Shifting from "Business as Usual":
Understanding Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism

Pauline J. Sheldon
University of Hawaiʻi, USA
&
Christian Schott
Victoria University, NZ

"Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal between one world and the next. We can ... walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our ... avarice ... and dead ideas ... behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world." Arundhati Roy, writer, political activist, actress

The Island Worldview

HE WAʻA HE MOKU, HE MOKU HE WAʻA
A canoe is an Island, an Island is a canoe.

Shifting from business as usual – framing sustainable and regenerative approaches to tourism

Associate Professor Christian Schott
Tourism Management Group
Wellington School of Business and Government
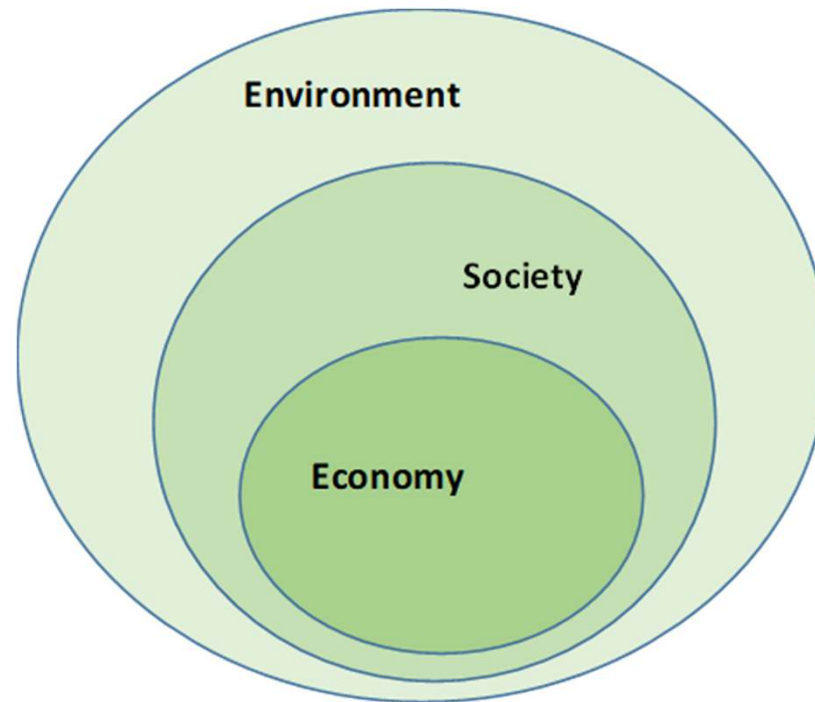Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington
christian.schott@vuw.ac.nz

MY FRAMING OF A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO TOURISM TO GIVE CONTEXT TO EXPERIENCES FROM AOTEAROA

Acknowledges tourism is part of a wider eco system

Acknowledges that we live in a VUCA world

The ecosystem that tourism is a part of is defined by:
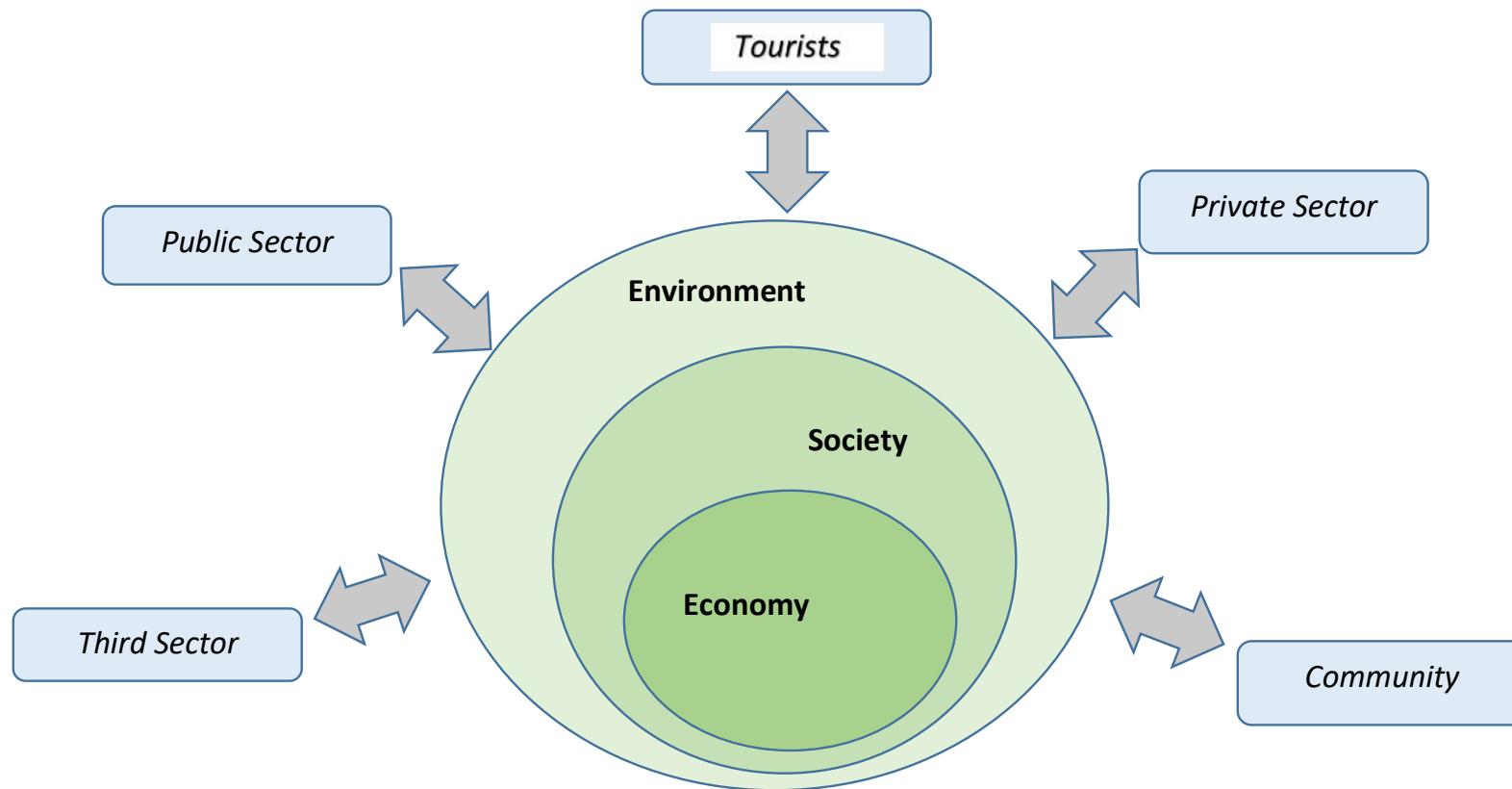
Volatility
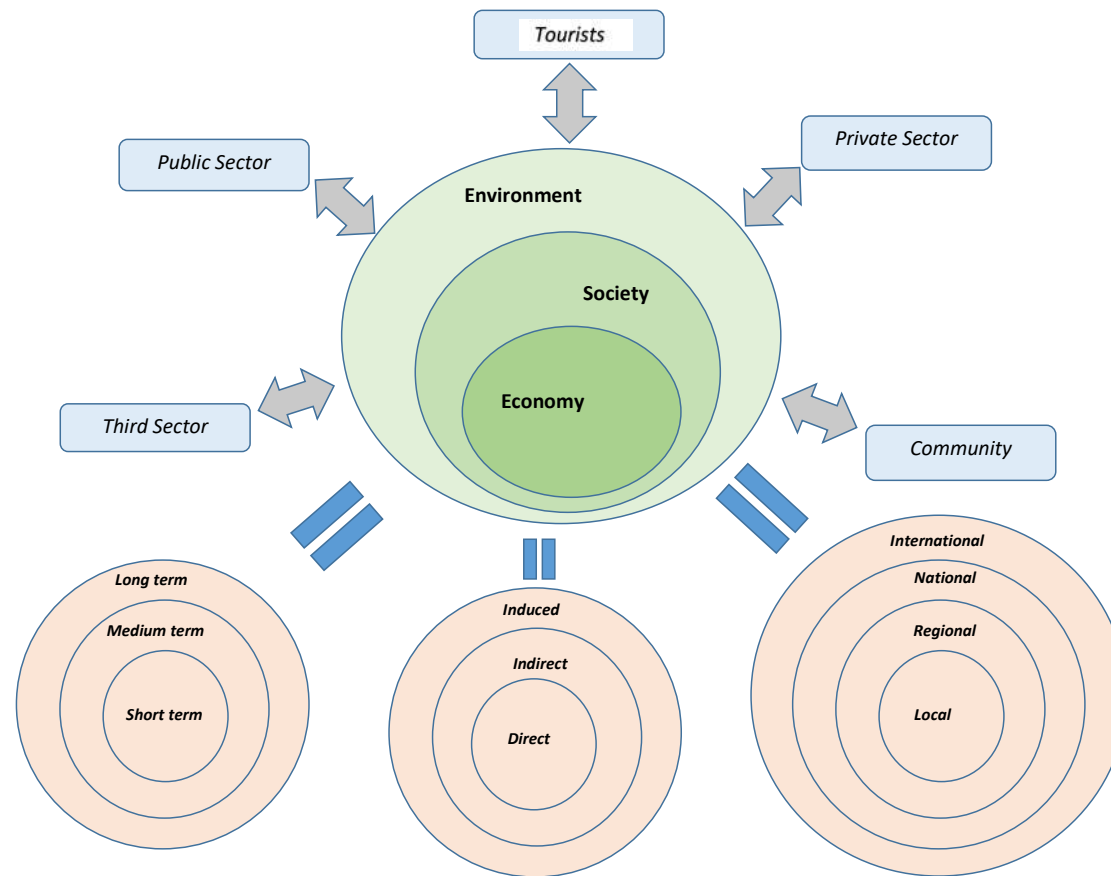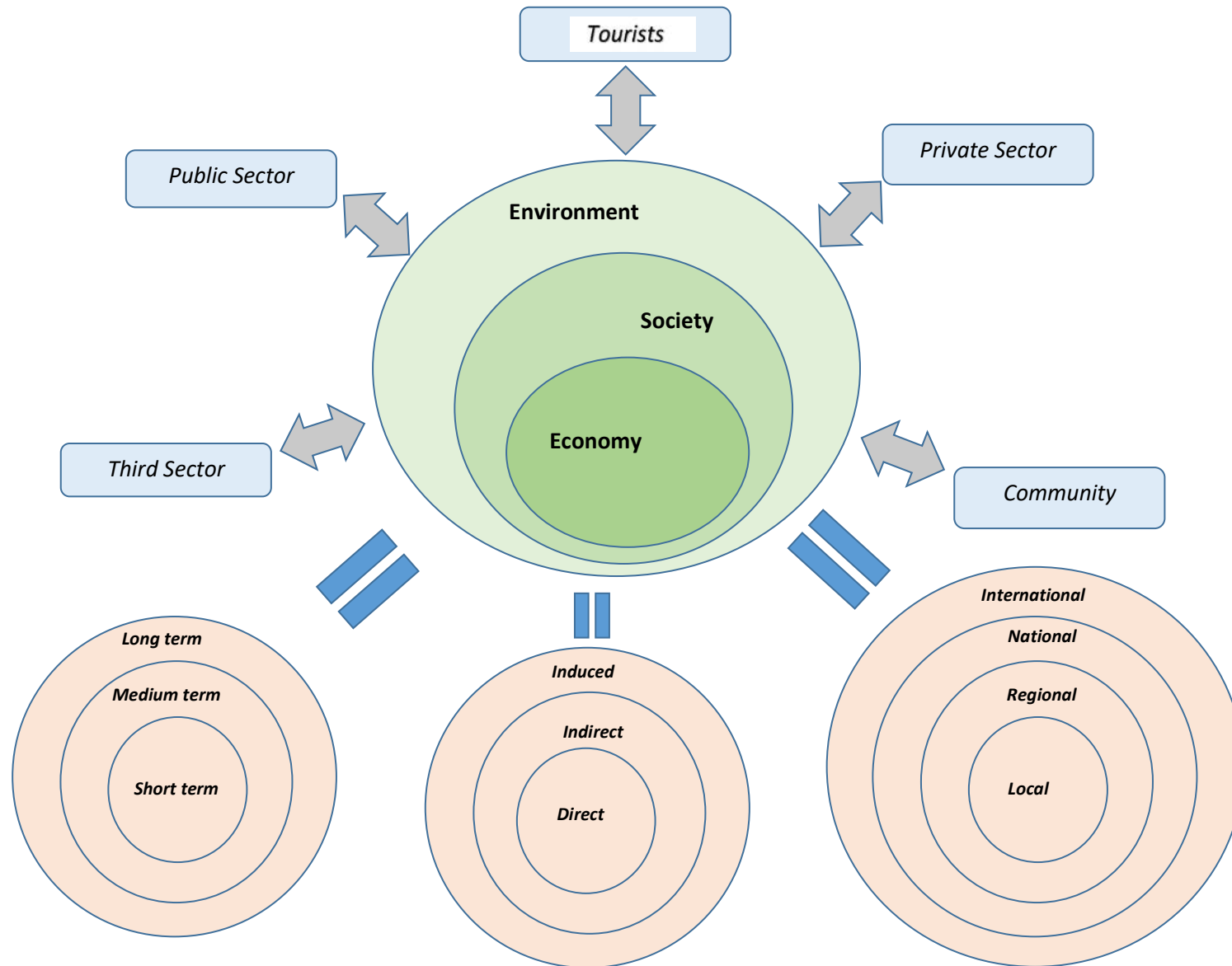
Uncertainty

Complexity

Ambiguity

complexity

Characteristics: The situation has many interconnected parts and variables. Some information is available or can be predicted, but the volume or nature of it can be overwhelming to process.

Example: You are doing business in many countries, all with unique regulatory environments, tariffs, and cultural values.

Approach: Restructure, bring on or develop specialists, and build up resources adequate to address the complexity.

volatility

Characteristics: The challenge is unexpected or unstable and may be of unknown duration, but it's not necessarily hard to understand; knowledge about it is often available.

Example: Prices fluctuate after a natural disaster takes a supplier off-line.

Approach: Build in slack and devote resources to preparedness—for instance, stockpile inventory or overbuy talent. These steps are typically expensive; your investment should match the risk.

ambiguity

Characteristics: Causal relationships are completely unclear. No precedents exist; you face "unknown unknowns."

Example: You decide to move into immature or emerging markets or to launch products outside your core competencies.

Approach: Experiment. Understanding cause and effect requires generating hypotheses and testing them. Design your experiments so that lessons learned can be broadly applied.

uncertainty

Characteristics: Despite a lack of other information, the event's basic cause and effect are known. Change is possible but not a given.

Example: A competitor's pending product launch muddies the future of the business and the market.

Approach: Invest in information—collect, interpret, and share it. This works best in conjunction with structural changes, such as adding information analysis networks, that can reduce ongoing uncertainty.

HOW WELL CAN YOU PREDICT THE RESULTS OF YOUR ACTIONS?

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SITUATION?

Acknowledges interrelationships and feedback mechanisms between stakeholders and the eco system

Tourists

Private Sector

Public Sector

Environment

Society

Economy

Third Sector

Community

Sustainable Approaches to Tourism assess and manage these interrelationships and feedback mechanisms in a locally grounded way taking account of all stakeholders and layers of feedbacks

Tourists

Public Sector

Private Sector

Environment

Society

Economy

Third Sector

Community

Long term

Medium term

Short term

Induced

Indirect

Direct

International

National

Regional

Local

Experiences and Perspectives
from Aotearoa New Zealand

Tourism's Environmental Sustainability

Aotearoa/New Zealand has been celebrated as a **leader in environmentally sustainable tourism** winning multiple awards from '*Tourism for Tomorrow Awards*' and '*Responsible Tourism Awards*', **but research highlights a range of environmental costs**:

- water quality degradation, solid waste generation, biodiversity loss and biosecurity risk (PCE, 2019, The Environmental Consequences of Projected Tourism Growth)

- Air pollution and sediment disturbance by cruise ships (Lück, Seeler, & Radic, 2021)

Pristine, popular... imperilled?
The environmental consequences of projected tourism growth

December 2019

Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
Te Kaitiaki Taiao a Te Whare Pāremata

Tourism's Cultural Sustainability

Aotearoa/New Zealand celebrated as global **leader in indigenous tourism** – many awards including '*TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Awards*' and '*National Geographic World Legacy Awards'*, **but Maori scholars and iwi raise concerns:**

MAI A NEW ZEALAND JOURNAL
OF INDIGENOUS SCHOLARSHIP
JOURNAL
DOI: 10.20507/MAIJournal.2020.9.3.10

FROM EXPLOITATIVE TO
REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Tino rangatiratanga and tourism in Aotearoa New Zealand

Helen Matunga*
Hirini Matunga†
Stephen Urlich‡

- "For Māori, the imperative for more effective management of tourism impacts has been a long-standing concern inextricably linked to broader concerns regarding the general health of the natural environment" (Matunga, Matunga & Urlich, 2020:296)

- Iwi and hapū have expressed concern about the impacts of visitors on culturally significant places (MBIE, 2020, Briefing to Incoming Minister of Tourism)

**CAPITAL THINKING.
GLOBALLY MINDED.**
MAI I TE IHO KI TE PAE

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA
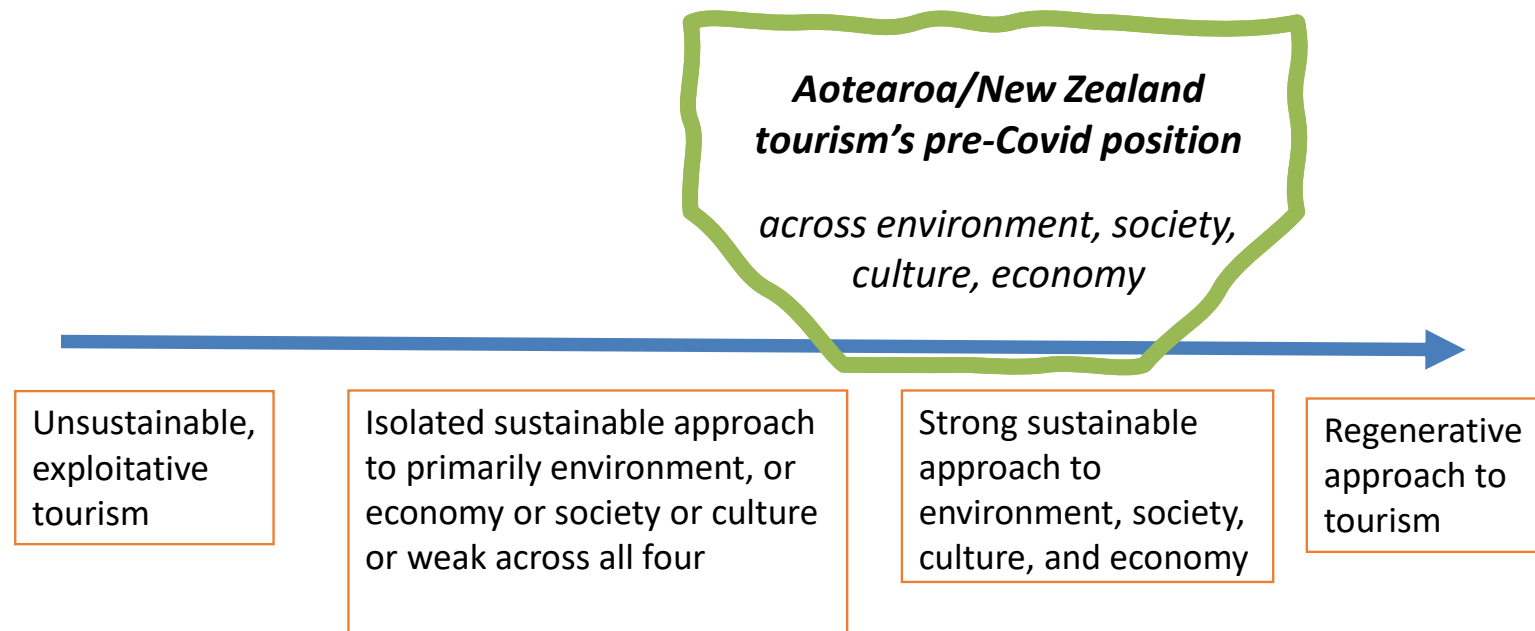1897

Tourism's Social Sustainability

According to the March 2020 Mood of the Nation Report, **92% of Kiwis agree that tourism is good** for New Zealand, but the **'social license to operate tourism' in its current form is being called into question by kiwis:**

- "adverse effects to the financial/physical, natural and human capitals have begun to have direct negative impacts on communities, which is damaging New Zealanders' support (the 'social license') for tourism" (MBIE, 2020, Briefing to Incoming Minister of Tourism)

- Pressure on infrastructure and damage to the natural environment were Kiwi's top concerns regarding international tourism (TIA & TNZ, 2020, Mood of the Nation)

- 12% of Taupo region residents wish for less tourists overall and 36% wish for less Freedom campers, biggest concerns increased litter and human waste (Lonergan & Schott, 2021)

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

Briefing for Incoming Minister
Of Tourism

November 2020

Simplified Continuum of Tourism Development and Management approaches

Aotearoa/New Zealand tourism's pre-Covid position

across environment, society, culture, economy

Unsustainable, exploitative tourism

Isolated sustainable approach to primarily environment, or economy or society or culture or weak across all four

Strong sustainable approach to environment, society, culture, and economy

Regenerative approach to tourism

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Regenerative Approach to Tourism:
Environment, Society, and Economy have increased wellbeing from tourism and support for ability to thrive
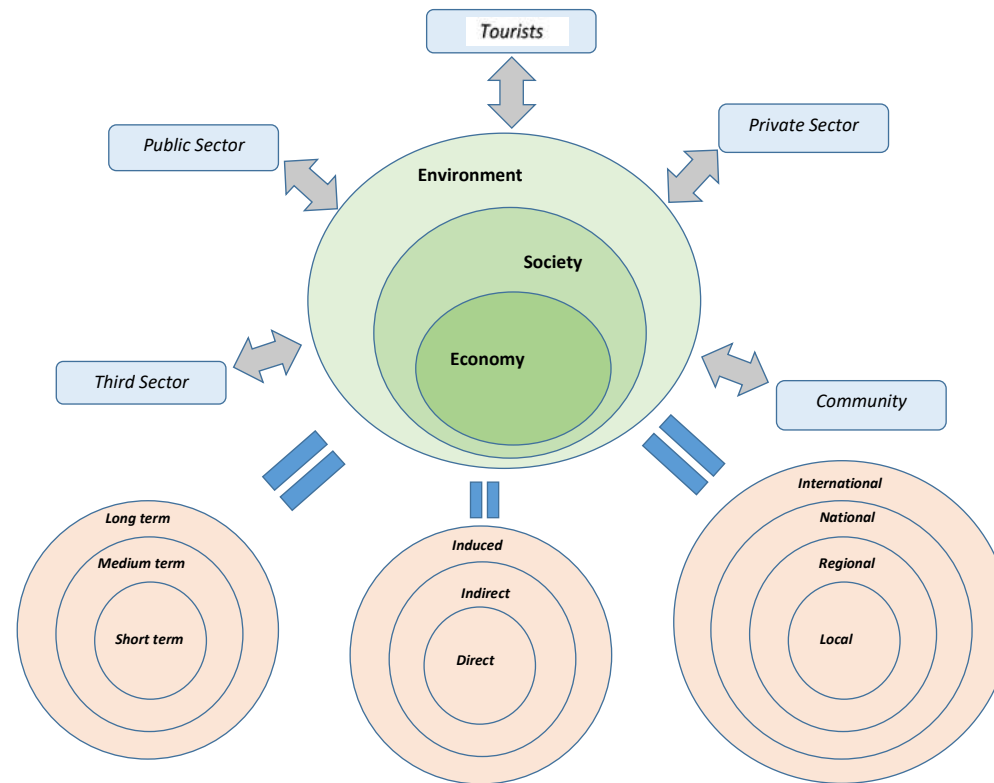
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Regenerative Approach to Tourism:
Environment, Society, and Economy have increased wellbeing from tourism and support for ability to thrive

Regenerative Approach to Tourism is not an alternative, it is a higher level goal of the Concept of Sustainable Tourism

In addition to meeting the full costs of any negative impacts, under a regenerative approach tourists and tourism companies should contribute:

- *to community wellbeing and community wellbeing initiatives (culturally, socially, physically, financially, educationally)*
- *to wellbeing of ecosystems, flora and fauna (financially, physically, educationally)*

Simplified Continuum of
Tourism Development and Management approaches
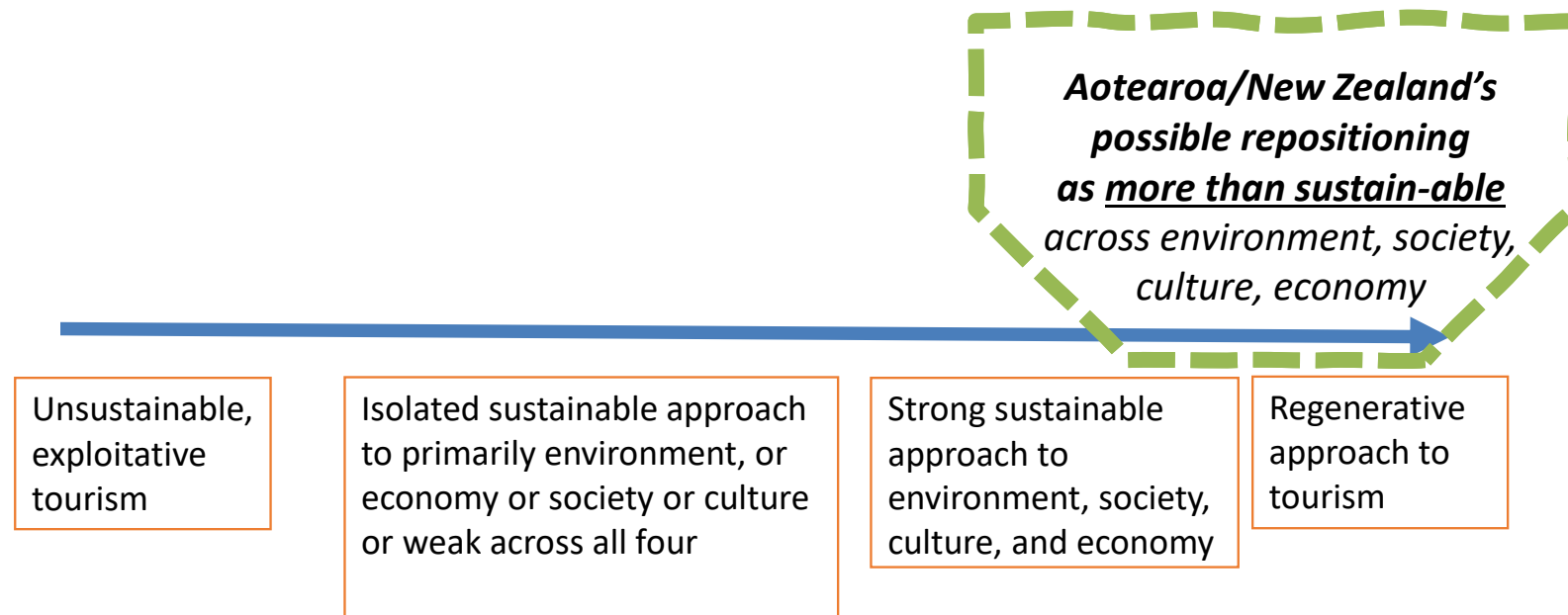
Aotearoa/New Zealand's possible repositioning as __more than sustain-able__ across environment, society, culture, economy

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Strong sustainable approach to environment, society, culture, and economy

Regenerative approach to tourism

Drivers for REGENERATIVE approach to tourism

Broad alignment with key tourism focused documents and strategies:
- Tourism Futures Taskforce
- MBIE Government Tourism Strategy
- DoC Heritage and Visitor Strategy
- Tourism Industry Transformation Plan
- TIA Sustainable Tourism Commitment

And other government documents and strategies
- Wellbeing Budget
- Treasury's Living Standards Framework
- TPK's Indigenous approach to LSF

Kiwis want change to tourism:
- Public consultation for TFT report
- Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment reports
- Community-based academic research
- Mood of the Nation report

Consistent with Te Ao Māori (Matunga et al, 2020) and embedded in The Mauriora Systems Framework (Matunga, 1993)

International tourists are increasingly questioning '100% Pure New Zealand'

Sustain-able tourism is essential, but not enough to achieve wellbeing for all of Aotearoa/New Zealand

Aotearoa/New Zealand's possible repositioning as more than sustain-able across environment, society, culture, economy

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Sustain-able tourism is essential, but not enough to achieve wellbeing for all of Aotearoa/New Zealand

possible repositioning
as more than sustain-able
across environment, society, culture, economy

Regenerative approach to tourism

Key Catalyst on road to regenerative approach, but still a rocky road
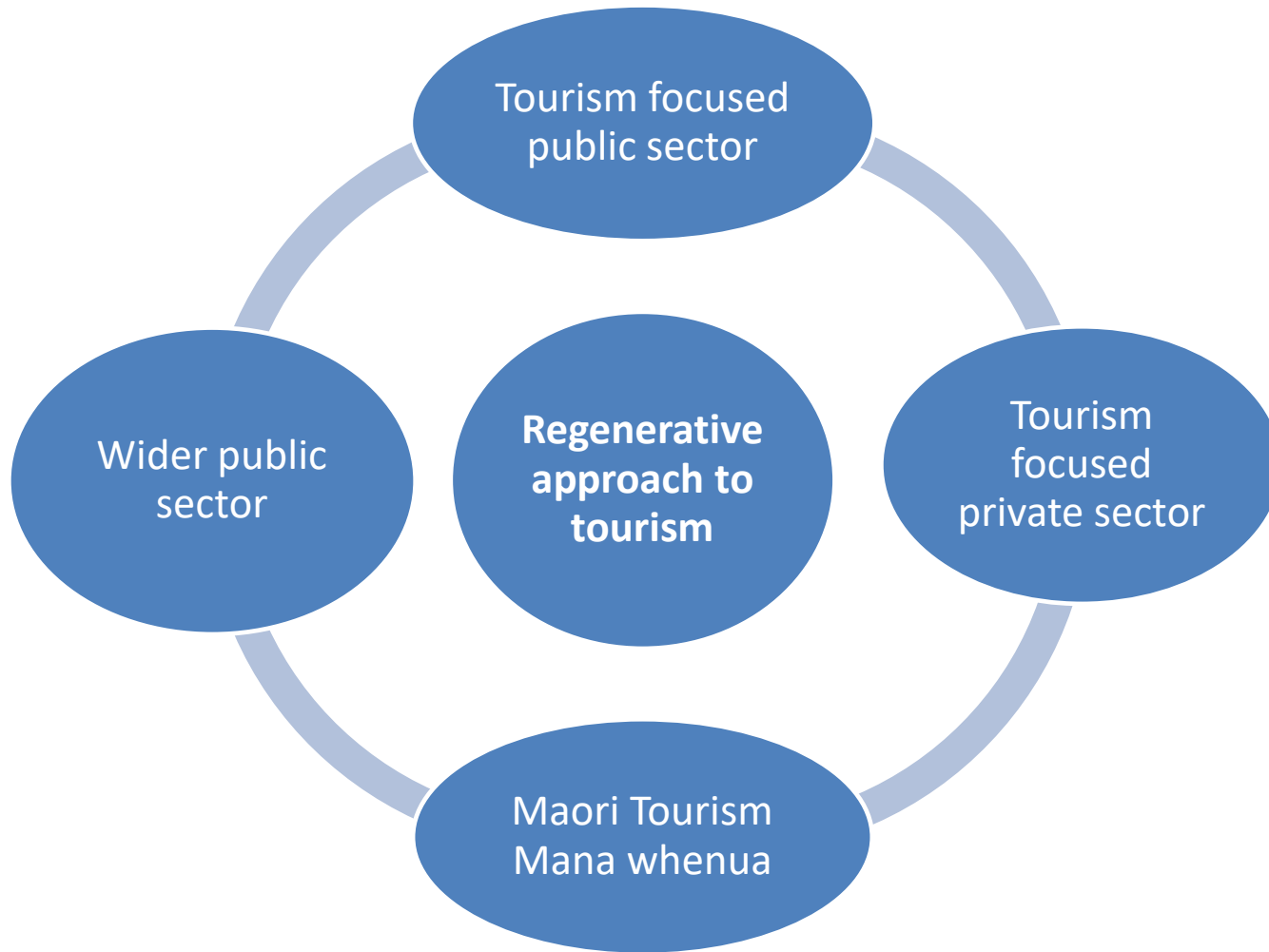
Persistent Problem

The expectations and decisions of tourists
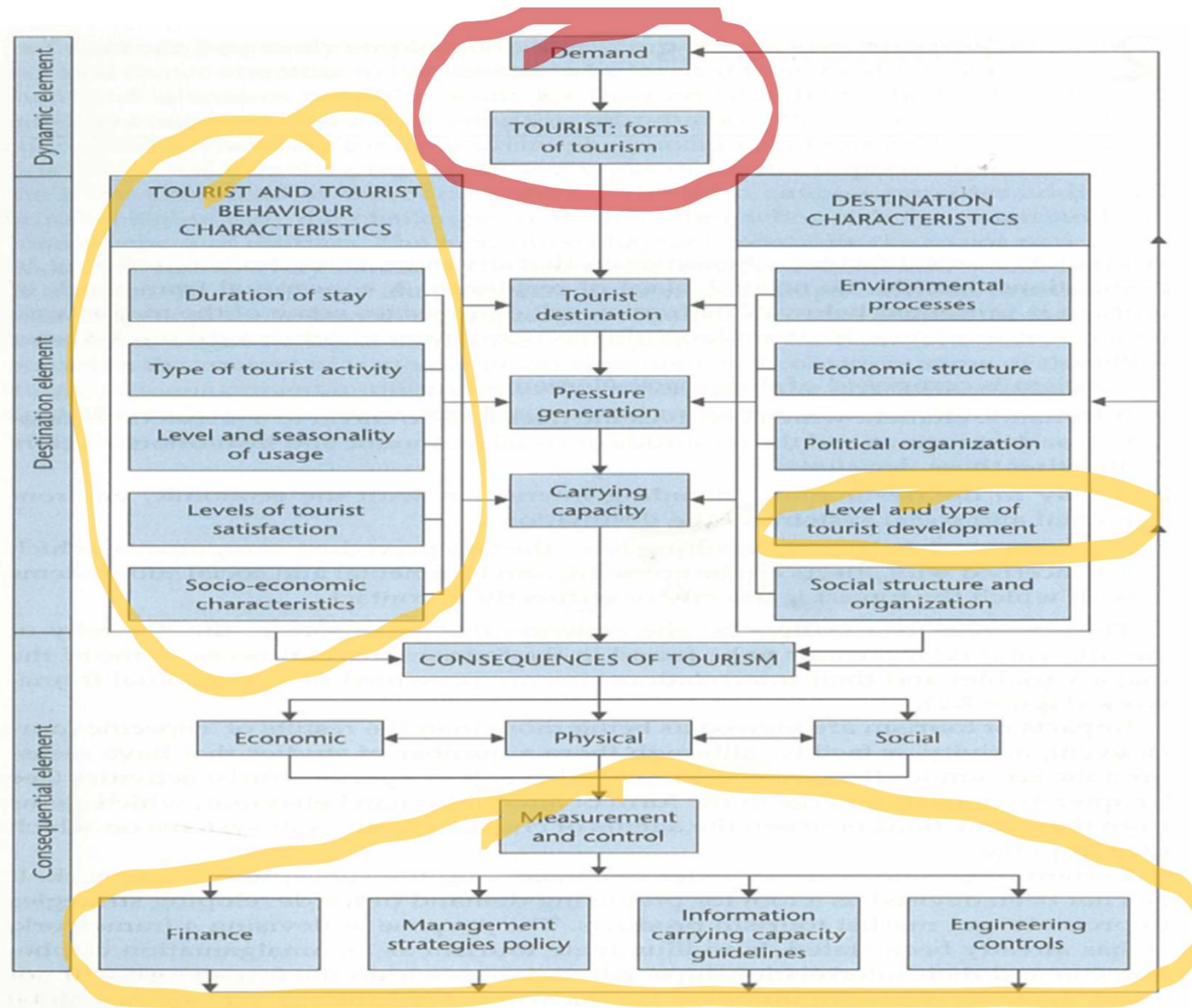
Fig. 2.1 A conceptual framework of tourism
(*Source*: After Mathieson and Wall 1982)

What is Regenerative Tourism?

Replenishes, revitalizes and contributes to the *long term flourishing* of destination communities and ecosystems

Looks to *living systems* for inspiration

Is *unique* for each destination

Is a journey not a destination

Requires a *new mindset* by all stakeholders

Polynesian Voyaging Society

1. Tourism is not (just) an Industry
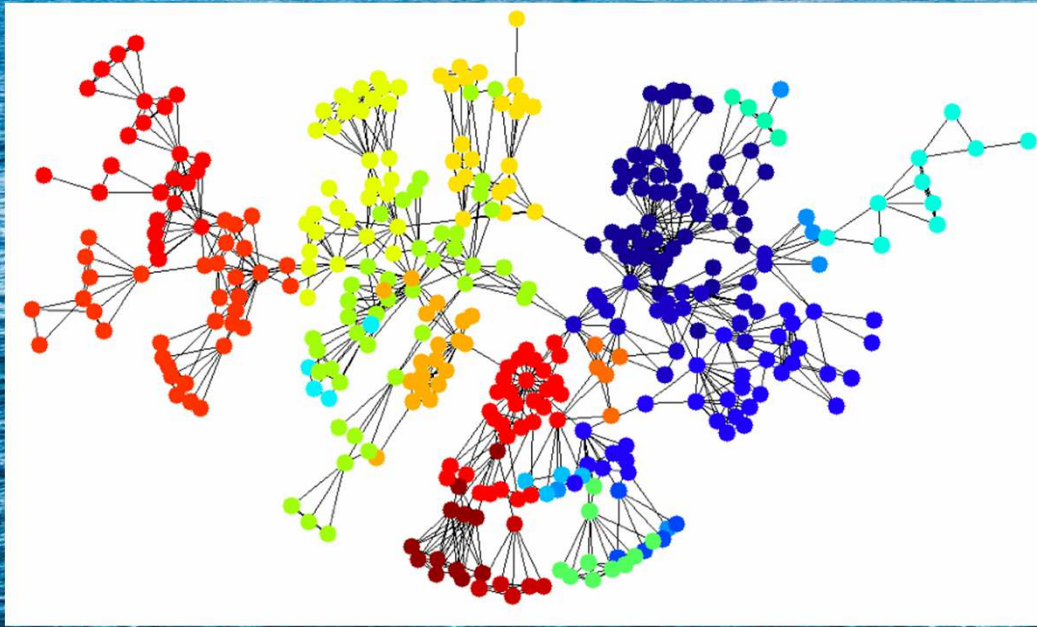
❖ **It is a system nested in other living systems**
❖ **Adaptive and evolving over time**
❖ **Needs a holistic, balanced vision**

2. VALUES-BASED

- Collaboration over competition
- Community over self-interest
- Culture over commodity
- Wellbeing over profit
- Redefine what is tourism 'success'

DOING THE DEEP INNER WORK

malama   'ohana   kuleana

3. Empowered Community Participation

- Community is the 'soil' of regenerative tourism

- Include community in all tourism-related decisions

- Ongoing stakeholder debate asking the deep questions

- *"The answer is in the room"*

So, what is Regenerative Tourism?

"...meaningful visitor experiences in thriving communities..."

"...tourism's contribution to an equitable and regenerative way of living on the earth"

Polynesian Voyaging Society
Photo : Oiwi TV Photograph

CHECK OUT...
Journal of Tourism Futures 8(3), 2022
Special Issue: Transformation and Regenerative Future for Tourism
Editors: Irena Ateljevic and Pauline J. Sheldon

THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

Tourism in a Nutshell - 2019

10 Mn. ANNUAL ARRIVALS (over 50% repeats)
(Hawai'i Popn. 1.4 mn)

9 days Average length of stay

$17.75 BILLION TOTAL SPENDING

216,000 JOBS

$2.07 BILLION TAXES GENERATED

25% Gross State Product

Significant Overcrowding & Resident Dissatisfaction

Kauai
Puuwai
Niihau
Kekaha Kapaa
Lihue
Kaulakahi Channel
Kauai Channel

PACIFIC OCEAN

Oahu
Pearl City
Honolulu
Pearl Harbor
Kaiwi Channel
Molokai
Kaunakakai
Maui
Lanai
Wailuku Hana
Red Hill
Kahoolawe
Alenuihaha Channel
Hawi
Honokaa
Waimea
Mauna Kea Hilo
Kailua Hawaii Pahoa
Captain Mountain
Cook Mauna Loa View
Pahala
Naalehu

H A W A I I

Visitor Flows: Pre and Post Pandemic

Total Passenger Count

2022 · 2021 · 2019

Note: Excludes flights from Canada

International Passenger Count

2022 · 2021 · 2019

Note: Excludes flights from Canada
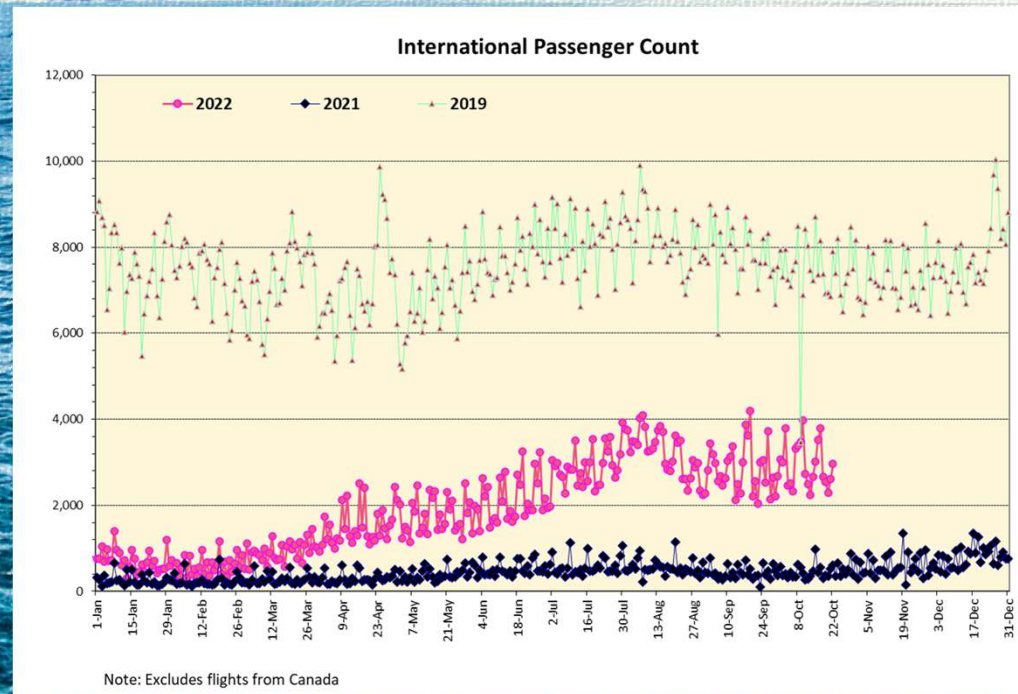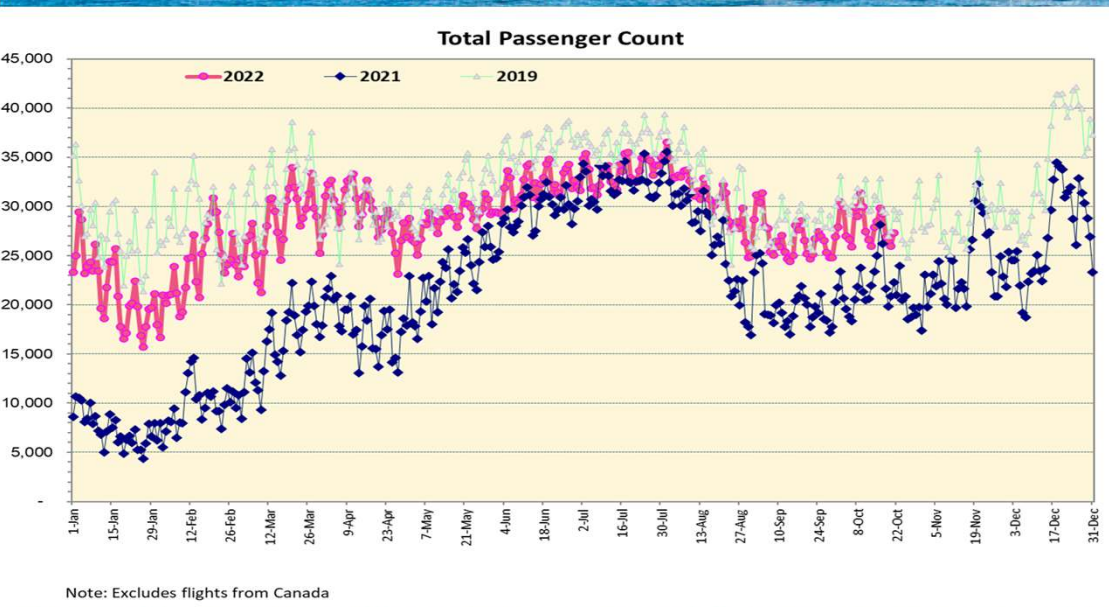
August 2022 compared with August 2019: Arrivals down 10.4%; Spending up 13.8%
August 2019: 30% international, 23% US East; 48% US West
August 2022: 11% international, 28% US East; 60% US West

REGENERATIVE TOURISM
Progress in the Hawaiian Islands

- PIVOTAL CHANGE IN COURSE: January 2020
  - Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority Strategic Plan, New CEO & Staff
  - MALAMA KUʻU HOME (*Respect our Beloved Home*)

Four Pillars of Regenerative Tourism:

NATURAL RESOURCES
Respect for Our Natural & Cultural Resources
HAWAIIAN CULTURE
Support Native Hawaiian Culture & Community
COMMUNITY
Ensure Tourism & Communities Enrich Each Other
BRAND MARKETING
Strengthen Tourism's Contributions

- KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
- Resident Satisfaction • Visitor Satisfaction • Total Visitor Spending

Hawai'i's Journey to Regenerative Tourism: Context
Hawaii Tourism

Hawaii Green
Growth
ALOHA+

Local2030
IslandNetwork

Aina Aloha
Economic
Futures

RETHINKING
TOURISM
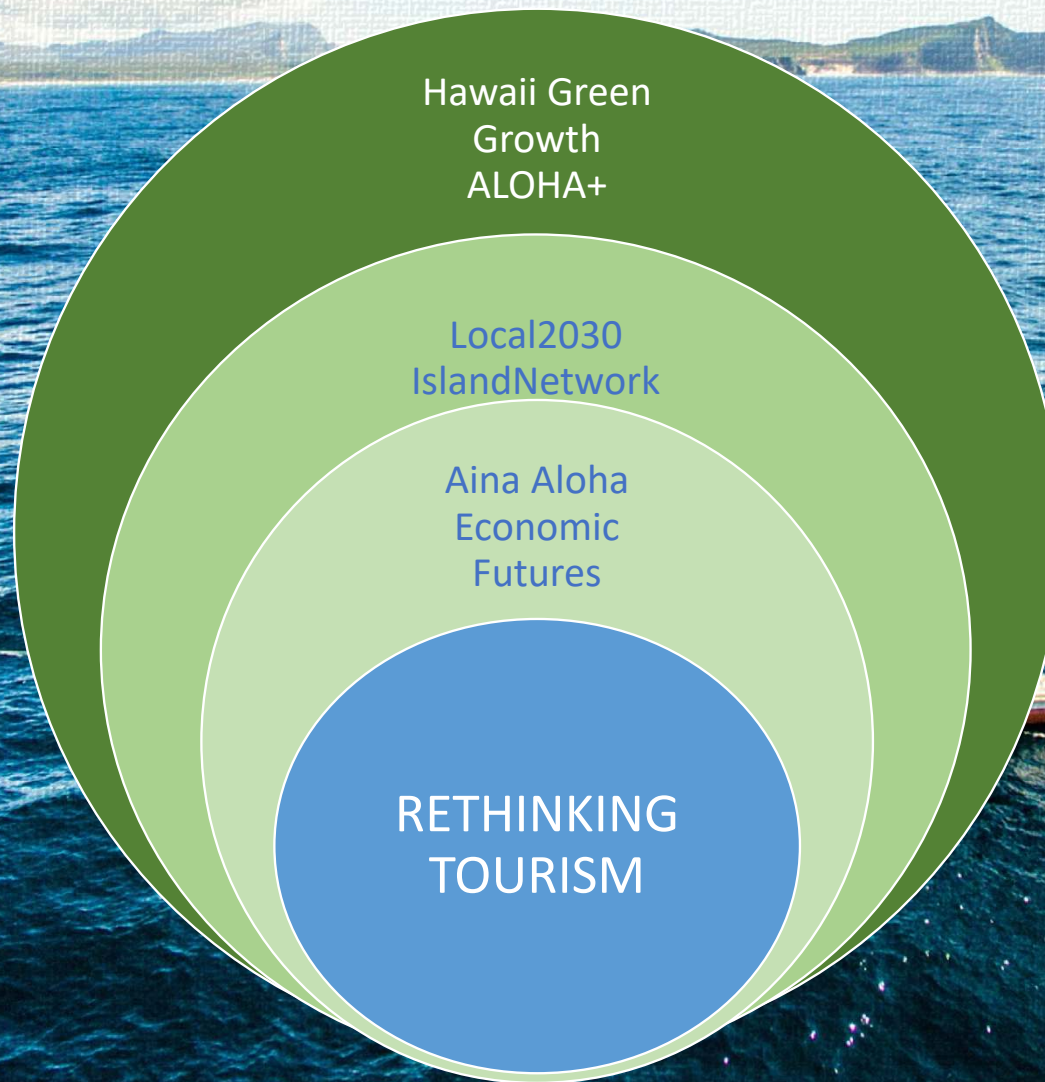
REGENERATIVE TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Polynesian Voyaging Society
Photo: ʻŌiwi TV Photography

STATE LEGISLATURE

Other state agencies

HAWAIʻI TOURISM AUTHORITY

Hawaii Green Growth
(Sustainable Tourism Forum)

HAWAIʻI VISITORS & CONVENTION BUREAU ™

Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement

NATIVE HAWAIIAN HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM Association of Hawaiʻi

travel2change

Destination Management Action Plans (DMAPS)

- DMAPs for Kauaʻi, Maui Nui (Maui, Molokaʻi and Lānaʻi), Oʻahu and Hawaiʻi Island.
- **Purpose**
  - Rebuild, redefine and reset tourism's direction over a **three-year period** through a collaborative process
  - **Collaborate** with Hawaii's visitor industry, communities, other sectors, & government agencies
  - Identify areas of need that require **management** for proactive mitigation planning

- Destination management includes:
  - attracting and educating **responsible** visitors;
  - solving **overcrowded** attractions, **overtaxed** infrastructure, and other tourism-related problems;
  - improving natural and cultural assets valued by **both** Hawaiʻi residents and visitors.

Current Tourism Issues in Hawai'i

- Managing Visitors: Quantity, Quality and Behavior Visitors
  - Reservation Systems for hot spots
  - Educating pre-trip and in-trip
  - Design of experiences including Voluntourism
- "Green" tax
- Controlling Vacation rentals:
  - New law – 30 day rental now 90 days
- Resident Pushback & Cost of living issues
- Labor shortages
- Who and how will we market the destination?
  - CNHA vs. HVCB
- How to encourage private sector to embrace ESG?
- Planning for climate change/sea level rise

Polynesian Voyaging Society
Photo: Oiwi TV Photograph

Aloha+ CHALLENGE

Clean Energy

Local food

Natural resource management

Green workforce and education

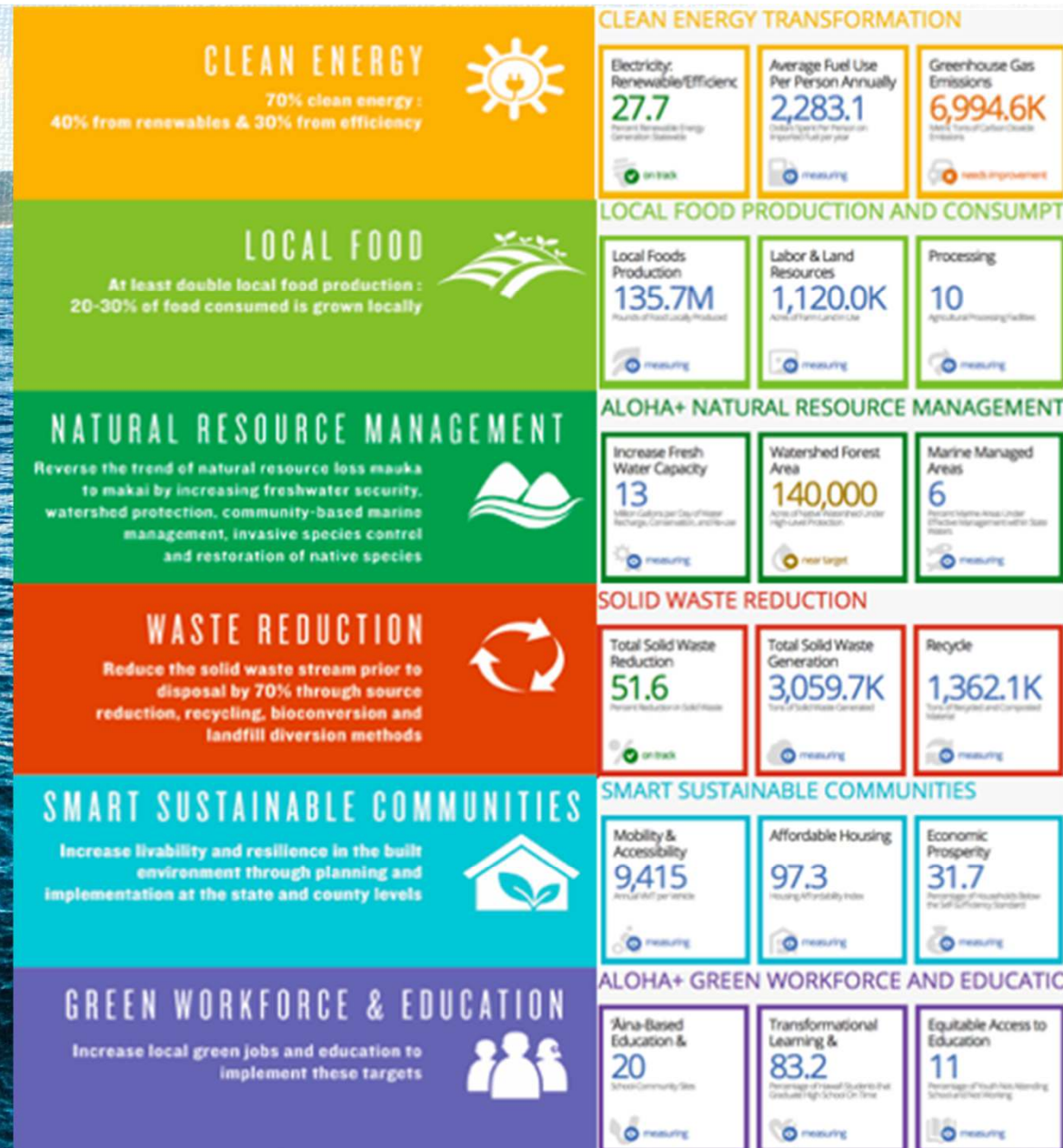Smart communities

Waste reduction

Aloha +

The **Aloha+ Dashboard** tracks Hawaiʻi's contribution towards the global goals with community-based metrics identified through a four-year engagement process. The open-data platform informs policy and empowers household action.

Measurement

CLEAN ENERGY
70% clean energy :
40% from renewables & 30% from efficiency

LOCAL FOOD
At least double local food production :
20-30% of food consumed is grown locally

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Reverse the trend of natural resource loss mauka to makai by increasing freshwater security, watershed protection, community-based marine management, invasive species control and restoration of native species

WASTE REDUCTION
Reduce the solid waste stream prior to disposal by 70% through source reduction, recycling, bioconversion and landfill diversion methods

SMART SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
Increase livability and resilience in the built environment through planning and implementation at the state and county levels

GREEN WORKFORCE & EDUCATION
Increase local green jobs and education to implement these targets

CLEAN ENERGY TRANSFORMATION

Electricity: Renewable/Efficiency	Average Fuel Use Per Person Annually	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
27.7	2,283.1	6,994.6K
on track	measuring	needs improvement

LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Local Foods Production	Labor & Land Resources	Processing
135.7M	1,120.0K	10
measuring	measuring	measuring

ALOHA+ NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Increase Fresh Water Capacity	Watershed Forest Area	Marine Managed Areas
13	140,000	6
measuring	near target	measuring

SOLID WASTE REDUCTION

Total Solid Waste Reduction	Total Solid Waste Generation	Recycle
51.6	3,059.7K	1,362.1K
on track	measuring	measuring

SMART SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Mobility & Accessibility	Affordable Housing	Economic Prosperity
9,415	97.3	31.7
measuring	measuring	measuring

ALOHA+ GREEN WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION

ʻĀina-Based Education &	Transformational Learning &	Equitable Access to Education
20	83.2	11
measuring	measuring	measuring

Global, island-led network

devoted to the Sustainable Development Goals through

locally and culturally informed solutions

Guiding Principles

Political Leadership

Public-Private Partnerships

Measurement

Concrete Action

3 Communities of Practice:

Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism

Data for Climate Resilience

Resilient and Clean Energy Systems

LOCAL2030 ISLANDS NETWORK

THANK YOU

psheldon@hawaii.edu

www.hawaiitourismauthority.org

A Regenerative Economy

AN ECONOMY

Place - Culture - Enterprise - Government - Commons

LESS Energy / Materials Required

Holistic Thinking

Patterns

Natural System Design

REGENERATING

CONVENTIONAL   GREEN   SUSTAINABLE   RESTORATIVE   REGENERATIVE

DEGENERATING

Mechanistic Design

Reductionist Thinking

Parts

MORE Energy / Materials Required
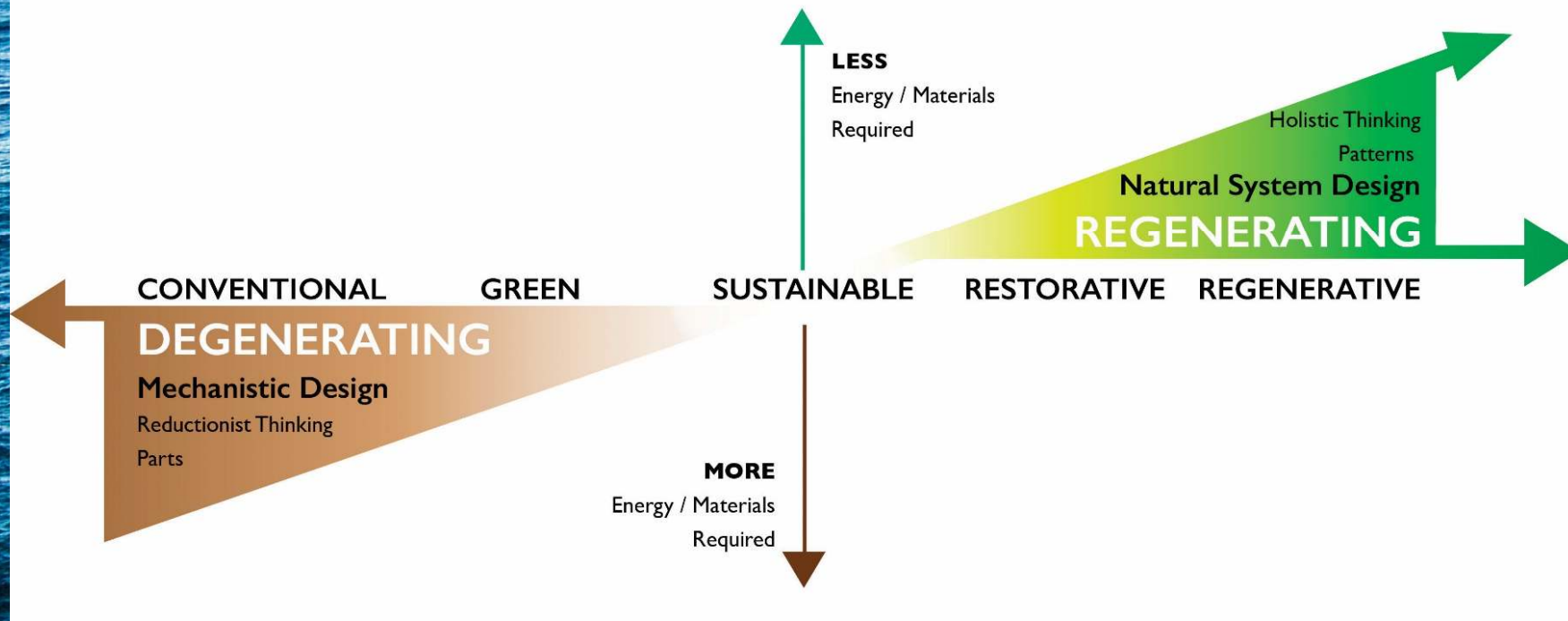
Source: Fullerton, J. (2015) Regenerative Capitalism How Universal Patterns and Principles will Shape our New Economy, Capital Institute