



VISITOR EARNINGS & REMITTANCES REPORT DECEMBER 2023

This report is a monthly release of the latest available indicators on the tourism sector and private remittances, with information sourced from the Central Bank, Samoa Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Customs and Revenue.

Report No.6: 2023/24

December 2023

Visitor Arrivals¹

Total visitor arrivals recorded a seasonal hike of **75.1 percent (or 9,656 visitors) to 22,512 visitors** when compared to the previous month and was also 34.2 percent (or 5,733 visitors) higher than December of last year. This strong performance of arrivals was also 25.6 percent higher than its pre-covid level (December 2019).

The seasonal expansion in tourist arrivals reflects the influx of the Samoan diaspora visiting their families (reunions), for church gatherings, chiefly title bestowments, family weddings as well as celebrating the Christmas and New Year's holidays here in Samoa. As a result, those here 'Visiting Friends and families' (rose by 6,607 visitors or 156.4 percent) while those that were here for 'Holiday' (up by 4,033 visitors or 80.4 percent) over the previous month. Furthermore, the hike in total arrivals was mainly from Samoa's main tourist markets, such as New Zealand (up by 5,204 visitors), Australia (up by 3,522 visitors), USA (up by 776 visitors) and American Samoa (up by 596 visitors).

As a result, **total visitor receipts expanded by 58.6 percent (or 30.0 million) to \$81.1 million** over the previous month or 43.7 percent higher than December 2022. Underpinning this growth over November 2023 were higher earnings from New Zealand, Australia, USA, American Samoa and 'Other countries' by \$13.1 million, \$10.5 million, \$3.3 million, \$2.5 million and \$0.9 million in that order. Proceeds from visitors such as 'Visiting Friends and Relatives', 'Holiday' and 'Others' all

rose by \$16.0 million, \$14.0 million, \$4.0 million in that order.

In addition, total arrivals for the first six months of FY2023/24 totalled 97,371 visitors, which was 107.0 percent higher when compared to the same period of FY2022/23. Correspondingly, total tourism earnings amounted to \$339.3 million, which was 116.0 percent higher when compared to the same period last year.

Remittances

Total **monthly remittances expanded by 13.2 percent (or \$10.1 million) to \$87.0 million** over November 2023 but was 8.0 percent (or \$7.6 million) lower when compared to the same month of last year.

The monthly improvement in remittances compared to the previous month was mainly due to hikes in funds from New Zealand (by \$7.4 million), Australia (by \$3.1 million) and 'Others' (by \$2.8 million). In terms of recipients, the expansion came from 'Family and Households' and 'Hand-carried cash' by \$10.9 million and \$0.2 million in that order, offsetting reductions in 'Non-profit institution serving households' (NPISH)², 'In-kind' and 'Others'.

As a result, the total inflow of remittances for the first **six months of FY2023/24 increased further by 1.1 percent (or \$5.0 million) to \$451.3 million** over the same period last year. Responsible for the sharp growth were higher transfers from USA by \$17.9 million and 'Others' by 3.2 million. This was

¹ Samoa re-opened its border to international travelers on 1st August 2022. Cruise ship tourists are not counted as tourist as they are only in Samoa for a day but their spending is included as part of tourist earnings.

² Includes funds for churches, non-profit organizations and charities

partially aided by a depreciation of the Samoan Tala against the US dollar (by 0.6 percent).

By recipients, total funds for ‘Non-profit institution serving households’ (NPISH), ‘Hand-carried cash’ and ‘Other’ grew by \$14.5 million, \$7.9 million and \$1.6 million respectively.

The monthly share of total remittances received through Money Transfer Operators (MTO’s) contracted to 76.7 percent in December 2023 from 82.5 percent in the same month of last year while funds received through commercial banks grew to 23.3 percent from 17.5 percent in December 2022.

The average monthly cost of sending NZD\$200.00 to Samoa edged up to 7.46 percent in the month under review from 7.35 percent in December 2022. Meanwhile, the average cost of sending AUD\$200.00 to Samoa fell to 7.36 percent from 7.89 percent last year.

CENTRAL BANK OF SAMOA
20th February 2024

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Table 2. INFLOW OF PRIVATE REMITTANCES

AMOUNTS IN TALA MILLION

Amount in Tala Millions	Dec-21	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
By Recipient (Tala Millions)	79.04	94.51	55.08	56.55	64.72	50.03	75.74	73.75	74.25	80.22	66.79	66.19	76.83	86.97
Banknotes	0.94	6.29	4.15	5.64	3.90	4.01	12.15	4.83	3.20	4.38	8.48	7.24	7.36	7.55
Churches, school, Charities	2.52	4.35	0.56	2.12	2.67	0.85	6.82	2.98	4.33	7.17	0.65	4.25	7.62	6.78
Individual/Family/Households	72.65	82.09	48.88	47.56	56.81	43.30	55.17	64.50	65.40	66.73	54.09	52.69	60.05	70.95
In Kind	0.79	0.93	0.82	0.55	0.78	0.75	0.79	0.82	0.70	0.81	0.85	0.84	0.88	0.83
Others	2.14	0.84	0.68	0.68	0.57	1.11	0.81	0.63	0.62	1.12	2.73	1.18	0.92	0.86
By Country (Tala Millions)	79.04	94.51	55.08	56.55	64.72	50.03	75.74	73.75	74.25	80.22	66.79	66.19	76.83	86.97
USA	10.10	12.35	7.87	10.44	8.83	8.32	9.53	10.90	13.18	15.24	11.22	13.28	15.16	12.48
New Zealand	34.34	38.01	22.90	21.53	27.77	22.40	31.85	28.29	24.27	27.71	25.78	24.00	29.26	36.67
Australia	26.46	36.45	20.65	20.81	22.95	16.01	23.28	28.16	29.48	32.65	24.05	22.68	26.00	29.09
American Samoa	5.86	5.06	3.12	3.26	4.05	2.90	4.00	4.02	3.98	3.51	3.51	3.63	3.98	3.55
Others	2.28	2.65	0.54	0.51	1.12	0.40	7.09	2.38	3.33	1.10	2.23	2.61	2.42	5.17
By Channel (%)														
Banks	14.4%	17.5%	8.7%	13.5%	14.0%	19.6%	21.7%	19.4%	22.1%	26.5%	26.6%	29.3%	30.7%	23.3%
Non Banks (1)	85.6%	82.5%	91.3%	86.5%	86.0%	80.4%	78.3%	80.6%	77.9%	73.5%	73.4%	70.7%	69.3%	76.7%
Total Remittances (Tala Millions)	79.04	94.51	55.08	56.55	64.72	50.03	75.74	73.75	74.25	80.22	66.79	66.19	76.83	86.97
First Number of Months up to	6 months to Dec 21	6 months to Dec 22	7 months to Jan 23	8 months to Feb 23	9 months to Mar 23	10 months to Apr 23	11 months to May 23	12 months to June 23	1st month to Aug 23	2 months to Sep 23	3 months to Oct 23	4 months to Nov 23	5 months to Dec 23	6 months to Dec 23
Total Remittances (Tala Millions)	380.31	456.25	511.33	567.88	632.60	682.63	758.37	832.13	74.25	154.47	221.26	287.45	364.29	451.25
Percentage Change (over same period last year)	17.4%	20.0%	20.5%	18.5%	18.4%	15.2%	14.9%	13.6%	-10.6%	-0.6%	-1.5%	0.1%	0.7%	-1.1%
3 year average (%)	11.5%	11.6%	10.5%	10.7%	9.5%	9.9%	10.1%	11.1%	18.6%	16.8%	18.2%	17.0%	16.8%	17.1%
5 year average (%)	9.5%	12.4%	11.8%	12.2%	12.2%	12.4%	12.7%	12.9%	21.5%	17.9%	17.1%	15.1%	14.7%	14.3%
By Recipient (Tala Millions)														
Banknotes	2.79	30.34	34.49	40.13	44.02	48.04	60.19	65.02	3.20	7.58	16.06	23.30	30.66	38.22
Churches, school, Charities	13.17	16.30	16.86	18.98	21.65	22.51	29.32	32.30	4.33	11.50	12.16	16.41	24.03	30.80
Individual/Family/Households	351.66	398.59	447.46	495.02	551.83	595.13	650.30	714.80	65.40	132.12	186.21	238.90	298.94	369.89
In Kind	6.02	5.15	5.97	6.51	7.29	8.04	8.83	9.65	0.70	1.51	2.36	3.20	4.08	4.91
Others	6.67	5.88	6.56	7.24	7.81	8.92	9.73	10.36	0.62	1.74	4.47	5.65	6.57	7.43
By Country (Tala Millions)														
USA	50.64	62.62	70.50	80.94	89.77	98.09	107.61	118.51	13.18	28.43	39.64	52.92	68.09	80.57
New Zealand	154.32	181.93	204.83	226.36	254.13	276.53	308.38	336.67	24.27	51.98	77.76	101.76	131.03	167.70
Australia	139.73	169.90	190.55	211.37	234.32	250.33	273.61	301.77	29.48	62.13	86.18	108.86	134.86	163.95
American Samoa	25.94	28.14	31.26	34.52	38.57	41.47	45.48	49.49	3.98	7.50	11.01	14.64	18.62	22.17
Others	9.69	13.65	14.20	14.70	15.82	16.22	23.30	25.68	3.33	4.44	6.66	9.27	11.69	16.87

(1) Includes Money Transfer Operators (MTOs) and Foreign Exchange Dealers (FEDs)
 (rev) - Remittances data starting from May 2017 up to December 2018 have been revised to reflect updates and amendments to the international transactions reported by commercial banks and money transfer operators.