not specifically address the WASH needs of people with a disability.</p>
<p><i>LGBQI inclusiveness</i></p>		<p>Government policies and their requirements for public/community and hotel WASH facilities were in place, but the implementation of policies that were LGBQI inclusive needed improvement. Data showed that there were no facilities designed for LGBQI hotel staff or community members and they used male or female facilities and displayed no preference for having separate facilities provided for them. However, it is suggested that special</p>

		facilities be built for LGBTQI in hotels and communities and LGBTQI policies be developed by hotel Human Resource Management.
<b>5.Sanitation</b> <i>Toilets in hotels and community</i>	<p>“170staff share 4 toilets. There's no issue because of the shift work, not all 170 staff are at work at the same time.” S.Staff_FPB_07&amp;08</p> <p>“Our wastewater goes into a separate system - which is dug out holes, filled with corals and then covered with a roofing tin piece and then buried, this has always been the case. Our septic tanks, which is only for toilets, is separate. We are comfortable with this system.” CC.Community_FPB_16</p>	<p>Most hotels offer guests private toilets as part of their rooms and provide public toilets in common areas and event spaces, separated by gender, with at least one male and one female toilet. Several hotels therefore report having over 100 toilets.</p> <p>Toilets in the community vary in type and standard. Most people living in the suburbs of Suva close to hotels have flush toilets inside their homes, whereby most homes have one toilet, some have two. In addition, there are communal toilets located in the community hall or church, separated by gender. Some people living in villages and rural communities have their toilets outside the house and not all toilets are flush toilets. In addition to flush toilets, participants reported water-seal toilets and pit toilets.</p>
<i>Sanitation practices</i>	<p>“But otherwise, we also use cleaning agents for our toilets and shower rooms, when it’s time to clean these. Yes, we think, because we copy what is used in the hotels.” CC.Community_FPB_05</p> <p>“At home, say for the toilet, we clean it once a week. We know in the hotels, it is maybe twice a day.” CC.Community_FPB_17</p>	<p>Communities practice cleaning but less frequently than hotels. While some respondents state they copy what is done in the hotels, other observe practices are less rigorous (e.g. cleaning of beach fronts).</p> <p>Not all communities have effective sewage systems, raising concerns about health risks. Drainage is also reported to be an issue, which leads to flooding of areas such as the village green, providing mosquito breeding grounds.</p>
<i>Wastewater</i>	<p>“The Resort's wastewater is channelled to our Septic Tank Plant, which is a treatment plant and then bailing out of the 'waste' is done by an external company. The Engineering Department is in charge of this and we’re very satisfied with this system.” CC.Operator_FPB25</p> <p>“All goes into the main drain, maintained by the Suva City Council.” S.Operator_FPB_017</p> <p>“We have recently made soak pits. Not all homes have these, so their wastewater ends up in the drains. This is a health and safety risk.” CC.Community_FPB_04</p> <p>“Septic tank or reused for gardening.” CC.Community_NM_19</p>	<p>Hotels were considered to have a good wastewater system and hotel managers and staff widely reported that they trust their wastewater systems. A number of hotels are connected with the municipal sewage system, others have their own sewage treatment plants or septic tanks, which are emptied by external companies on a regular basis. There are certain departments or designated maintenance personnel who maintain the wastewater system. Several operators also reported that testing of wastewater is conducted.</p> <p>Standard of wastewater disposal in the community varies. Many residential houses have septic tanks for toilets whereby wastewater from the kitchen, laundry and shower either goes into drains, soak pits or dug holes filled with coral and is covered with pieces of roof tin, which is then buried. Some towns are connected to the main sewer. Some respondents reported households had their wastewater connected to small streams, others mentioned the possibility of wastewater leaking into the ocean. Some wastewater is recycled for the gardens.</p> <p>There were no reports on any water testing being conducted and responsibility was reported to lie either with Council or individual households.</p>
<i>Solid Waste</i>	<p>“We could do a better with our rubbish separation, instead of putting it all in the garbage bag and gets collected. Separate the glass, cans, recyclables.</p>	<p>Respondents considered that hotels have more efficient waste management systems in place than the community. This was explained by hotels having the resources to have dedicated departments.</p>

	<p>Some homes have composts. We used to have bins within the community surroundings, but these were destroyed by drunk youths and have not been replaced." CC.Community_FPB_05</p> <p>"We have incinerators and our rubbish is collected by the town council - paid for by the hotel" CC.Community_FPB_05</p>	<p>Results indicate that it is not common for individual households to separate their waste, and community participants recognise the opportunity to do better.</p>
<p><b>6.Hygiene in hotels</b></p>	<p>"The kitchen staff know to wash hands almost every time we finish preparing a meal etc. But the Maintenance guys have access to the kitchen to come and get their boiled water. There's no procedure for them to wash their hands - I see that there is a need for that now. Washing our hands before preparing food is a habit." Staff FPB03</p>	<p>Hotels have high hygiene standards, which are documented in Staff Handbooks and signage around the hotel. Staff report a good knowledge and practice of expected personal (grooming) and handwashing hygiene.</p> <p>Handwashing vigilance depends on staff roles, e.g. kitchen staff report very frequent handwashing whereas maintenance staff wash hands less frequently than is ideal.</p> <p>Physical facilities such as sinks with continuous running water, as well as materials (soap and hand sanitisers) required for good hand hygiene are always available and accessible to staff and guests.</p> <p>Hotel cleanliness, good personal and hand hygiene are recognised by hotel staff as important to their and guests' health, as well as guest satisfaction.</p> <p>Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) waste disposal is provided for by the hotel and no MHM concerns were raised.</p>
<p><i>Hygiene practices in communities</i></p>	<p>"The difference between home and work is, while at work, we're more 'switched on' with washing of hands, due to our nature of work and the people we're constantly in contact/interact with. Being at home, we're more relaxed, no constant handwashing, only due critical times - after toilet use, before eating/cooking, after returning from outside." Staff FPB06</p> <p>"The biggest difference would be the frequency of handwashing the readily available of soap and other hand cleaning stuff at the hotels. In our homes, we just use regular soap. Also in the Hotels, they need to do this because they are always in contact with different people - guests. We have always used soap and water." Community FPB17</p>	<p>Staff do not wash their hands as frequently at home as they do at work. Community members have good knowledge and report regular practice of daily personal hygiene (washing hands, brushing teeth, showering etc), but are more 'relaxed' about it. The critical times reported for handwashing included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Before preparing food.</li> <li>- Before and after eating.</li> <li>- After using the toilet.</li> <li>- Returning home from the food garden, farm.</li> <li>- After handling something dirty.</li> </ul> <p>There was no mention of washing hands after cleaning infant faeces or helping children use the toilet.</p> <p>Physical facilities such as sinks with continuous running water, as well as materials (soap and hand sanitisers) are mostly good, but not universally available to all community members. Some reported running out of soap, having water supply disruptions, and not having sinks inside their houses.</p> <p>COVID-19 has prompted increased vigilance to and regularity of cleaning in hotels and increase hand hygiene frequency.</p>

<p><b>7. COVID-19</b></p>	<p>“We need all the help we can get.” Operator FPB25</p>	<p>The Tourism Recovery Team developed the Care Fiji package to reassure travellers and tourism stakeholders that Fiji is a safe destination to visit when their borders open. Resorts believe their HR Training Managers are equipped to conduct COVID-19 preparedness training. Smaller resorts welcome training from outside consultants, especially as it relates to COVID19 preparedness for staff, guests and their local community.</p>
	<p>“Most felt they would be at risk but were unsure how to do deal with this.” Operator FPB25.                  “COVID19 is very contagious and with NCDs and limited medical facilities we will not be able to cope with an increase in infections.” Operator FPB21</p>	<p><b>COVID-19 Concerns</b>                  Questions were asked of hotel/resort management, employees and local communities regarding their preparedness for COVID-19 and what they thought would happen once the borders opened.                  Stakeholders agreed that they had little knowledge of what COVID19 was, what they would have to do to prepare themselves to deal with it, and how their behaviour would have to change.                  There are large concerns for staff and communities once the borders open. More education and knowledge need to be given to communities to empower them to prepare for this eventuality.</p> <p><b>Impacts of COVID-19</b>                  Tourists will be more focused on hygiene practices and what each holiday destination has implemented at resorts. Prior to COVID-19 there had been a strong focus on markets such as China and India, however this is not to be the case for a while.                  There are concerns with opening the borders to New Zealand and Australia, which are Fiji’s traditional markets.</p>
<p><b>8. Value Proposition</b></p>	<p>“Fiji will still maintain our smiles and hospitality, which is a drawcard to our destination. In terms of Culture, this is in its people. Visitors come for the people, visit villages and want to experience the culture of the Fijian people. How I see it, it is the tourism industry that will revive the cultures. A good example is Samoa - the tourism industry is all culturally centred.” S.Operator_FPB_017</p>	<p>When imagining a successful tourism industry in the future, respondents’ vision revolved around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Returning to normalisation after COVID.</li> <li>- Growing tourism.</li> <li>- Increasing sustainability.</li> <li>- A stronger focus on culture and local identity.</li> </ul> <p>A GEDSI WASH-at-Work program in hotels and communities can support such vision.</p>

## 5 Discussion

In order to understand whether a GESDI WASH-at-Work program may effectively address the WASH requirements of the hotels operating in, and the communities supporting, Fiji's tourism sector, it is important to understand what are their needs, concerns and interests, recognise existing WASH practices, and assess the tools required to enhance them. The formative research findings analysed here form the basis from which to understand current GESDI WASH-at-Work practices and how these might be improved through GESDI WASH-at-Work programs in Suva, the Coral Coast and elsewhere in Fiji.

### 5.1 Water Use

Respondents reported that hotels in both Suva and Coral Coast access water from the main water supplier, WAF. Most hotels also have back-up water sources including water tanks, their own supplementary supply from boreholes and back-up water storage tanks, which provide water if the WAF supply becomes unreliable. Water access and pressure was reported to be consistent throughout the year and respondents consider water supply to hotels to be stable.

Respondents reported that hotels offer several options for drinking water, including tap water for staff, and other drinking water sources at hotels such as water dispensers containing boiled water, water fountains and bottled water. Some hotels provide complimentary bottled water on arrival, others offer bottled water for sale. Hotel water quality is generally reported to be good, consistent and safe. Water quality is affected by natural disasters or when water filters require changing. Most respondents did not think water quality was an issue, only water pressure. Water quality is affected after heavy rain (such as in the rainy season), after a cyclone or during droughts, in which case, communities purchase bottled water or boil their drinking water. In cases of reduced water quality, a hotel operator reported that they provide bottled water instead, indicating that a back-up plan is in place.

Community access to water is considered secure and similar to the hotel, as communities are most commonly connected to the main water supplied by WAF. The Coral Coast Tourism Chapter was reported to provide backup water supply to communities and several hotels supply all water to communities. In Suva, the Council carts water to communities in times of disruption of water supply. Communities experience low water pressure at certain times of the year, i.e. during the afternoons and the dry season. Reported concerns regarding water supply were water quality, e.g. brown/turbid after heavy rain, or white, potential for sickness from water, not having a back-up system, tank water being high in chlorine and not having proper shelter for the water tank. While water conservation awareness is presented in villages and schools, in hotels limited training on water supply is provided to staff, but some reported that they had received training on how to guide water use for guests.

Respondents identified a symbiosis between hotels and communities, due to use of the same water sources, the employment of many staff from local communities and, on the Coral Coast, the provision of water to some of the communities and neighbourhood cows. “A symbiotic relationship exists between communities and tourism operators because they need each other. Communities provide food supplies and support services, manpower, and land to tourism businesses. Also, part of lease conditions are community development/support for schools, education funds”. S.Informant FNM002.

Tourism is known to be resource intense, particularly of water, because tourists use more water when on holidays than they use at home. This problem is amplified because, on a global scale, tourists leave their water-rich home regions in the global North to travel to often water-poor areas in the global South (Gössling et al., 2012). The findings align with broader literature that suggest competing demands for water access can challenge equitable and sustainable development, an issue which can become more critical on out-lying islands with more limited water resources. Negative impacts on people may increase as competing demands for clean, fresh water place increased pressure on water availability and quality. Correlated negative impacts are increasing risk for businesses, governments, communities and the environment (SDG Compass, 2019). Due to the increased risks surrounding a contested and constrained public resource, ‘water stewardship’ has emerged not from business theory, but in response to business awareness of water as a critical and finite resource for business and society (Hepworth, 2012).

Businesses can contribute to the alleviation of potential water challenges by adopting water stewardship approaches that address the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of water. By adopting water stewardship approaches or gaining water stewardship accreditation, companies may make a positive contribution to improved WASH management and governance (AWS, 2021). Their contribution means adopting values and practices that aim to safeguard long-term availability of clean water and the provision of WASH for all stakeholders in a watershed (SDG Compass, 2019).

## 5.2 Governance and Policy

The data indicated the need for closer collaboration to ensure good governance of WASH in the tourism sector in Fiji. Collaboration and partnership networks are well established in Fiji’s tourism industry. Stakeholders work in collaboration with existing infrastructure including NGOs and development partners via which more people at the grassroots level are encouraged to take ownership of WASH to ensure the wellbeing of their communities and, in the process, support Government and industry efforts in overall development. However, Government must continue working with regional and provincial offices through its consultative process and coordinated approaches, exercising protocol when involving communities. Functional relationships are proving effective as partners join resources and share knowledge on WASH issues.

Key informants and hotel operators/managers are aware of tourism legislation, policies and plans, however, the greater tourism workforce requires more awareness. There is a need to ensure messaging

and information are sent and received and work is done in partnership with industry stakeholders to ensure effective awareness. The data also highlighted little consultation on policies being implemented and enforced. Too often legislation and plans are developed without early consultation with the private sector or with those impacted by the decisions. The research findings link policy to WASH and the tourism sector, particularly the dissemination of policy and community support for collaboration with the tourism industry. Whilst the tourism industry was expanding in Fiji (prior to COVID-19) and is considered globally to be a key driver for socio-economic progress, organisations such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), which devised a Pledge for Access to Safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) at the Workplace, have noted that since the launch of their WASH Pledge in 2013, only 47 companies have signed. The low uptake suggests it is timely to recognise that tourism sector businesses require information and government support if they are to provide GEDSI WASH-at-Work programs and broader WASH opportunities that, in turn, may lead to more comprehensive commercial, social and health benefits.

Respondents do acknowledge Government support to the tourism industry, which is a key employer and contributor to the Fijian economy's GDP. There is general understanding of the various types of tourism and the niche markets that Fiji offers, as well as Government's support through facilitative processes, incentives, concessions and relevant infrastructure to promote its development. Support for Government policies is provided by the tourism sector through the tourism associations and groups who assist where they can either through conservation, rehabilitation efforts, support to infrastructure and charity. In contrast, some respondents were not aware of national tourism plans and highlighted the need to strengthen tourism plans with more evidence-based support to influence legislative reviews, recommendations and advise. Tourism operators are found to readily comply with national and local government policies and they understand the consequences of non-compliance. Although policies exist, there is a general consensus that enforcement needs to be strengthened in order to obtain feedback on policy success and learnings. Tourism operators also need to be aware of WASH policies such as the Rural and Water Sanitation Policy and the Water Carting and Rainwater Harvesting Guidelines of which the Ministry of Waterways and Environment is responsible.

Generally, respondents maintained there is a sense of women's empowerment given to hotel staff. Women are provided the opportunity and relevant platforms to raise their issues and act on them for the greater good. At village or community meetings or religious women's groups, concerns are voiced, which are either addressed or not acted upon if not part of community/group's priorities. Communication of information and concrete government support have the further potential to enable Fiji, via the tourism sector, to achieve aspects of its SDGs, i.e. SDG 6, which requires the achievement of universal access to water and sanitation by 2030, and SDG 5, which requires the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

## 5.3 Culture and Tradition

Respondents recognised that Fiji's varied cultural beliefs and practices could be leveraged to achieve the country's broader vision for tourism because cultural practices attract visitors and cultural and religious diversity is promoted with unique traditional practices. These are the Bula spirit, the Fijian people, the way of life, culture and traditions, natural resources, seclusion, location and authenticity, and traditional practices using natural flora and fauna, which also contribute to sustainable development.

Hotel managements' respect for and knowledge of the local culture enabled workplace issues to be resolved sensitively and professionally, particularly for local managers, who have the advantage of understanding culturally appropriate practices. Of significance also are the links identified by respondents between WASH and culture, particularly in relation to hygiene practices taught at schools or learnt in the workplace, then transferred to homes and communities, whether village or informal settlements. A GEDSI WASH-at-Work program generated from the tourism-sector and supported by government could work to enhance knowledge and awareness of effective hygiene practices within local communities elsewhere in Fiji.

## 5.4 Gender Equity, Disability and Social Inclusion

Respondents identified a number of GEDSI issues as key influences on hotel operations in Fiji's tourism sector. Overall, issues relating to gender equity, particularly in relation to women and girls, were recognised and understood. However, GEDSI also exists in the gaps in people's knowledge. In not understanding the heterogeneity of tourists and the community, the needs, interests and concerns of members of SVGs are under-estimated or ignored. For example, in terms of hygiene facilities, it was stated that facilities existed and were safe in the workplace, and in the community. However, the data showed that few were designed to be accessible by people with a disability, the elderly, pregnant women or to support women's menstrual hygiene needs (other than disposal facilities to avoid pipe blockages). Despite the recognition in hotels of the existence of female employees' menstruation and the need for hygienic disposal of items, there was no training in menstrual hygiene management (MHM) (or broader social inclusion) in the workplace. Women's GEDSI WASH requirements are taken for granted and women are expected to bear individual responsibility for their menstrual hygiene needs.

Among many hotel operators knowledge of government policies and their requirements for public/community and hotel WASH facilities to address the specific needs of people with a disability, limit their ability to fit within the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) WASH-at-Work framework and to enact its requirements. Members of disability advocacy groups confirmed that hotels do not specifically address the WASH needs of people with a disability. There is also a need for a nuanced recognition of the GEDSI implications of water availability, quality and access, to understand that even a seasonal lack of access to drinking water and effective sanitation hinders gender equality by ignoring

the needs of women in the community, who are likely to have higher demands for water during their period (due to the need to wash more regularly), and when they care for small children, the elderly and/or sick relatives. Pregnant women require water of high quality to ensure their continued health and that of their foetus, while in the workplace women require water to maintain an acceptable public standard of hygiene.

The findings identified that whilst there is some WASH training in some workplaces, many hotels rely on knowledge that staff acquired in school. And, despite the acknowledgement that facilities are not optimal in communities, overall there is little GEDSI WASH training, nor provision for the needs of people with disabilities. Collaboration and cooperation is key to socially inclusive engagement with female and male staff, with women in communities, and with the GEDSI requirements of the community's needs.

The findings suggested that cultural aspects must be considered to prepare stakeholders to deal with post-COVID-19 preparedness and recovery. The i-Taukei community engages in communal activities that can lead to the spread of the virus such as drinking yaqona from a shared bowl, sharing alcohol, i.e. drinking from shared shot glasses, cigarettes and food. Further, attendance at church is an important practice that includes communion and hand-shaking. Elders within communities support curfews, which has enabled them to enforce village laws, e.g., no drinking, church attendance at 7.00pm and 5.00am, work in house gardens and focusing on children's education and set times for homework and play. However, there are strong impacts on women who continue to work, due to the additional burden of work in the home and village, and the rigid requirements of village religious life. While some women are assisted by male partners and their children, it is significant that GEDSI-specific factors related to COVID-19, particularly in relation to the increase in domestic violence on women and children, were not recognised or were ignored. As Koester (2015) argues, the gendered roles, behaviours and attitudes that societies define as appropriate for women, men and gender diverse people can be the cause, consequence and mechanism of power relations in households and communities. To effectively combat COVID-19's gendered negative impacts, these must be acknowledged and women provided with effective support for their needs.

The findings align with Heller's (2016) report on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation on the role of gender equality in the realisation of the human right to water and sanitation. The report highlighted key areas to prevent and respond to gender inequalities in WASH, as well as gender-based violence and barriers to the realisation of the human right to water and sanitation. It links with the Global Water Partnership, which has identified gender as a key cross cutting issue, and the Women for Water Partnership, which emphasizes the importance of cross-linking the implementation of SDGs 5 and 6. GEDSI WASH-at-Work can provide Illustrative Gender Targets and Indicators, as does SDG Target 6.2, i.e. By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations. In addition, a value proposition for GEDSI WASH-at-Work can frame quantitative questions, i.e. what is

the percentage of WASH staff aware of basic issues related to gender and prevention of violence against women and girls, including linkages between WASH programming and reduced vulnerabilities to violence? What is the female-to-male ratio of WASH program staff? What is the percentage of women/girls in job skills training on operation and maintenance of water supply and sanitation, including for technical and managerial roles? What is the access to menstrual hygiene-related education, materials, and disposal options? What is the female-to-male ratio of persons who participate in community-based WASH committees or other decision-making structures?

In relation to people with a disability, the UN Disability and Development Report (2017) provides evidence that persons with disabilities remain at a disadvantage in global, regional and national efforts towards achievement of the SDGs. Recognition of disability-inclusive development in water and sanitation (SDG 6) is detailed as “Ensuring inclusive access to water and sanitation for person with disabilities requires accessible designs, including accessible toilets, water points, water carriers, bathing places and handwashing facilities” (UN, United Nations Disability and Development Report, 2017) . Accessible infrastructure development in urban and rural environments, public spaces, facilities and services (SDG 11) is of parallel importance to the participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development (UN, United Nations Disability and Development Report, 2017). And it is recognised that double disaggregation of data is needed to achieve the SDGs for those who experience disadvantage based on more than one aspect of their identity, such as women and girls with disabilities.

## 5.5 Sanitation

The data showed that sanitation access in the community in comparison to access in hotels are different, particularly in relation to the availability, type, comfort, and quality of toilets, and in disposal of wastewater. Respondents reported that most hotels offered guests private toilets as part of their rooms and provide public toilets in common areas and event spaces, separated by gender, with at least one male and one female toilet. Several hotels therefore reported having over 100 toilets. Most staff reported they have their own toilets, usually separated for males and females.

The data showed that toilets in the communities vary in type and standard. Most people living in the suburbs of Suva close to hotels have flush toilets inside their homes, whereby most homes have one toilet, some have two. Some people living in villages and rural communities have their toilets outside the house but not all toilets are flush toilets. In addition to flush toilets, participants reported water-seal toilets and pit toilets. All respondents reported there to be no issues with toilets and toilet safety. Toilets in the community and hotels are safe to use, can be locked and have lights.

Respondents reported on the various ways that wastewater was disposed of and treated, i.e. via:

- Hotels are confident in their wastewater disposal systems “because no water is leaked out into the sea”.

- Hotels were considered to have a good wastewater system and hotel managers and staff widely reported that they trust their wastewater systems. A number of hotels are connected with the municipal sewage system, others have their own sewage treatment plants or septic tanks, which are emptied by external companies on a regular basis.

Many residential houses have septic tanks for toilets whereby wastewater from the kitchen, laundry and shower either goes into drains, soak pits or dug holes filled with coral and is covered with pieces of roof tin, which is then buried. Some towns are connected to the main sewer.

Some respondents reported households had their wastewater connected to small streams, others mentioned the possibility of wastewater leaking into the ocean. Some wastewater is recycled for the gardens. Respondents were asked about open water ways (ocean or any freshwater streams) located close to their hotel or home. Most communities and hotels in Suva and the Coral Coast are located close to the ocean. On the Coral Coast, community members use the ocean as a source of food (protein) and children use it for leisure activities. For hotels, the ocean is mainly an attraction and provides recreational activities for guests. Most respondents reported the water to be clean except after heavy rain, when there is increased run-off into streams and the ocean.

Respondents considered that hotels have more efficient waste management and sanitation systems in place than the community, due to hotels having the resources for departments and funds available to pay for sanitation facilities and cleaning products. Hotels use chemicals for cleaning, which can be problematic for women's health (as the key employees in Housekeeping Departments), whereas natural products are often used in village communities. Respondents reported health risks linked to sanitation as drainage problems, including open drains containing soil, smelling, or blocked drains causing a safety hazard for children and elderly and breeding ground for mosquitos cause health risks, including the risk of dengue fever and diarrhea. Environmental risks were identified as wastewater disposal, including spillage of wastewater into the ocean, environmental pollution, cleanliness, and social inclusion.

The pressing need for sanitation improvements in Suva, the Coral Coast, and elsewhere in Fiji can be linked to the main drivers of water problems, i.e. rapid urbanisation and economic development, which can result in a lack of access to water and sanitation (Tularam & Murali, 2015). Tourism adds an additional pressure. The data show the level of WASH training in hotels varies widely. Some operators and staff reported regular training. For example, in some hotels, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Occupational Health and Safety Department is involved, and training is provided on a regular basis (every 6 months). Others are not aware of any training or guidance provided except on basic hygiene for COVID-19 infection and prevention control, such as handwashing and social distancing. Some staff stated there was no training and staff were learning on the job as it was not a priority for managers.

## 5.6 Hygiene

The data indicated that the previous section on sanitation is closely linked to hygiene practices and management in Suva and the Coral Coast, particularly in relation to availability of water, soap, facilities, and hygiene awareness, education and training. The respondents identified that hotels have high hygiene standards, which are documented in Staff Handbooks and signage around the hotel. Staff report a good knowledge and practice of expected personal (grooming) and handwashing hygiene. However, handwashing vigilance depends on staff roles, e.g., kitchen staff report very frequent handwashing whereas maintenance staff wash hands less frequently than is ideal.

While good hand hygiene by hotel staff is viewed as critical to guest satisfaction, explicit hygiene training is not usually provided. Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) for hotel staff is addressed and, while no concerns were raised, no explicit MHM training in hotels or the community was provided. There was no discussion of women missing work, needing or being granted special leave or any taboos about MHM. In the community handwashing was reported as practised for some (but not all) critical times, due to hygiene training learnt at school, and public health advertisements on television. However, there was no mention of washing hands after cleaning infant faeces or helping children use the toilet. Community elders remind everyone to wash hands before cultural events such as kava sessions potentially due to hygiene practices promoted by hotels. People do not always wash hands when interacting with their own families, but are more likely to do so when moving beyond their community.

Generally, the linkage between good hand hygiene and health is well understood. Community practices link to the recognition of structural factors that support handwashing, which include time to wash hands, accessible and clean facilities, and ensuring handwashing is a social norm. Understanding people's perceptions of handwashing is critical to planning hygiene interventions (Chittleborough, Nicholson, Basker, Bell, & Campbell, 2012). Respondents noted that risks associated with COVID-19 have increased handwashing and improved hygiene practices amongst community members and hotel staff. Staff understand well that the hygiene measures in place are to protect their health and the health of guests.

The findings align with the World Health Organisation's and UNICEF's (2019) report establishing service ladders for basic services, from no service to limited to basic service in water, sanitation, hygiene, waste management and environmental cleaning. The report asks member States to establish standards for accessibility, availability, quality, affordability, acceptability and sustainability of water and sanitation services. It provides a framework for partner countries to develop standards that have applications within homes, work, school, health centres, public places. Such a framework is likely to be beneficial within the case study areas and elsewhere in Fiji.

## 5.7 COVID-19

Since the declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, Fiji has focused on health and safety as its priority. Due to the country's effective response to COVID19 Fiji was able to contain the virus at an early stage and declare itself as COVID free by 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The data showed that the tourism sector's focus on maintaining personal hygiene primarily for the benefit of hotel guests has been changed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The change in focus to also maintain personal and family safety may support further improvements in the broader community's hygiene practices.

Respondents reported the implications of COVID-19 as an increased focus on personal hygiene for health in contrast to negative economic consequences. However, some respondents noted they had little knowledge of what COVID19 was, what they would have to do to prepare themselves to deal with it, and how their behaviour would have to change. They also articulated significant concerns for staff and communities once the borders open. Post-COVID-19 preparedness and recovery requires continued education, training and capacity-building initiatives that can address inclusive WASH in tourism, and GEDSI WASH-at-Work in particular. The Tourism Recovery Team has developed the *Care Fiji* package to reassure travelers and tourism stakeholders that Fiji is a safe destination to visit when their borders open. An opportunity also exists for hotels to assist communities to prepare for post-COVID-19 recovery as safe destinations, particularly for the elderly and parents with children, not only are important to the tourism sector but also highlight the importance of destination stewardship (see May 1991 for environmental destination stewardship).

The concept of stewardship in tourism encompasses responsibility and precaution, whereby it is in the "host's best interest to become proactive champions, stewards and custodians of the natural environment and cultural context" (Dwyer 2018: 36). To develop a stewardship approach, community interests need to be considered and broad participation sought (Dwyer, 2018). A coordinated destination-wide response is likely to require input from government and tourism sector associations to assist Fiji's businesses and community with additional guidance and support. While responses indicated that domestic violence was not recognised, they also demonstrate the extremely low awareness of COVID-19's impact of domestic violence on women and children - to the point of disregarding the topic.

The findings aligned with the business case for inclusive WASH. The availability and quality of inclusive WASH services is a basic yet valuable indicator of government functionality at national and local levels. The full potential of investment in inclusive WASH is realised through the establishment of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions that support equity and inclusion for the most vulnerable, including women and girls. Establishing such institutions and enhancing WASH services through tourism provide an example of how a shift in tourism development from focusing on serving the community rather than (or as well as) the tourist may be achieved (Pollock, 2013).

Providing WASH services in a timely manner is an essential first step in re-building communities and re-establishing or strengthening local government systems and creating an enabling environment for long-term sustainable development following a health and economic crisis such as that caused by COVID-19. Inclusive WASH interventions can help bridge immediate humanitarian needs with longer term development efforts (WaterAid Canada, 2017, 22).

## 5.8 Value Proposition

Ideas presented in the data related to the importance of inclusive WASH to tourism and to support the construction of a value proposition as it is reflected in multiple scales, i.e. the stewardship of the destination (destination scale), and the importance of GEDSI WASH-at-Work (workforce scale and hotel scale).

The data provided evidence that WASH is important for the attractiveness of Fiji as a tourism destination due to people's friendliness, authenticity, ways of life, culture and traditions. When imagining a successful tourism industry in the future, respondents' vision revolved around:

- Returning to normalisation after COVID-19;
- Growing tourism;
- Increasing sustainability; and
- A stronger focus on culture and local identity.

There are many factors that influence destination choice, but tourism is image sensitive and risk averse (Shakeela & Becken, 2014). For example, the World Economic Forum (2019) measures the travel and tourism competitiveness for each country using a range of indicators, wherein 'health and hygiene' is considered important. The respondents' vision can be supported to provide high levels of GEDSI WASH practice in hotels and communities, particularly as for hotel operators, future success was seen as returning to normality after COVID-19 with the expectation this will involve a stronger focus on hygiene practices and cleanliness, greater focus on the health and safety of staff and guests, and the need for tourism businesses to comply with health regulations.

To achieve sustainable economic development through tourism, a holistic approach needs to be taken to develop destinations and improve the tourism product on offer. To be successful, this needs to go beyond developing the primary tourism product and includes improving the provision of sanitation in addition to enhancing environmental and health conditions (Arthur & Mensah, 2006). Ensuring improved access to clean drinking water and sanitation can help maximise tourism potential which may lead to further investment in tourism businesses (Hutton & Chase, 2016). Poor sanitation impacts tourism as it affects the attractiveness of destinations, can lead to sickness of visitors and therefore affect arrival numbers, leading to economic costs in the form of revenue loss and failure to exploit potential tourism capacity (Hutton et al., 2008).

There is thus a case for improved inclusive WASH services across Fiji as a destination to reduce the risk of infectious disease or environmental degradation which may deter tourists. The data also suggested it would be in the interest of the wider tourism sector and its businesses, to contribute to an improvement of WASH in local communities and the broader surrounding environment.

Respondents perceive tourism as improving local people's economic lives (especially prior to COVID-19 border closures). However, respondents in both case study areas thought tourism contributes to loss or change of culture. This includes traditional practices and rights, such as access to natural resources, negative environmental impacts, social changes to family life, and potential increases in crime. Equally, respondents perceived culture to provide an important opportunity to help achieve the tourism vision, including growing tourism. GEDSI WASH has the potential to address some of the challenges destinations are facing by working to reduce negative impacts and support the tourism sector to create benefits to the wider destination, including the local communities.

A value proposition for GEDSI WASH-at-Work can benefit from the concept of 'gender lens investing', which integrates gender analysis with financial analysis to promote beneficial investment decisions. Gender analysis for investment strategies can include making money available to enterprises owned by women, market analysis of female consumers, focusing on workplace equity and employment opportunities for women, and investing in products and services that benefit women and girls (US AID, 2015). A GEDSI WASH-at-Work value proposition can also ask broader questions about support for women in WASH programs such as the potential for public or private financing stakeholders who prioritise social impact to invest in WASH to support women's leadership, entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.

## 6. Recommendations and Conclusion

### 6.1 GEDSI WASH-at-Work in Fiji

Tourism is a key economic priority for Fiji. Planning for infrastructure can be developed more effectively via specific collaboration and engagement with local people's needs, interests and concerns, particularly those of hotels across all scales, guest-house operators, and with the diversity of staff and members of the community.

The data showed that water is available to most households in Suva, and to many communities on the Coral Coast via lease and water sharing agreements. However, communities experience low water pressure at certain times of the year and reported concerns regarding water quality. Water conservation awareness is present in villages and schools, but limited training on water supply is provided to hotel staff, beyond guidance on water use for guests.

Amenities for tourists differed markedly from local communities, particularly in relation to the lower availability and type of toilets, lower quality, comfort and safety and, when compared to hotels, to the

latter's provision of handwashing facilities, soap and privacy. Toilets in the community varied in type and standard with people living in the suburbs of Suva close to hotels having flush toilets inside their homes, plus toilets located in the community hall or church, separated by gender. Some people living in villages and rural communities have toilets outside the house but not all are flush toilets.

The research documents the need for closer collaboration to ensure effective governance of Inclusive WASH in Fiji's tourism sector. Extending partnership networks to enable more people at the grassroots level to take ownership of WASH (while exercising appropriate protocol within communities) would act to ensure their community's wellbeing and support Government and industry in overall socio-economic development.

Whilst the Tourism Recovery Team has developed the *Care Fiji Commitment* package to reassure future travelers and current tourism stakeholders, communities want hotels to contribute to their society and prepare for post-COVID-19 recovery, particularly for the elderly and parents with children, by providing WASH through CSR programmes. Collaboration and cooperation are key to socially inclusive engagement with female, male and gender diverse hotel staff, women in communities, and understanding the GEDSI needs of each community. The provision of 'best practice' models about how to improve management through multi-stakeholder collaboration between communities, government and tourism operators could be valuable. Government stakeholders confirmed the need to more effectively link policy to WASH and the tourism sector, particularly in relation to policy dissemination. There was a desire for more effective cooperation and collaboration using multi-stakeholder groups to address socially inclusive WASH issues and broader policy-making, which has the potential to transfer some responsibility to the community (and thereby potentially increase their agency) and to enhance knowledge transfer between communities, government and tourism operators in Fiji to improve tourism management and to enhance benefits from tourism to whole communities.

GEDSI WASH-at-Work tools were developed in conjunction with hotels, communities, and government. The research demonstrates the ways in which GEDSI is integral to the complex network of social, environmental, political and economic issues that shape tourism. However, there is limited recognition by government agencies and hotel management of the different needs of tourists, and those within the community, with a disability. There is little to no training in menstrual hygiene management (MHM) (or broader social inclusion) in the workplace. Also, key to understanding the needs of the community is through a GEDSI lens to recognise the needs of women, who are likely to have higher demands for water during menstruation (due to the need to wash more regularly), and when they care for small children, the elderly and/or sick relatives. These findings are significant for Fiji's recognition that water and sanitation are fundamental human rights and are integral to a human rights-based approach to development, and for the tourism sector's ability to enact the requirements of the ILO's WASH-at-Work framework.

Inclusive access to WASH is important for the tourism sector to maintain a strong reputation with tourists and social license to operate from local communities. Whilst all stakeholders envisioned Fiji's tourism success contributing to an improved economy, enhancing community welfare, human resource

development and improved public and environmental health, a number of changes are required to achieve this vision.

## 6.2 Recommendations for Fiji

The recommendations are made as steps towards achieving a vision of Fiji as a tourism destination benefitting all stakeholders.

### 1. Government

- 1.1. Develop programs to incentivise and subsidise household water tanks.
- 1.2. Support community management of water systems. For example, provide training to communities in operation and maintenance of water tanks.
- 1.3. Department of Water and Sewerage to increase awareness and strengthen implementation of water related policies and guidelines.
- 1.4. MoH advise councils to improve public area infrastructure, facilities and cleanliness of public toilets. This should involve reviewing how many public toilets are provided, ensuring there is soap available in all public facilities and that water is safe and that drinking fountains are available and maintained.
- 1.5. Improve standards for residential sewage treatment and disposal in areas where houses are not connected to the main.
- 1.6. MoH schedule more visits to communities and share information relating to COVID-19, hygiene and handwashing, for example through COVID-19 preparedness and inclusive WASH training. Hereby, community communication should be improved (providing schedules in advance and confirm visits via text or phone calls) and engagement.
- 1.7. Collaboration between MoH and Ministry of Education (MoE) to be increased to ensure WASH is part of curriculum, material is engaging to reinforce practices.
- 1.8. Continued support for inclusion of GEDSI across all areas of WASH policies and plans and strengthen their implementation.
- 1.9. Support current community systems that contribute to WASH such as the Village Nurse and 'Tiko Bulabula' programs.
- 1.10. Government to design holistic recycling and solid waste management processes and facilities.
- 1.11. Government to provide support for urban area composting and recycling.
- 1.12. Government to provide recycling bins to communities.

### 2. Community / Civil Society Organisations

- 2.1. Expand the role of existing rural and peri-urban village committees to support household WASH management.
- 2.2. Community to support and, together with staff, co-design (drawing on traditional knowledge and past practices) community on-site waste management (solid and liquid) programs and provide ongoing maintenance.
- 2.3. Community to review and enhance accessibility of toilets, in particular for children, elderly, people with a disability and pregnant women.
- 2.4. Collaboration from communities with hotels to ensure training is provided.
- 2.5. Hotel workers share at village and church meetings and via women's and youth groups what WASH practices they learn at work.

- 2.6. Community members and parents practice good handwashing with soap behaviours and reinforce these messages to children.
- 2.7. Maintaining COVID-19 awareness in community of staff risk and responsibilities when commuting between hotels and community.
- 2.8. Install footpaths for safety and ramps for disability access, especially during natural disasters such as flood events, to help vulnerable people.
- 2.9. Village committee to encourage household composting.
- 2.10. Village committees to explore women's' skills to provide biodegradable receptacles to hotels.

### **3. Hotels**

- 3.1 Ensure the operation and maintenance of community water supply services where hotels are responsible for them.
- 3.2 Hotels to provide or support training to communities for maintenance of water supply systems (e.g. checking of key water connections, ways of cleaning these, cleaning of water filters etc).
- 3.3 Review and update in hotels, where necessary, staff facilities, in particular staff toilets (availability and distance from workstations) and female changing rooms.
- 3.4 Explore cost-sharing opportunities with communities on wastewater/septic tank maintenance.
- 3.5 Provide updated pandemic and WASH training annually to staff and communities as a component of corporate social responsibility (CSR). This should create awareness of staff risk and responsibilities when commuting between hotels and community.
- 3.6 Continue to adhere to high standards of hotel cleanliness and staff hygiene practices as important to protecting staff and guests' health, as well as guest satisfaction. This involves management to strictly monitor practices and reinforce hygiene and sanitation SOPs and should include hygiene training, especially handwashing with soap, for all staff.
- 3.7 Ensure safe WASH access for all guests (ramps, rails etc.) and exits when planning for natural disasters
- 3.8 Encourage hotels to conduct a risk assessment for the safety of people with a disability, the elderly, pregnant women and older staff members, particularly in hotel public areas, public toilets and guest bathrooms.
- 3.9 Encourage on-site waste management strategies, including glass crushing.
- 3.10 Engage guests in waste management processes at hotel as part of CSR initiative, e.g. rewarding children, reducing food waste.
- 3.11 Hotels to encourage staff through community service to design community on-site waste management programs.
- 3.12 Hotels to take up composting.
- 3.13 Hotels to revise purchasing policies to reduce single use items and to focus on biodegradable items.

### **4. All Stakeholders**

- 4.1 Review suitability of water systems design to cope with natural disasters such as heavy rainfall and encourage risk-based management (water safety planning).
- 4.2 All stakeholders to support the improvement of drainage in urban and peri-urban areas for protection against extreme events such as storm surge. Hotels to improve drainage for sanitation and protection of staff and guests. Communities to improve drainage for protection of people with disability, children and vulnerable members and prevention of diseases carried by mosquitoes.
- 4.3 As a disaster management and/or climate change response, following extreme rainfall events, ensure all community members are aware of water hygiene practices.
- 4.4 Initiate engagement and collaboration between stakeholder groups. For example, communities to engage with hotels for access to used cleaning and leftover soap and cleaning products. MoH/ Ministry of iTaukei

Affairs/ MoWE, hotels and communities to collaborate in knowledge about production/ use of appropriate traditional cleaning and handwashing products where access is limited.

- 4.5 All stakeholders to maintain awareness of COVID-19 health information and requirements in post-pandemic environment via relevant updated training and monitoring of staff and guest practices.
- 4.6 GEDSI training is provided across all areas of Inclusive WASH, including training and awareness on menstrual hygiene management in the tourism sector and communities.
- 4.7 Consider GEDSI and inclusion of all relevant groups in WASH decision-making.

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