

PRESS RELEASE

REVIEW OF THE FIJI TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN 1998 - 2005

The Tourism industry once again reached a milestone with the signing of the agreement between the **Ministry of Tourism** and **GRM International Pty Ltd of Brisbane, Australia** for the Review of the Tourism Development Plan 1998-2005 as well as the Formulation of a Seven (7) year Rolling Tourism Master Plan 2007-2014.

The project as depicted in the Agreement is intended to be completed by the end of the year; Dec 2006 with various outlined outcomes expected to be attained prior to the end of the project duration. There are five (5) critical areas of the project that are expected to be accomplished during the review. These include:

- The production of a comprehensive 10 year Tourism Development Strategy Plan that reflects the national tourism policy objectives and is based on the concepts of sustainable development
- The formulation of a short term action plan of three (3) years for implementation of the first stage of the Tourism Development Strategy Plan
- Produce Three (3) model regional (sub-provincial) tourism development strategies based on selecting each of 'most', 'medium', and 'less' developed regions that will demonstrate the planning approach and processes
- An agreed new and more effective partnership based institutional framework and organizational structure for tourism development at the national level
- Formulation of a strategy plan for human resource development (HRD) requirements in the Fiji Tourism sector.

As per the project plan, the delivery of the three main deliverables:

- Final Fiji Tourism Strategy Plan
- Final Fiji Tourism 3 Year Action Plan
- Final Regional Tourism Development Strategies (Three Regions) will be on the 31st of January, 2007.

Therefore, the project period is of nine (9) months.

The need for the review is the result of the rapid growth of the industry which is quite evident with the significant foreign earnings that it has been able to gauge

in linked to the number of arrivals that we have serviced at our shore versus the concern for the formulation of a reliable and effective framework and relevant legislations to govern the various activities that will be carried out for the achievement of our expected outcomes.

Our current national tourism policy objectives are:

- To increase visitor arrivals in line with sustainable growth levels
- To increase the economic contribution, retention and equal distribution of the tourist dollar
- To increase resource owner's participation in the tourism industry
- To promote human resources development in the tourism industry and
- To promote sustainable ecotourism development and public awareness at all levels of the society.

For the attainment of the above, the project closely relates to the UNDP's Millennium Goals and global policies giving emphasis to:

- Capacity building for sustainable tourism development;
- Formulation and implementation of realistic partnership based tourism investment and marketing programs at the local level;
- The creation of micro, small, and medium tourism enterprises through special support mechanisms; and
- Sustainable development.

Desired Outcomes

- Contributing to sustainable human development and the expansion and protection of the asset in the country through formulation and implementation of:
 - A partnership-based national strategy for tourism development
 - A partnership-based regional inter-provincial tourism development strategy
- Sustainable human resource development (SHRD) through capacity building and change management processes
- Improving national capacity to monitor environmental conditions and trends, and to assess policy performance in promoting sustainability

Beneficiaries

The short-term beneficiaries of the project will be the professional, technical and administrative staff of the Ministry of Tourism while the medium term beneficiaries will be the private sector tourist industry operators, other government and non-government agencies involved in tourism development and the traditional resource landowners in Fiji. The medium to longer-term beneficiaries are the people of Fiji, particularly those living in outlying and general poorer regions of the country.

The project encompasses of key capacity building elements that are designed to improve the attitudinal, technical and management capacities of tourism administrations at the national and provincial level to work with local communities and the private sector to prepare and implement realistic plans for tourism investment and marketing.

It will also set the basic national and regional framework plans designed to encourage a more equitable form of tourism development. Furthermore, the will lead to greater community participation in decision-making and ownership of the outcomes, and hence contribute to a more sustainable economic growth pattern, and its equitable distribution