JURISDICTION PROJECT



Cook Islands

Overview:

The Cook Islands, located in the South Pacific, are a state in free association with New Zealand.

Territory:

A group of 15 islands loosely divided into six northern (Manihiki, Nassau, Penrhyn, Pukapuka, Rakahanga, and Suwarrow.; and nine southern islands (Rarotonga, Aiutaki, Atiu, Mangaia, Manuae, Mauke, Mitaro, Palmerston, and Takutea). The northern group consists of low-lying atolls and one sandy key, and the southern group are mainly volcanic, with a few atolls, and one sandy key. The volcanic islands have fertile soil and lush vegetation, and the atolls are sparsely vegetated with large lagoons. Total Coastal Length: 120 km

Location:

South Pacific, between French Polynesia and Fiji

Latitude and Longitude:

Between 156 and 167 W, 8 and 23 S

Time Zone:

GMT-10

Total Land Area:

240

EEZ:

Climate:

The islands have a tropical oceanic climate with two seasons. During the drier months (April-November) the average maximum temperature is 26 degrees centigrade, and the lowest 20 degrees centigrade. During the wetter months (December-March) the average maximum and minimum temperatures are 28 and 22 degrees respectively. The wet season brings occasional severe tropical storms and hurricanes.

Natural Resources:

rich diversity of Marine landscapes and life. The coral reefs are home to many species of fish and whales live off of the islandsÂ' coasts.

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:		
2003	166,373,633.00 USD	

Per Capita GDP:	
2003	9,030.00 USD
2005	9,100.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:					
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary		
1995	18%	9%	73%		
2000	17%	7.8%	75.2%		
2004	15.1%	9.6%	75.3%		

% of Population Employed by Sector				
	Primary Secondary Tertiary			
1995	29%	15%	56%	

External Aid/Remittances:

Overseas Development Assistance: In 2001 New Zealand signed a new development assistance program with the islands to strengthen governance, encourage sustainable development and improve the delivery of basic social services. The New Zealand Agency for International Development provides the Cooks with project support of \$NZ 6.2 million. New Zealand is the largest bilateral donor to the Cook Islands, followed by Australia. In 2000-2001 the NZAid programme supplied 53% of aid to the islands. Further aid is provided by AusAid, the Australian Agency for International Development (\$NZ 1.5 million). Other funding comes from the Asian Development Bank, the Canada Fund, the South Pacific Environmental Programme, UNEP, and the FAO. In 2000 the Cooks signed the Cotonou Agreement, paving the way for important financial and technical assistance from the E.U. and its Asia, Caribbean and Pacific Group. In 2003 E.U. funding will be used the support education and health improvements on the islands.

Growth

The Cooks experienced a major economic crisis in the mid 1990Â's due to living beyond their means in the 1980Â's and early 90Â's. They had the largest public service in the Pacific region per head of population, and a large foreign dept. In an attempt to revive the economy, the number of public servants was reduced, state assets were sold, and strong growth in the public sector was encouraged. The number of ministries was cut from 52 to 22 (eliminating about 1,600 government jobs). Some of the unemployed were absorbed into the public sector but many emigrated to New Zealand. The government receives large percentage of revenue from taxes (1997/98: 61.7; 2002/03:76.7; 2003/04:73.8%).

Labour Force:			
1996	8,000		
2001	6,820		

Unemployment		
Year: Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)		
1996	13%	

Industry:

fruit processing, clothing (on a small scale). Investments in the fishing industry are being promoted by the government by means of tax incentives. Entities established under the offshore regime are exempt from any form of income taxation, stamp duties and withholding tax. Strong confidentiality provisions apply to offshore firms set up on the islands, and no exchange controls are applied for offshore business transactions.

Niche Industry

Pearl farming. Site for weddings. Pearl farming is the countryÂ's leading export. The Cooks produce 20% of the worldÂ's pearls. In 2000 the market produced \$NZ 18 million worth of pearls. In 2001 this figure dropped to 14 million and in 2002 it was a 6 million. The drop in earnings is due to a market price drop and disease outbreaks in the pearl beds in Manihiki and Penrhyn. Most of the pearls produced are grown on these two islands in the northern group. 78% of the black pearl production is on Manihiki, 20% on Penrhyn, and 2% on Rakahanga. In 2000 about 450 people worked on pearl farms in the northern group of islands. On Manihiki the pearl industry has stimulated progress in telecommunications, transport and social development. The main export market for the pearls is Japan (50%). The remainder is sold to Europe, Australia, Hawaii, and on the domestic market.

Tourism:

The leading economic sector. In 2000, 75,000 people visited the islands. In 2001 this number dropped slightly to 74,575, but in 2003 it had risen to 78,000. The main tourist markets are New Zealand (51.6%), Europe (20.1%), and Australia (16.4%). Of those visiting from New Zealand and Australia, 11.7% and 6.8% respectively were visiting Cook Islanders. Tourism is mainly centered on the southern islands of Rarotonga and Aitutaki and has encouraged major improvements in infrastructure development on these islands. The main tourist attractions are traditional arts and crafts, snorkeling, diving, fishing, wind surfing, cruises, hiking, horse-riding, tennis, squash, and golf. The islands have been marketed as an ideal site for weddings and marriage rates have risen tremendously over the last ten years.

Imports and Exports: The Cook Islands have had a negative balance of trade for at least the last five years. In 2003 their imports totaled \$NZ 121,021,000 and their exports \$NZ 14,579,000. Main Imports: Foodstuffs, textiles, fuels, timber, capital goods. Main Exports: Copra, papayas, fresh and canned citrus fruit, coffee, fish, pearls and pearl shells, clothing. Tot. Value of Imports 81,040,000.00 USD (2005) From Eu: Import Partners (EU:) Partners Outside EU: **Import Partners:** NZ 61%, Fiji 19%, US 9%, Australia 6%, Japan 2% (2006) Tot. Value of Exports 5222000 USD (2005) To Eu: **Export Partners:** Australia 34%, Japan 27%, NZ 25%, US 8% (2006) Partners Outside EU:: **Export Partners:** Main Imports: foodstuffs, textiles, fuels, timber, capital goods copra, papayas, fresh and canned citrus fruit, coffee; fish; pearls Main Exports: and pearl shells; clothing

TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS

External:

Number of Airports: 9

Number of Airports: 9 (7 with unpaved runways) Air New Zealand has daily flights from Rarotonga to Auckland, New Zealand, Fiji, Tahiti, and L.A. (USA). Aloha Airlines launched its first flights between Hawaii and Rarotonga in December, 2002 which operate twice a week during the northern hemisphere winter, and once a week during the rest of the year. It connects with flights from Vancouver and a number of airports on the west coast of the U.S.

Number of Main Ports: 2

The main ports are Avarua and Avatiu. Two international shipping services connect Rarotonga with Auckland, Samoa, Tonga and Niue. A smaller service operates between the outer islands and New Zealand. Yet a third service connects the outer islands to Rarotonga.

Internal:

Λ:..

Air Rarotonga operates passenger and cargo services to the outer islands six days a week. It has five flights to Aitutaki a day and daily flights to four of five other islands, as well as flights to the northern group twice a week. Flight schedules are at www.airaro.com.



Road:

While there are no trains on the islands, there is a public bus service connecting areas on Rarotonga, and many have cars, bicycles, and mopeds. total: 320 km; paved: 33 km; unpaved: 287 km (2003)

Sea:

Other Forms of Transportation:

There are car-rental dealerships as well as moped agencies on the larger islands.

Economic Zones

Fishing licenses also contribute to the economy. The islands receive around \$NZ 1 million annually for allowing a certain number of US tuna fishing vessels to fish in their EEZ. The EEZ is monitored by the Royal New Zealand Air Force, the French Military Maritime Patrols, and the Cook IslandsÂ' patrol boat Te Kukupa.

Energy Policy:

The Cooks Islands produce a surplus of electricity but all of it is generated from imported fossil fuel. They have no solar, wind or hydro power stations on the islands at this time. Electricity on Rarotonga and Aitutaki is fully regulated and available 24 hours a day. The outer islands have electricity supply at least 12 hours a day.

			Type				S	ector		
Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)		Geothermic (Mwh)		Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)
2005	30,000	0	0	0	27,900	0	0	0	0	0

Official Currency:

The New Zealand Dollar (NZD)

Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions: Number of Agricultural Credit Unions: Number of Insurance Companies:

Financial Services:

Offshore finance services were created by a series of legislative enactments in the 1980Å's which established a regime for international companies, partnerships, trusts, offshore banking, insurance companies, and registered trustee companies. There are currently six trustee companies on the islands. These entities contribute to the local economy by means of direct value added (wages and profits), license fees and taxes, as well as indirect benefits. The industryÂ's most important activities revolve around the formation and management of trusts for asset production. There is considerable onshore business servicing the trusts and providing administrative services and support for these offshore firms.

Communications/E-Commerce:

Telecom Cook Islands offers international direct dialing service plus internet, email, fax, telex and telegram services. Some of these are available on the outer islands. The islands have two radio stations. Radio Cook Islands (RCI) and Radio Ikurangi. RCIÂ's signals reach all the islands. Radio Ikurangi has limited reception. Privately-owned Cook Islands Television broadcasts a mix of local news, New Zealand and Pacific programmes, and other overseas shows. The former government-owned newspaper, the Cook Islands News was privatized in 1989 and is published six days a week. RarotongaÂ's four weekly newspapers, The Herald, The Press, The Times and The Independent are owned by Elijah Communications, which also operates the Cook Islands Television and Radio Cook Islands, effectively operating a monopoly over the islandsÂ' media.

Public Ownership:

Land Use:

Environment: Water Supply: Rarotonga and Aitutaki have reticulated water supply systems and there is no charge for water. The other southern islands have limited reticulation, supplemented by rainwater catchment and storage. The northern group of islands rely entirely upon rainwater catchment systems. Currently it is estimated that the islands are using 73% of available water resources. Waste Disposal: Sewage is disposed of through on-site septic tanks and soak-aways, and some of the larger hotels have built secondary wastewater treatment plants. Solid waste is collected by private companies and deposited in a landfill. Recycling products are also handled by private entities under contract, and much is exported. On the outer islands the Island Council is responsible for providing waste disposal for the community. arable land: 16.67%; permanent crops: 8.33%; other: 75% (2005)

Agriculture/Forestry:

About 70% of all households are involved in either subsistence, commercial, or both forms of agricultural production. Commercial producers supply the local tourist market and export to New Zealand. Research is underway to identify new varieties of fruit and vegetables that will grow well on the islands. The main agricultural products are copra, citrus fruit, pineapples, tomatoes, beans, pawpaws, bananas, yams, and taro. Pigs and poultry are also raised.

Marine Activity:

Fishing

Fishing is an ever-expanding sector of the economy. Longline fishing is a relatively new industy. The main types of fish caught are tuna -bigeye, yellowfin, bluefin and albacore, striped marlin, broadbill, and many by-catch species: mahimahi, wahoo, moonfish. Many of the latter are frozen and sold on the local market. The southern islands airlift fresh fish to the U.S. and Japanese markets via New Zealand. In 2003 up to 20 tonnes of fish were exported to markets in Japan and the U.S. weekly. The northern islands fish mainly for varieties that are canned, dried, or frozen as transport is slower. About 271 tonnes of fish worth \$NZ 2.5 million (gross) were caught in southern waters in 2002. This number increased sharply in 2003 due to a large increase in fishing vessels.

Marine Life:

Critical Issues:

Problems encountered are detrimental exploitation of marine resources for tourism, and illegal fishing in their EEZ. Another issue that will need to be

addressed in the near-future is sustainable management of fisheries stocks as the increase in longline fishing boats has prompted a project to increase the countryÂ's largest harbour at Avatiu, which will in-turn lead to even more fishing vessels being drawn to the rich waters of the islands. The lack of infrastructure on the islands needs to be addressed as waste production from coastal hotels and other types of tourist developments increases. Education on the Cook Islands is an area for great concern. The inadequate educational training of the instructors is reflected in the students. The majority drop out as soon as they are no longer required to attend school. Pass rates for New Zealand School Certificate (high school level) in year 12 were 33.9% in 1996 and 34.9% in 2000. In 1997 secondary school had only a 67% enrollment rate. Retention rates drop annually. Currently around 80% drop out. Fewer than 10% of those in form four reach form seven. Those most interested in pursuing higher education seriously leave the islands and most do not return. Of the few that remain on the islands for higher education, none actually meet the admissions requirements for higher education, and therefore almost none of them make it beyond the first year of their studies. Currently one-third of the primary teachers are between the ages of fifty and sixty.

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:

Avarua

Political System:

Form of Government: The Cook Islands are a self-governing parliamentary democracy. There are two houses in the government. The Lower House or Legislative Assembly has 24 elected members from districts and islands of the Cook Islands presided over by a speaker. The Upper House, or House of Akiri is made up of traditional leaders who have advisory functions only. Each of the outer islands has at least one representative in Parliament and some have two or three. (The Lower House used to have one additional seat representing Cook Islanders living overseas. In 2003 a constitutional amendment was passed to eliminate the overseas seat in the lower house. This came into effect after the 2004 general election.) Executive Authority: The head of government is the Prime Minister. He and his cabinet of up to eight other Ministers of his choosing exercise executive authority. Islands are also administered by Government Representatives in addition to their own Mayors who preside over island Councils and village committees in some of the outer islands. The head of the state is Queen Elizabeth II, represented by the QueenÂ's Representative, currently Frederick Goodwin. This position has long been held by islanders.

Political Parties:

The main political parties on the islands are the Cook Island Party, the Democratic Alliance Party, and the New Alliance Party, each of which is split into many factions. Voter turnout is very high -- more than 90% on the Cooks and more than 80% in New Zealand.

Important Legislation:

Principal Taxes:

Associated Power:

New Zealand

Citizenship:

Under the agreement that establishes the Cook Islands as self-governing in free-association with New Zealand, the Cook Islanders are New Zealand citizens and may move to New Zealand to live and work. Officially, the Cook Islanders are responsible for internal affairs, and New Zealand provides money, controls defense, and handles foreign relations in consultation with the Cook Islands government. In reality New Zealand is very involved with internal affairs on the islands. The economy is still being heavily supported by New Zealand, and many social development projects are being spearheaded by New Zealand. The islands have the right to move to full independence by unilateral action, but it is doubtful that they will ever do this given the current relationship they have with New Zealand.

Paradiplomacy:

The Cook Islands are a member of FAO, the Asian Development Bank, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the WHO, and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. They are also an Associate Member of both the Commonwealth and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. They also take active part in regional affairs through the Pacific Islands Forum and the Pacific community. The Cooks have established diplomatic relations with 19 countries, and have diplomats in New Zealand and the European Community. Germany, France, and the U.K. all have honorary consuls on the islands. The Islands are party to a number of international environmental agreements including the agreement on Biodiversity, the Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, and the Law of the Sea.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Over half the Cook IslandsÂ' population lives on the southern island of Rarotonga.

- 1				
	Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population

Year: Resident Population: 1999 15,500 2001 14,000 2003 13,900 2004 13,200

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
2001	5106	0	0	8,926	958

Migration

Migration patterns are from the more remote northern islands towards Rarotonga, and from there to New Zealand, Australia, and elsewhere. The Cook Islands have had a negative migratory rate for many years. In 1999, 8,012 people left the islands. In 2000, 8,920; in 2001, 9,111; in 2002, 9,419; and in 2003, 10,221. While a percentage of those leaving are vacationing, a larger percentage are going for educational reasons, business, or formally stipulate that they are permanently moving. Large numbers of those leaving are registered as going for "other" and "not stated" reasons. The number of Cook Islanders living in New Zealand alone far exceeds the resident population on the islands.

Crude Birth Rate:		
2001	22.4%	

2002	19.7%
2003	21.4%

Life Expedctancy:

Crude Birth Rate: 2001: 22.4; 2002: 19.7; 2003: 21.4 Crude Death Rate: 2001: 6.3; 2002: 6.6; 2003:6.2; life expectancy males (2005) 70; life expectancy females (2005) 75

Crude Death Rate:	
2001	6.3%
2002	6.6%
2003	6.2%

Ethnicity:

The Indigenous people on the Cook Islands are the Cook Islands Maori who are related ethnically to the indigenous population of the Tahiti, and nearby islands, and to New ZealandÂ's Maori people. The ethnic groups on the island currently are: Polynesian (full blood), 81.3%; Polynesian and European, 7.7%; Polynesian and non-European, 7.7%; European, 2.4%, and other, 0.9%.

Class Division:

Languages:

The official language on the islands is English, but Cook Islands Maori is also widely spoken. There are six geographically specific dialects of Maori spoken on the Cooks. Pukapukan is the third language spoken on the islands. It originated in western Polynesia and has links with the tongues of Samoa, Tokelau and Niue. It is claimed to be the oldest language in the Pacific.

Religion:

Cook Islands Christian Church 55.9%, Roman Catholic 16.8%, Seventh-Day Adventists 7.9%, Church of Latter Day Saints 3.8%, other Protestant 5.8%, other 4.2%, unspecified 2.6%, none 3% (2001 census)

Literacy:

While the literacy rate is quoted as being 95%, the level of education is exceedingly low. 52.9% of the elementary school teachers have an academic qualification of one high school subject pass or higher. In the northern group of islands this figure drops to 40.9%.

Education System

The elementary, secondary and tertiary curricula have close ties with New ZealandÂ's education system. Education is compulsory between the ages of five and fifteen, and is paid for by the government. Government funding for education is only 12.5% of total expenditures Â- very low. In 1998 there were only 4,940 students enrolled in the Cook Islands school system, and public expenditure was \$NZ 1,000 per student. The budget increased by 10% between 2000 and 2001, with 4,657 students.

Total Pre-schools:()	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	
Second Level:	
Third Level:	
Total Secondary Schools:	
Total Professional Schools	
Universities:	

Number of Schools per Island: Pre-school Elementary High-school Prof. Universi										
	Pre-school		Elementary		High-school		Prof.	Univ	ersity	
	Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv

Students	Enrolled:				
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University

Teachers								
Year Pre-Schoo	Pro-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University	
	Pre-School	1	2	3	High-School	Piol.	University	

there were 29 primary schools, none exclusively primary, with 2,397 students and 134 teachers. The average student-teacher ratio is 18 to one. There is currently just one private elementary school which was founded in 1993. Its roll has more than doubled by 2000. There are 24 schools with secondary-school students. Only five are exclusively secondary. In 2001 there were 1,804 enrollments. The islands currently have a teacher training college, a trade training centre, a tourism training centre and a nursing school. Fiji-based University of the South Pacific has an extension centre in Avarua, Rarotonga, and provides vocational, foundation, and degree courses, some using video links with the Fiji centre. Salaries for local teachers are very low therefore providing no incentive for Cook Islanders education abroad to return to teach. Corporal punishment was widely used in schools until 2001 when it was finally banned. Programs have been set up by New Zealand in cooperation with the Cook Islands to improve education standards and retention rates over the last few years. One project sent a group of ten teachers from New Zealand to teach on the islands in the hope that their teaching methods would be learned by those already teaching on the islands. While the standards in the classrooms of the foreign teachers went up, the local teachersÂ' standards remained the same. In 2002 17 New Zealand teachers were sent to teach on the islands. Recognition of the need for place-appropriate educational curricula for the islands has recently been put on the agenda. Currently 95% of the skills and perspectives taught, and materials used are imported. There is a great need for local-level cultural adaptation within the education system that has yet to be addressed.

Medical Services:

100% of islanders supposedly have access to health services. The National Health Service is managed by the Ministry of Health. There is a 90-bed hospital on Rarotonga, 7 outer-island hospitals, 13 outpatient clinics, 5 healthcare centres, and 58 maternity-child clinics. Difficult cases are referred to New Zealand for treatment. Life expectancy is 72.5 and infant mortality rate is 21 per 1,000 live births. There are 14 physicians, 49 nurses, 3 midwives, 10 dentists, and 2 pharmacists (2001).

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

40,000 years ago hunter/gatherers called Astraloids settled in New Guinea, moving into Bismarck and the Solomon Islands over time. They were undisturbed for thousands of years until the Agriculturalist Austronesians moved in. The invaders did not entirely wipe out their predecessors and some intermarriage occurred. 3,600 years ago some of these people started moving into Vanuatu and New Caledonia. 600 years later they began leaving the Melanesian islands and moving into Western Polynesia and Eastern Micronesia. Most of Polynesia beyond Tonga and Samoa was settled by 1,000 years ago. Magellan, sailing for Spain, "discovered" the Pacific. During the 16th and 17th centuries there was a great lack of understanding between the Europeans and the islanders, who were considered to be heathen, non-Christian savages. Captain James Cook initiated the slow process of changing the attitude of European explorers to the area. He did not like the violence between the white explorers and the islanders, and tried to not kill those that he interacted with. Despite his beliefs, he too resorted to violence at times. In 1888 a British protectorate was established over the southern Cook Islands to prevent other countries from moving in. In 1901 a British protectorate was established over Niue, and in 1901, New Zealand annexed the Cook Islands, including the northern group and Niue, from Britain. The Cooks were never a group of islands until the Europeans combined them administratively. The missionaries exerted much influence on Chiefs — passing morality laws and controlling entrance to the islands. In line with the United Nations General AssemblyÂ's landmark resolutions 1514 (the declaration on the granting of independence to colonial peoples), and 1541 (defining the three ways non-self-governing territory could attain a full measure of self-government) urging colonial powers to assist their colonies to move towards independence, the Cook Islands became self-governing in free-association with New Zealand on August 4th, 1965.

Referenda:

Recent Significant Events:

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

Recently there has been a revival of interest and concern in maintaining the Cook Islands cultural resources. Traditional, island specific dances and songs are very popular on the islands. Arts and crafts are also pursued by the islanders. Weaving, (such as the traditional rito hats, made from coconut fibre) is popular, as are woodcarving, needlework, shell craft, pottery, the making of tapa (barkcloth) tapestries, basket making, and drum building.

Sources

CANADIAN DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE. Cook Islands Factsheet, July, 2004. http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/asia/country/cookisland_factsheet-en.asp. Accessed December 29, 2004. COOK ISLANDS. http://www.cook-islands.com/OpenFrames.htm FAIRNAIRN, T., Charles E. Morrison, Richard W. Baker, Sheree A. Groves. (1991), The Pacific Islands. Politics, Economics and International Relations. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, Hawaii. Government of the Cook Islands. (2004), http://www.ck/govt.html#con. Accessed December 15, 2004. LOWTAX.NET. http://www.lowtax.net/lowtax/html/jcicfir.html#economy. Accessed December 29, 2004. NZAid. (2004), http://nzaid.govt.nz/programmes/c-cook-islands.html. Accessed December 23, 2004. PRISM (Pacific Regional Information System). http://www.spc.int/prism/country/ck/About_CK.htm#About. Accessed December 28, 2004. RAPAPORT, M., Ed. (1999), The Pacific Islands. Environment & Society. Bess Press Inc., Honolulu, Hawaii. RIDGELL, R. (1995), Pacific Nations and Territories. The Islands of Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. Bess Press, Inc. Third Ed, Honolulu, Hawaii. THE COOK ISLANDS. http://www.ck/. Accessed December 28, 2004. WORLD FACTBOOK. (2004), http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cw.html#Geo. Accessed December 20, 2004.

Useful Links:
IslandStudies.ca
www.upei.ca
www.google.ca

Please address queries to: Institute of Island Studies University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) 550 University Ave Charlottetown, PE, Canada, C1A 4P3

Copyright 2007. Institute of Island Studies, UPEI. Educational and Non-Commercial Use Only