



Te Ara Akapapa'anga Nui 2020+
National Sustainable Development Agenda
NSDA2020+
Annual Indicator Report



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Te Ara Akapapa'anga Nui 2020+ • National Sustainable Development Agenda NSDA2020+ • Annual Indicator Report

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Te Ara Akapapa'anga Nui 2020+
National Sustainable Development Agenda
NSDA2020+

Annual Indicator Report

2021 • YEAR 1

Koutu mana Tutara o Te Ipukarea
Office of the Prime Minister



WANT TO KNOW ABOUT OUR LOGO?

Designed by Fave Designs Inc, a local business in the Cook Islands, the logo reflects three key elements: 1) **Our land and ocean**, 2) **Our people**, and 3) **Our bond**.



Our land and ocean: The green and blue patterns symbolise our land and our ocean. They are reflected in a weave - our ka'a



Our people: The lines of our land and ocean are symbolic of a fingerprint, an imprint of our identity - unique like our our Cook Islands people and culture



Our bond: The tikitikitangata surrounds our logo, represents our people in unity, as we work towards a single goal

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ACL	Avaroa Cable Limited
ANZ	Australia New Zealand Banking Corporation
BCI	Bank of the Cook Islands
BSP	Bank of the South Pacific
BTIB	Business Trade and Investment Board
CI	Cook Islands
CIAGS	Cook Islands Administration Guidelines
CICC	Cook Islands Climate Change (a division of OPM)
CIET	Centre of Excellence in Information Technology
CIIC	Cook Islands Investment Corporation
CIT	Cook Islands Tourism Corporation
CITTI	Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute
COVID19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CPPO	Central Policy and Planning Office (a division of OPM)
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DV	Domestic Violence
<i>E.coli</i>	<i>Escherichia coli</i>
ECE	Early Childcare Education
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EMCI	Emergency Management Cook Islands (a division of OPM)
EPRI	Economic Policy Research Institute
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GIS	Geographic Information System
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
ICI	(Ministry of) Infrastructure Cook Islands
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INTAFF	Ministry of Internal Affairs
IT	Information Technology
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IVS	International Visitor Survey
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LPG	Liquefied petroleum gas
MFAI	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration
MFEM	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
MMR	Ministry of Marine Resources

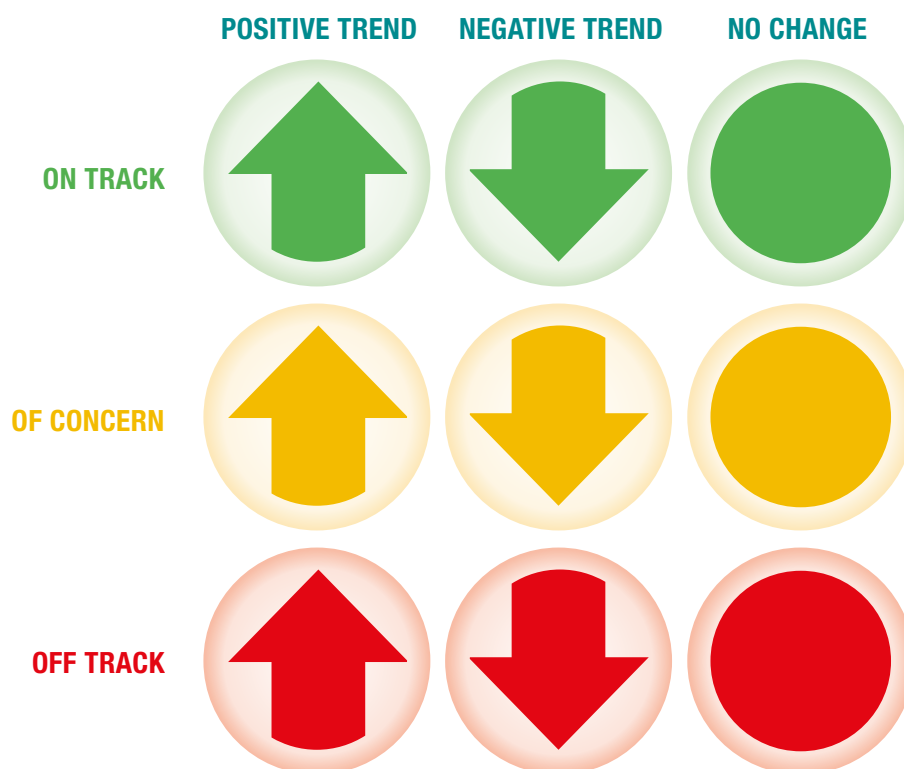


MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOCD	Ministry of Cultural Development
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOT	Ministry of Transport
MP	Member of Parliament
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NES	National Environment Service
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSDA	National Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+
NSO	National Statistics Office (a division of MFEM)
NZ	New Zealand
NZD	New Zealand dollars
OECD	Other Effective Conservation Measures
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OPSC	Office of the Public Service Commissioner
PEG	Pa Enua ¹ Governance (a division of OPM)
PIFS	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
R2R	Reef to Ridge
REDD	Renewable Energy Development Division (of OPM)
RMD	Revenue Management Division (of MFEM)
S.A.M.O.A	Small Island Development States (SIDS) Accelerated Mode of Action pathway
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Development States
SIF	Social Impact Fund
SOE	Report State of the Environment Report
SPC	Secretariat for the Pacific Community
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TAU	Te Aponga Uira o Tumutevarovaro (Electricity Authority)
TKRM	Te Kopapa Reo Māori
TMO	Te Marae Ora
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USP	University of the South Pacific
WHO	World Health Organisation

¹ 'Pa Enua' refers to the 14 outer islands (both habited and inhabited) to the main island 1 of Rarotonga. The Cook Islands is an ocean state which consists of 15 islands scattered over approximately two million square miles of the Pacific Ocean.

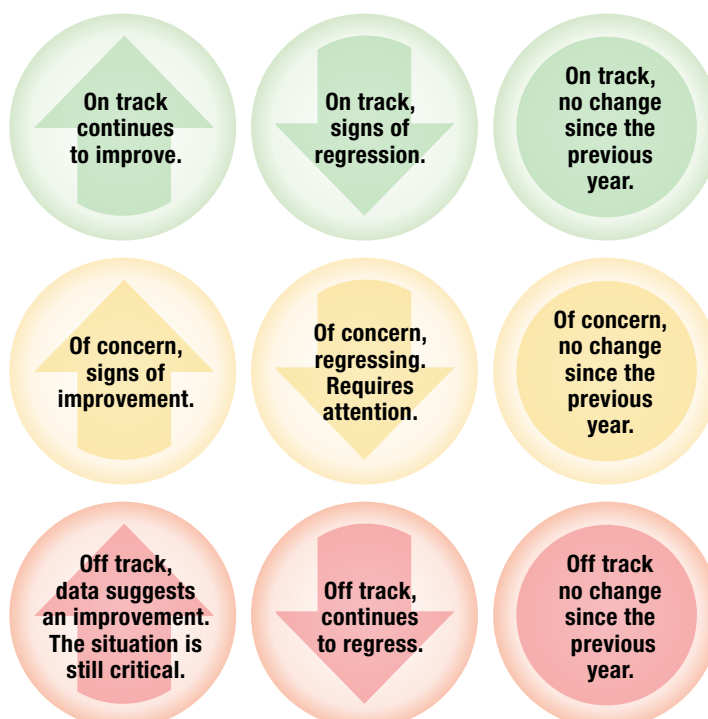
Guide to the indicator status and trend symbols

The Report includes data and analysis for each of the indicators, together with some explanation of the methodology. Where possible, the Report identifies a status and trend for each of the indicators. Status is illustrated using a traffic light system (green, yellow, red) to identify the different levels of concern or urgency. Trends are illustrated using arrows (up or down) or a circle (no change). This is shown in the figure below.



Indicator Analysis

The indicator is...



Executive summary

The National Sustainable Development Agenda (NSDA) 2020+ Annual Indicator Report is an annual report that provides a comprehensive overview of key indicators that measure the wellbeing, social, economic, and environmental performance of the Cook Islands. The report aims to inform policymakers, stakeholders, and the public on the progress of the nation towards achieving its goals and objectives, as well as identify areas that require improvement.

The report covers a wide range of indicators, including wellbeing, economic growth, employment rates, poverty, education, health, energy, and the environment. These indicators are selected based on their relevance, reliability, and ability to reflect a snapshot of sustainable development in the Cook Islands. The report presents data in the form of graphs, tables, and maps which hopefully make it easy to understand and interpret.

One of the key findings of the report is that the economy continues to recover on an upward trend. However, this growth has not quite translated into other areas of wellbeing and the environment. The report identifies the need for policies that can promote inclusive growth, create more jobs, and create an enabling environment for whole being.

Another important area covered in the report is education. The report notes that while access to education has improved over the years, the quality of education remains a challenge. Many students leave school without acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge required to succeed in the workforce, with 24% of youth in the Pa Enua classified in the 2021 Census as not in education, employment or training (NEET). The report recommends investing in education, particularly in early childhood education and the education workforce, to improve the quality of education and ensure that students are better prepared for the future.

The report also highlights the need to address environmental challenges such as climate change, waste and sanitation, and the loss of biodiversity. The report notes that while some progress has been made, much more needs to be done to ensure a sustainable and resilient future. The report recommends the adoption of policies that promote clean energy, support Net Zero and Zero waste targets and protects the environment.

Overall, the National Indicator Report provides a snapshot of the sustainable development of the Nation across a wide range of indicators. The report highlights both areas of progress and areas that require attention, providing policymakers and stakeholders with the information they need to make informed decisions. By tracking progress over time, the report can help to ensure that policies and interventions are effective in achieving their intended outcomes, and that the Nation is on track towards achieving its goals and objectives and vision towards Turanga Memeitaki. It must be noted that this is a snapshot of sustainable development and does not elaborate on all work being undertaken in respective thematic areas and that this does not reflect the performance of agencies.

SUMMARY OF GOAL RESULTS • 2021

OUR VISION OF WELLBEING

An empowered, innovative and environmentally conscious people who are grounded in our culture and languages, with the highest quality of wellbeing in life.



NSDA 2020+ Goals

Status Trend

Summary of results



GOAL 1
Wellbeing for all



OF CONCERN DUE TO LIMITED DATA AVAILABILITY
However, we anticipate that more data will become accessible from Year 2 onwards.



GOAL 2
Welfare and Equity



ON TRACK
However, data limitations exist due to reliance on income tax records that exclude some low-income earners.



GOAL 3
Economy, employment trade and enterprise



OF CONCERN, WITH SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT



GOAL 4
Manage solid and hazardous waste



OF CONCERN
Despite the challenges in obtaining information, it is evident that hazardous waste management remains an area requiring ongoing attention



GOAL 5
Water and Sanitation



OF CONCERN, WITH SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT



GOAL 6
Connecting our Nation through Infrastructure, Transport and ICT



OF CONCERN, WITH SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT
Indicator 6.2, 6.4 and 6.5 has not been reported on so no conclusions can be drawn. It is expected that the data will be available in the next iteration.



GOAL 7
Health and Healthy Lifestyles



OF CONCERN
The rate of premature deaths from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is off track and regressing. Health spending is also a concern, showing regression. Limited data makes the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STIs) and youth engagement concerning. The mental health index is of concern, although there are signs of improvement. On a positive note, average life expectancy is on track and continuing to improve.



GOAL 8
Education and
Innovation



ON TRACK, WITH POSITIVE PROGRESS TOWARDS GOAL



GOAL 9
Our Inclusiveness –
Gender, Equity and
Social Inclusion



OF CONCERN, AND CONTINUES TO REGRESS

The accessibility of public facilities for people with disabilities remains a pressing concern that requires attention, as it has been reported as “off track”. On a positive note, the government support provided to NGOs is “on track”.



GOAL 10
Agriculture and
Food Security



ON TRACK, WITH SIGNS OF REGRESSION



GOAL 11
Our Biodiversity and
Natural Environment



OF CONCERN

Achieving Goal 11 is a significant challenge, particularly on Rarotonga, where the development pressures are greatest.



GOAL 12
Climate Change,
Resilience,
Renewable Energy
and Energy Efficiency



OF CONCERN, WITH SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT



GOAL 13
Cultural Heritage,
History, Identity
and Language



OF CONCERN

There is limited information about progress towards the goal.



GOAL 14
A Sustainable
Population



OF CONCERN, WITH SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT

This goal gives limited information about progress towards the goal and a couple of indicators have not been reported on.



GOAL 15
Our Security,
a Peaceful and
Just Society



OF CONCERN

There are limited information about the progress towards the goal.



Introduction

Te Kaveinga Iti, our 5-year scorecard, serves as a vital link to the Akapapa'anga Uki plan and the long-term vision of Turanga Memeitaki in the Cook Islands. The Central Policy and Planning Office (CPPO) within the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) annually reports on the Te Ara Akapapa'anga Nui 2020+ (NSDA2020+) indicators, which measure progress towards the 15 national goals and the vision of wellbeing for all. The NSDA2020+ framework outlines the goals and utilises 73 indicators to track our achievements. This reporting process promotes transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making, supporting the Cook Islands' traditional approach to planning for the future. Through Te Kaveinga Iti and NSDA2020+ indicators, we can assess progress and align efforts towards a future that embraces Turanga Memeitaki, holistic wellbeing for all Cook Islanders.

The 15 goals cover the following areas:

- 1** Wellbeing for all
- 2** Welfare and Equity
- 3** Economy, Employment, Trade and Enterprise
- 4** Manage Solid and Hazardous Waste
- 5** Water and Sanitation
- 6** Connecting our Nation through Infrastructure, Transport and ICT
- 7** Health and Healthy Lifestyles
- 8** Education and Innovation
- 9** Our Inclusiveness (Gender, Equity and Social Inclusion)
- 10** Agriculture and Food Security
- 11** Our Biodiversity and Natural Environment
- 12** Climate Change, Resilience, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
- 13** Cultural Heritage, History, Identity and Language
- 14** A Sustainable Population
- 15** Our Security, a Peaceful and Just Society

This inaugural indicator report serves as the national sustainable development scorecard under the NSDA 2020+. The provided information predominantly pertains to either the 2021 calendar year or the 2020/2021 financial year², depending on the data collection timeline. In cases where recent data is unavailable, earlier data has been utilised. It is important to note that certain indicators relating to specific goals have not been reported due to data limitations. The report provides explanations for indicators without sufficient information and includes other relevant statistics or reports whenever possible.

The report includes data and analysis for each of the indicators as appropriate, together with some explanation of the methodology. Where possible, the report identifies a status and trend for each of the indicators. Status is illustrated using a traffic light system as per the guide above to identify the different level of concern or urgency.

Furthermore, the NSDA2020+ Te Kaveinga Iti goals are closely aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and regional commitments such as the Small Islands Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (S.A.M.O.A Pathways).

² The 2020/21 financial year runs from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

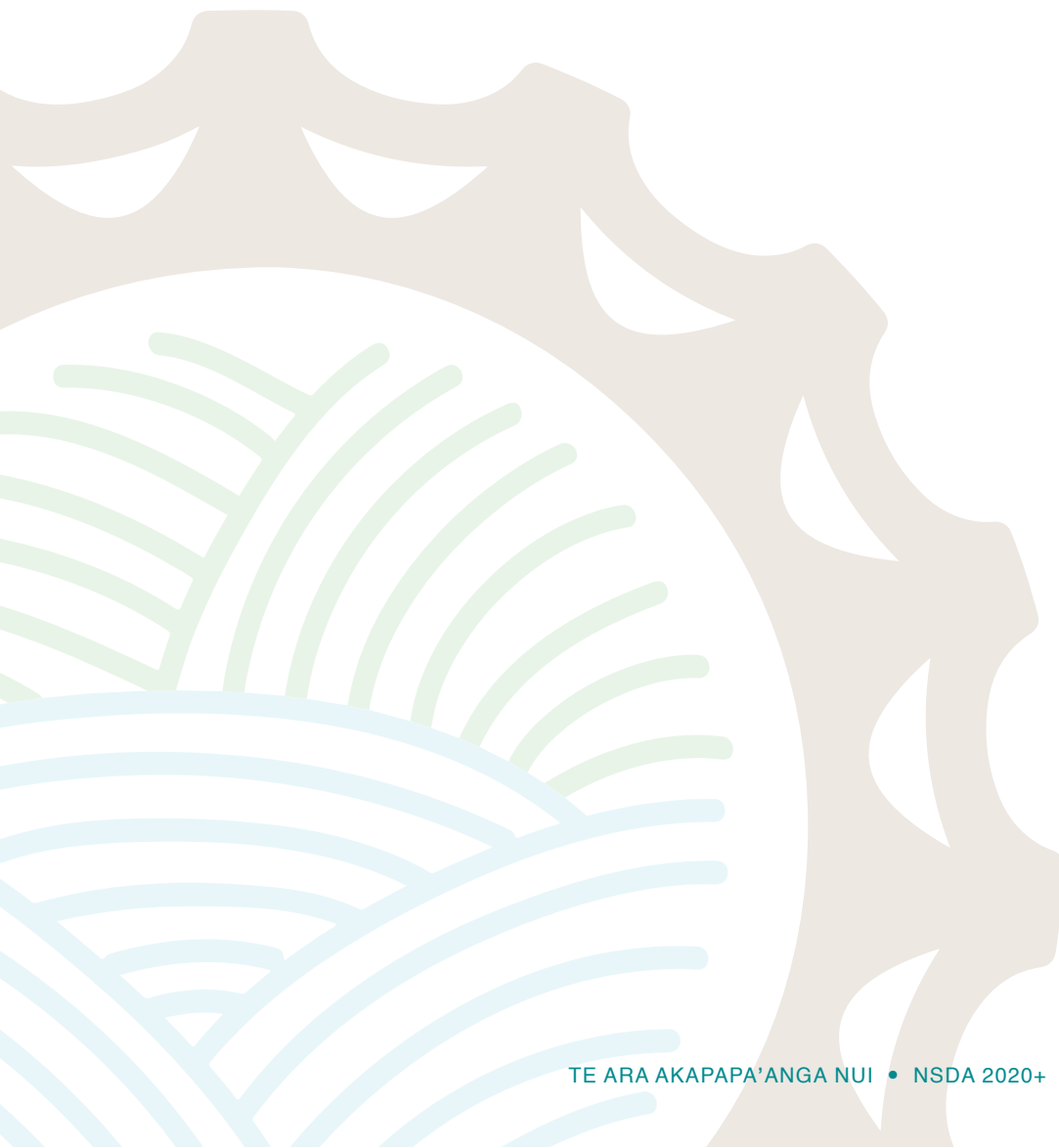


GOAL 1

Wellbeing for all

25 Year Target of Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

This goal seeks to address the vision of Te Ara Akapapa'anga Nui – NSDA 2020+ and is centered on **Turanga Memeitaki no te katoatoa – Wellbeing for all**, aiming to ensure that each person attains a state of comfort, health, and happiness. This involves creating a supportive environment where individuals have access to resources and opportunities for good physical and mental health, social connections, and overall life satisfaction. Key factors contributing to wellbeing for all include accessible healthcare, quality education, employment opportunities, social support networks, and a sense of community belonging. Achieving this vision requires collaboration and a commitment to addressing systemic inequalities, promoting environmental sustainability, equitable resource distribution, and diversity and inclusion. By prioritising wellbeing for all, we can build a prosperous, sustainable, and fulfilling world for everyone. The overall status for the Goal 1 indicators are “**of concern**” due to limited data availability. However, we anticipate that more data will become accessible starting from Year 2 onwards, allowing for better analysis and measurement of progress towards this goal.




INDICATOR 1.1

Employee wellbeing index

Introduction

This indicator assesses the wellbeing of employees as a measure of the fairness of the labour market and adequacy of working conditions.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
88% (based on PSC employee engagement survey)	N/A			To be determined	

Source: Public Service Employee Engagement Survey: OPSC

Comments on methodology

The NSDA2020+ suggest that the methodology for this indicator will look at collecting this information from the labour force survey. This target is to be determined by Ministry of Internal Affairs (INTAFF).

Analysis

Although no specific target has been established for this indicator, the Cook Islands took a significant step forward by conducting its inaugural Labour Force Survey (LFS) in 2019. The LFS yielded a plethora of valuable insights into the prevailing employment conditions within the Cook Islands, offering an in-depth analysis of economic activity and the labor force prior to the onset of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It is worth noting, however, that the LFS did not encompass the aspect of employment wellbeing. Consequently, it is highly recommended that the forthcoming Labour Force Survey incorporates a comprehensive assessment of employment wellbeing.

In 2019, the Cook Islands working-age population (15 years old and above) was estimated at 11,445 people, corresponding to 74.9 per cent of the total population, of whom 8,056 are in the labour force. This represents a relatively high labour force participation rate of 70.4%. Around three quarters of the working-age population (8,423 or 73.6%) were located in Rarotonga, only more than one quarter were located in the Pa Enua (3,022 or 26.4%). Furthermore, 51.3% of the working-age population were women and 48.7% were men. In the working-age population, the share of women exceeded the share of men by 2.6%. The Figure 1 below shows a snapshot of the working age population.

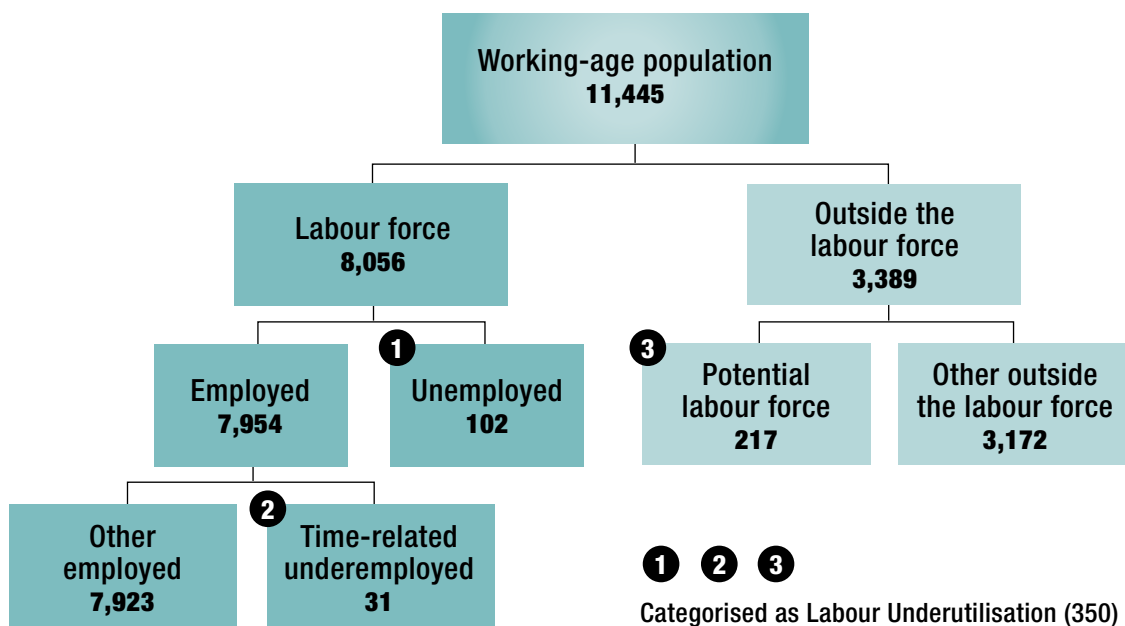


FIGURE 1 Working Age Population *Source: INTAFF*

NSDA2020+ understands Office of the Public Sector Commissioner (OPSC) has carried out a survey on employee engagement in the Cook Islands public sector, specifically targeting the health and wellbeing of the employees. The findings from this survey are set to be released in the next iteration.

Since there is currently no existing information for this particular subject, NSDA 2020+ has categorised this status as “**of concern**” with no change. However, forthcoming information in the next iteration will provide further insights into the baselines for future reference.

INDICATOR 1.2

Youth wellbeing index

Introduction

Youth wellbeing refers to the physical, mental, emotional, and social health of young people. It is essential to ensure that youth are given the necessary resources and support to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. This includes access to healthcare, education, and social support networks, as well as opportunities for recreation and personal growth. By prioritising youth wellbeing, we can help ensure that the next generation is equipped with the tools and skills they need to succeed and make positive contributions to society. Additionally, investing in youth wellbeing can lead to long-term benefits for individuals and communities, including increased productivity, reduced healthcare costs, and improved social outcomes.

This indicator assesses the relative wellbeing of young people and assesses the following:

- Optimism about future opportunity
- Current self-perception of individual wellbeing
- Engagement in the Community

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
N/A	N/A			To be determined	

Source: INTAFF report

Comments on methodology

Unfortunately, the required data for this indicator is currently unavailable. To ensure clarity in future reporting, it is necessary to establish how this indicator will be measured. Ongoing efforts are being made in this area to address these considerations.

Analysis

In 2021, INTAFF formulated the Te Mana o Te Mapu youth policy, acknowledging the importance of youth wellbeing and the necessity for improved systems to cater to young individuals in both Rarotonga and the Pa Enua. This policy specifically defines young people as those aged between 15 and 24 years old. Within the Te Mana o Te Mapu policy, five key policy areas have been identified and recognised:

- Proud of their culture, traditions and identity
- Learning and development
- Healthy and resilient
- Accepted, respected and connected
- Environment action ready.

In order to shape the policy, INTAFF conducted a survey in 2020 involving young individuals from both Rarotonga and the Pa Enua. The survey results indicate that youth programs, services, and development initiatives are being acknowledged, with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) being viewed as more effective and successful in implementing youth programs. Furthermore, young people have identified family, sports, technology, agriculture, culture, and health as priority areas for youth development. The insights gained from this survey have helped inform the policy-making process.

With regard to the population status of young individuals, the Table 1 indicates a 5% decline in the total number of Cook Islands youth (aged 15–24) in 2021 compared to the figures from the previous Census conducted in 2016. It can be inferred that some young people may have migrated overseas in search of employment opportunities or to pursue secondary or tertiary education

TABLE 1 Number of youth age group between 15–24 years residing in the Cook Islands *Source: Census 2021*

2016 Census	2021 Census
2087 young people	1991 young people

As there is no available data or information at this time, NSDA 2020+ has recorded the indicator as “**of concern**” and no change. However there is work being undertaken with data to be realised in the later years.

INDICATOR 1.3

Family wellbeing index

Introduction

This indicator focuses on evaluating the relative wellbeing of families through a set of questions, which will be regularly assessed through rapid assessments. Family wellbeing plays a crucial role in the overall health and happiness of individuals and society as a whole. Families serve as the primary source of socialisation and support for their members, and their influence on the development of children and adolescents is of utmost importance. A family that prioritises effective communication, empathy, and positive relationships can contribute to the flourishing and resilience of its members in the face of life’s challenges. Moreover, a healthy family environment has the potential to yield improved physical and mental health outcomes, reduced stress levels, and enhanced social connectedness. By investing in the wellbeing of families, we can foster a more resilient and supportive society, equipping individuals with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of modern life.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2021				
N/A	N/A			To be determined	

Comments on methodology

At present, the required data for this indicator is not available. While a rapid assessment has been conducted and drafted, it is not yet accessible at the time of this report. NSDA2020+ expects that the results of the rapid assessment will be accessible for reporting in Year 2.

Analysis

As part of the NSDA2020+ plan, a new indicator has been introduced. The NSDA2020+ acknowledges that a rapid assessment is currently being carried out by the National Statistics Office (NSO). Further details will be provided in the next iteration of the report.

Since no information is available at the moment, NSDA2020+ has classified this indicator as “**of concern**” with no changes. Ongoing efforts are being made to gather data, and the results are expected to be available in the future years.

INDICATOR 1.4

Elderly wellbeing

Introduction

The aim of this indicator is to evaluate the wellbeing of elderly individuals by determining the type of support they require to ensure comfort in their homes. This assessment will be conducted through a rapid assessment approach.

The wellbeing of elderly individuals is essential to ensuring that our aging population can lead healthy and fulfilling lives. Elderly individuals may face a variety of physical, mental, and social challenges, including chronic health conditions, isolation, and financial insecurity. Prioritising their wellbeing involves creating an environment that supports their independence, provides access to quality healthcare, and fosters social connections and a sense of belonging within the community. By investing in the wellbeing of our elderly population, we can help them remain active and engaged in society, maintain their quality of life, and contribute to the wellbeing of future generations.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
N/A	N/A			To be determined	

Comments on methodology

At present, the necessary data for this indicator is unavailable. While a rapid assessment has been conducted and drafted, it is not yet accessible at the time of this report. The results of the rapid assessment are expected to be available for reporting in Year 2.

Additionally, INTAFF has undertaken assessments in this field, and information from these assessments will be released in the future years.

Analysis

Under the NSDA2020+ plan, a new indicator has been introduced. The NSDA2020+ acknowledges that a rapid assessment is currently being conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO), with more information to be provided in the next iteration of the report.

Furthermore, INTAFF is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure the comfort and well-being of elderly individuals. One such support is the welfare payments administered by INTAFF, which are available to individuals aged 60 years and above. The purpose of this fund is to assist retired elderly individuals who are residing in the Cook Islands. The following support payment structure is in place:

- A payment of \$250 will be issued on the 1st and 16th of each month for individuals aged 60 to 69.
- A payment of \$350 will be issued on the 1st and 16th of each month for individuals aged 70 and above.

Regarding the population status of our elderly population, Table 2 provided indicates a 15% increase in the total number of Cook Islands elderly individuals in 2021 compared to the figures from the previous Census conducted in 2016.

TABLE 2 Resident Population for the Elderly 60+ *Source: Census 2021*

2016 Census	2021 Census
2218 elderly people (or 14.98%)	2580 elderly people (or 17.21%)

Since there is currently no available information for this particular aspect, NSDA 2020+ has categorised the indicator as “**of concern**” with no changes noted. Ongoing work is being conducted, and further information will be revealed in the future years.

INDICATOR 1.5

Parents and infants wellbeing

Introduction

This indicator provides information on the wellbeing of our infants and their parents and or caregivers.

Parental and infants or children’s wellbeing are inextricably linked. Parents who prioritise their own physical, mental, and emotional health are better able to provide a supportive and nurturing environment for their infants/children. This, in turn, can lead to improved outcomes for infants/children, including better mental and physical health, improved academic performance, and reduced risk-taking behaviors. Additionally, investing in infants/children’s wellbeing can lead to long-term benefits for society, including reduced healthcare costs and increased productivity. By promoting the wellbeing of both parents and infants/children, we can help create a healthier, happier, and more resilient society, where families can thrive and contribute to the wellbeing of their communities.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
N/A	N/A			To be determined	

Comments on methodology

The majority of the information related to this indicator will be sourced from INTAFF. Ongoing work is being carried out by INTAFF in this area, and data and information are expected to become available in the future years.

Analysis

To safeguard and provide assistance to our children and their parents or caregivers, a solid foundation is essential. Within INTAFF, the Welfare Services unit is responsible for overseeing the distribution of benefits for children. Based on welfare data from 2021, the government allocated the following approximate cash transfer amounts to parents and babies.

TABLE 3 Government Benefit Distribution *Source: INTAFF*

Benefit	Number of receivers	Payment total
Child benefit	4,456	\$5,402,250
New born allowance	193	\$193,000
Maternity leave funds	58 working mothers in the private sector	\$111,360

Furthermore, Social Policy plays a crucial role in supporting children and families through the Child and Family Services division. This division handles adoption reviews, resolution of family disputes, and matters involving children and babies. Childcare support is also managed by this unit.

INTAFF has taken into consideration the future increase of child allowances and caregiver allowances. A comprehensive review of welfare programs was conducted by UNICEF/EPRI between 2013 and 2018. The review highlighted the need to gradually adjust current benefit rates based on inflation or food prices. INTAFF has utilised this report as a supporting tool to make recommendations. Furthermore, INTAFF prioritises increasing the caregiver allowance and child benefit allowance for children with disabilities over other welfare benefits.

However, the decision to implement these changes will heavily rely on the support of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM), considering the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and the resulting pressure on public finances.

In 2021, CPPPO conducted a situation analysis report as part of the NSDA2020+ evidence base. The report highlights the importance of reviewing and gradually adjusting parental leave support, social support for babies and families, and making childcare more affordable and accessible.

It is worth noting that a draft social protection policy is currently being developed by INTAFF, which will determine the direction of social protection, including welfare payments, in the country.

The NSDA2020+ acknowledges the significance of this indicator, categorising it as “**of concern**” with no observed changes.



GOAL 2

Welfare and equity

25 Year Target of Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

Welfare and equity are essential components of a just and thriving society. Welfare refers to the provision of social support and services that help individuals and families meet their basic needs, such as food, shelter, and healthcare. It is crucial in promoting social and economic stability, reducing poverty and inequality, and ensuring that all members of society have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

Equity, on the other hand, involves ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly and have equal access to resources and opportunities, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances. It is about creating a level playing field where everyone has the chance to thrive and reach their full potential.

Investing in welfare and equity is not only the right thing to do but also makes good economic sense. By reducing poverty and inequality, we can create a more productive and prosperous society, where everyone has the opportunity to contribute and benefit from economic growth. Additionally, promoting equity and inclusion can lead to more innovative and creative solutions to societal challenges, as diverse perspectives and experiences are brought to the table.

However, achieving welfare and equity requires systemic change and a commitment from individuals, communities, and policymakers. This involves addressing structural inequalities, creating policies and programs that prioritise the needs of marginalised groups, and promoting social cohesion and empathy. By prioritising welfare and equity, we can create a more just and equitable society, where everyone has the opportunity to lead a fulfilling and prosperous life.

This goal seeks to address the economic wellbeing across the nation by reducing economic hardship, improving the distribution of wealth, and promoting economic equity. The results for Goal 2 are **“on track”** with no change. However, there are limitations with the data used for all these indicators due to reliance on income tax records which do not include some of the lowest income earners.




INDICATOR 2.1

Percentage of people under 'minimum liveable income'

Introduction

This indicator focuses on determining the percentage of individuals in our nation who are facing difficulties in affording basic necessities. It utilises a specific Cook Islands definition of economic hardship, taking into account the basic cost of living for people and households.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
4.76%	*3%			Keeping this proportion below 10% and moving toward 5%	

**Preliminary results*

Source: Income tax data: RMD-MFEM; calculations and analysis: Economic Advice: MFEM;
Minimum living level: National Statistics Office-Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (NSO-MFEM)

Comments on methodology

For the purpose of this indicator minimum liveable income is defined as \$20,820.45 in 2018, and adjusted for inflation in other years. This is based on a family of two adults and two children. At the individual level, this is halved to give the minimum livable income for a single adult.

Analysis

The information for this indicator is set out in the Table 4 below.

TABLE 4 Minimum liveable income information for 2019–2021 *Source: CINSO, RMD, CENSUS and Economic advice*

Description	2019	2020	2021
Individual 'Minimum liveable income'	\$10,495.40	\$10,621.34	\$10,950.61
Income tax returns under this	1,263	797	412
Resident population 15+	13,138	13,138	13,138 (Nov 2021)
Percentage of total resident population under minimum liveable income	10%	6%	3%

Results show that in 2019 the percentage of total resident population under the minimum liveable income is 10% and slowly decreasing below target in 2020 and 2021 with 3%. This is a significant improvement however these results should not be relied upon at this time noting discussions between MFEM-Economics and NSO have indicated that the basket under minimum liveable income does not reflect a commonly-purchased basket of goods, limiting the usefulness of this as an indicator.

Based on the methodology set out with 3% earning below the minimum liveable income in 2021, the status of this indicator is assessed as **“on track and continues to improve”**. However, given the limitations in the data, particularly the reliance on income tax information which excludes some of the lowest earners, there are difficulties in reaching conclusions based on this indicator. The results may also change once more outstanding income tax returns have been filed and processed with further analysis that need to be factored.

INDICATOR 2.2

The Gini Coefficient – measure of income inequality

Introduction

This indicator examines the income distribution within the economy and focuses on highlighting income inequality. Calculating the Gini Coefficient for the Cook Islands would provide a comprehensive understanding of the income distribution landscape. The Gini Coefficient is a statistical measure that quantifies income inequality within a population. It is represented on a scale from 0 to 1, where 0 signifies perfect equality (where all individuals have the same income) and 1 represents perfect inequality (where a single individual possesses all the income).

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2020	2021				
0.385	0.415			Decline towards 0.300 (HIES data) and 0.400 (tax data)	

Source: Income tax data: Revenue Management Division-MFEM (RMD-MFEM);
Calculations and analysis: Economic Advice: MFEM

Comments on methodology

A major limitation of the methodology is that it only considers people for which MFEM has taxpayer records. It does not include people who are in informal employment, and some of the lowest income earners fall into this category.

Analysis

The Gini coefficients for 2018 to 2021 data have been calculated by MFEM – Economic advice as follows:

TABLE 5 Gini Coefficients

Year	Gini coefficients
2018	0.460
2019	0.424
2020	0.385
2021	0.415

The Gini coefficient has remained relatively stable, indicating consistent income inequality levels. However, it is reasonable to assume that in 2020, due to the global pandemic, the Gini coefficient might have decreased. This could be attributed to factors such as disruptions in tax data collection processes or other pandemic-related influences.

This indicator has been assessed as **“of concern and requires attention”**. The impact of the global pandemic will likely result in changes in the results.


INDICATOR 2.3

Real growth in the lowest 20% of incomes

Introduction

This indicator provides information about the impact of economic growth on the lowest 20% of our society to monitor whether the benefits of our economic development are being shared equitably once we control for cost of living adjustments.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2020	2021				
28.6%	9.7%			>1.5% annual increase or consecutive years of growth	

Source: Income tax data: RMD-MFEM; calculations and analysis: Economic Advice: MFEM

Comments on methodology

Tax data is used in this indicator to determine the percentage of total income earned by the bottom 20 per cent of income earners. Where possible, we will disaggregate the data to take into account gender and migrant demographics.

Analysis

The information for this indicator is set out in Table 6 below.

TABLE 6 Individual Tax Data *Source: RMD*

Description	2019	2020	2021
Real growth in the average income of the lowest 20% of incomes (\$)	10,571	13,593	14,915
Real growth in the average income of the lowest 20% of incomes (%)	35%	28.6%	9.7%

The NSDA2020+, suggest that achieving an increase of over 1.5% or consecutive years of growth is considered an indicator of being “**on track**”. However, it is important to note that there are limitations associated with the data used for measuring this indicator.



GOAL 3

Economy, employment, trade and enterprise

25 Year Target of Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

The economy, employment, trade, and enterprise are critical components of a healthy and prosperous society. A robust economy provides the resources necessary to invest in social services, infrastructure, and education, which are essential for promoting wellbeing and economic mobility. Employment and entrepreneurship provide individuals with opportunities to contribute to the economy and society, while also providing a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Trade enables countries to exchange goods and services, leading to increased economic growth and opportunities for businesses and consumers. Together, these components form the foundation for a strong and sustainable economy, one that can provide for the needs of all members of society and support long-term growth and development.

This goal addresses the growth and health of the economy including trade and enterprise. The results for Goal 3 indicators show that progress towards the goal is **“of concern with signs of improvement”**.



INDICATOR 3.1

Real median income

Introduction

This indicator provides information about the real median income of people living and working in the Cook Islands. Real median income refers to the income level that represents the middle of the income distribution, adjusted for inflation. It is a measure of the typical or average income level in a population and can provide insights into changes in economic wellbeing and income inequality over time.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019(p)	2021				
5.2%	6.3%			Growth of at least 2% in median income per year on average	

Source: Income tax data: RMD-MFEM

Comments on methodology

The data for this indicator has been sourced from annual income tax data. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations associated with relying solely on this data source, as previously discussed under Indicator 2.2 Gini coefficient. These limitations pertain to the exclusion of individuals with the lowest incomes, as they may not have tax records, as well as the inclusion of a reduced amount of taxpayer data due to pending filing and processing of outstanding income tax returns.

To provide a more comprehensive assessment, the NSDA2020+ recommends utilising median income as a measure. Median income divides the income distribution into two equal groups, with half of the population having income above that amount and the other half having income below it. This approach is suggested as a more accurate representation of income distribution compared to using average income or GDP per capita.

Analysis

The following table, Table 7, presents the data for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021.

TABLE 7 Real median income information for 2019–2021 *Source: MFEM – Economic advice*

Description	2019	2020	2021 ^(p)
Real median income (\$)	21,365	19,987	21,242
Growth (%)	5.2%	–6.5%	6.3%
Total number of values	1.033	1.004	1.049

As per the NSDA2020+, if the median income experiences an average annual increase of at least 2%, it is categorised as “**of concern with signs of improvement**”. This suggests that such a growth rate demonstrates a positive trend, although further attention and action may still be necessary.

INDICATOR 3.2

Real GDP (aggregate)

Introduction

This indicator looks at aggregate economic activity and the size of the economy using real GDP. Real GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is a measure of the total value of all goods and services produced in a country, adjusted for inflation. It is a measure of the size and growth of a country’s economy and can be used to track changes in economic activity over time.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2018/19	2020/21				
8.7%	–26.7%			>2% annual increase or 2+ consecutive years of increase	

Source: MFEM – Economic Advice; NSO

Comments on methodology

‘Real’ GDP takes into account inflation so allows a more accurate measure of economic growth over time (as opposed to ‘nominal GDP’).

Analysis

As of the time of this report, MFEM has indicated that they do not possess any data regarding this indicator. Consequently, the indicator has been evaluated as “**of concern**” due to the lack of available information.


INDICATOR 3.3

Growth in non-tourist related industries

Introduction

This indicator assesses economic diversity by measuring the proportion of economic growth that comes from industries not directly related to tourism. Growth in non-tourist related industries refers to the expansion of industries that do not rely on tourism as their primary source of revenue. This can include sectors such as fishing and technology. Diversifying the economy in this way can lead to more stable and sustainable economic growth and job creation.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2018/19	2020/21				
-5.7%	9.5%			>2% annual increase or consecutive years of growth	

Source: Income tax data: RMD-MFEM; calculations and analysis: Economic Advice: MFEM

Comments on methodology

This indicator uses information from MFEM-Economics to calculate the contribution of identified 'non-tourist related' industries to nominal GDP. The target for this indicator is an average of two per cent growth in non-tourism related industries in the given year.

However, it is important to acknowledge a limitation of this approach, which is the reliance on assumptions regarding which industries are considered tourism-related. The Cook Islands heavily depends on tourism, and it is integrated into various aspects of the economy. For instance, the restaurant and accommodation sectors are likely to be tourism-related. Additionally, certain segments of retail and telecommunications trade may also be linked to tourist activities rather than local trade. Furthermore, some aspects of agriculture serve the tourism sector, such as supplying local produce to resorts and restaurants. These complexities and interdependencies make it challenging to precisely categorise industries as strictly tourism-related or non-tourism related.

Analysis

The following table, Table 8 below sets out the information for non-related tourism industries for 2018–19, 2019–20 and 2020–21, based on nominal GDP.

TABLE 8 Non-related tourism industries 2018–2021 based on nominal GDP

Source: NSO, MFEM -RMD, MFEM – Economic advice

Industry	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
Agriculture	11.38	10.59	10.85
Fishing including Pearls	1.89	2.26	0.89
Mining and Manufacturing	11.33	11.58	15.80
Electricity and Water	9.71	10.03	11.98
Construction	19.67	14.86	15.41
Trade	75.27	65.66	85.67
IT and Communications	31.74	27.44	20.25
Finance and Insurance	35.88	30.63	33.02
Real Estate	7.96	10.91	9.62
Ownership of dwellings	28.00	28.85	29.34
Professional Services	21.30	20.87	21.84
Public Administration	51.35	36.15	40.20
Education	11.73	11.76	12.31
Human Health and Social Work	10.10	26.93	30.62
Total non-tourist related	327.31	308.52	337.81
Growth	6.8%	-5.7%	9.5%

In the financial year 2019/20, there was a significant decline of -5.7% in the non-tourism industries, primarily attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions that affected the Cook Islands' economy. However, there was a slight increase observed in the 2020/21 financial year, which can be attributed to the implementation of the Economic Response Plan (ERP) aimed at providing support to individuals and businesses during these challenging times.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this indicator, as outlined in the methodology. One significant limitation is the challenge of accurately categorising industries as either tourism-related or non-tourism related. Given the integrated nature of tourism in the Cook Islands' economy, certain industries, such as retail and telecommunications, may have both tourist-related and local trade components. MFEM is unable to differentiate between these aspects within a sector.

Considering the progress made and the improving trend, the status of this indicator has been assessed as **“on track and shows signs of improvement”**.

INDICATOR 3.4

Visitor yield

Introduction

This indicator looks at visitor spend per person per day on Rarotonga and in the Pa Enua. Visitor yield refers to the financial expenditure made by tourists during their visit to a specific destination, usually measured on a per-visitor or per-trip basis. It serves as a crucial measure of the economic influence of tourism and aids in evaluating the effectiveness of tourism strategies and investments in a particular area.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019/20	2020/21				
\$2,049 per person	\$2,164 per person			3–4% sustained yield increase	

Source: Cook Islands International Visitor Survey (IVS) report – Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CIT)

Comments on methodology

The data for this indicator is sourced from the Cook Islands International Visitor Survey (IVS) report, which is prepared by the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute at Auckland University of Technology on behalf of the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CIT). The report specifically focuses on the characteristics, expectations, and expenditure patterns of tourists who visited the Cook Islands between May 17 and June 30, 2021.

The survey had a total of 445 individual respondents, representing 781 adults and 90 children included in the expenditure analysis. This sample size accounts for approximately 12% of all visitors during the specified period, based on visitor arrival data from the NSO for the same period in 2021.

Analysis

The average visitor spend prior to arrival in the Cook Islands is \$2,164 per person, which has increased from the 2019/20 annual average of \$2,049 per person. On the island, the average spend per person per day is \$206, significantly higher than the 2019/20 annual average of \$154.

According to the IVS report, over half (56%) of the visitors spend between NZ\$1,000 and NZ\$2,499 prior to arrival (Figure 2). The prepaid figure per person is higher than the period of April to June 2018/19 (NZ\$2,092), and it is also higher than the previous year, with an average prepaid spend of NZ\$2,049 for 2019/20. The spending prior to arrival includes expenses such as accommodation, domestic transport, airport transfers, meals, and breakfast. However, activities are less likely to be included in pre-paid expenses.

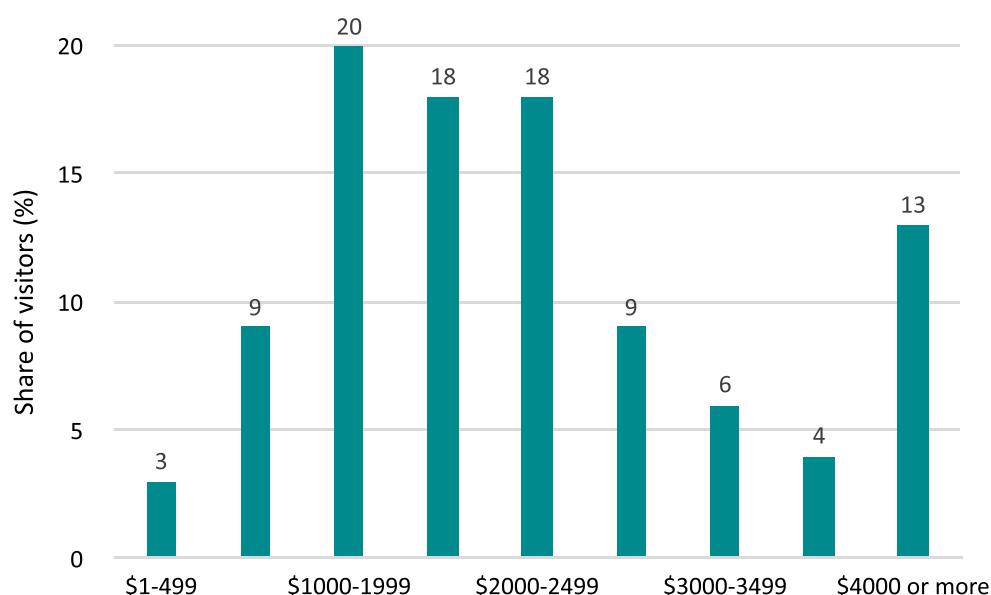


FIGURE 2 Amount of money spent per person prior to arrival *Source: IVS Report*

According to Table 9, the total spend per visitor per day in the Cook Islands (excluding pre-paid expenditure) is NZ\$206. This amount is significantly higher than both the overall spend figure for 2019/20 (NZ\$154) and the same 4th quarter IVS survey period in 2018/19 (NZ\$154). The majority of the money spent locally is allocated to accommodation-related services (45%), followed by restaurants, cafes, and bars (23%), and shopping (7%). These expenditure figures per person are based on 445 survey responses, which cover a total of 871 individuals (781 adults and 90 children).

TABLE 9 Average visitor expenditure in the Cook Islands, per person, per day. *Source: IVS Report*

Expenditure	Mean	% of spend
Accommodation	93	45
Restaurant/Café/Bar	48	23
Shopping	15	7
Vehicle rental	11	5
Groceries	11	5
Domestic Flights	9	4
Water-based Activities	8	4
Other	4	2
Land-based Activities	3	1
Petrol	2	1
Internet	2	1
Public Transport	0	0
Total spend (NZ\$)	206	100%

Estimating the exact proportion of pre-paid spend that benefits the Cook Islands is challenging. However, based on our estimation, the daily pre-paid spend that circulates in the local economy is NZ\$95, and for the average total visit (9.1 nights), it amounts to NZ\$866. By multiplying the daily in-country spend by the average stay, we find that the average spend per person per visit while in the Cook Islands is approximately NZ\$1,881. This includes both the amount spent locally and the amount flowing back from pre-paid expenses. Therefore, the total contribution per visitor per day is NZ\$301 (\$206 + \$95), or NZ\$2,747 (\$1,881 + \$866) for each visitor.

Table 10 demonstrates that visitors in 2021 significantly contribute more to the local economy compared to the annual period of 2019/20 and the April to June (4th quarter) of 2019.

TABLE 10 Visitor contribution between 2021 and 2019/20. *Source: IVS Report*

	May–June 2021	2019/20 annual	April–June 2019 (4 th Qtr)
Average spend prior to arrival (NZ\$)			
Per person per trip	\$2,164	\$2,049	\$2,092
Flowing into local economy rate – estimated 40%			
Per person per trip	\$866	\$820	\$837
Per person per day	\$95	\$96	\$105
Length of stay (nights)	9.1	8.5	8.0
Average local spend			
Per person per trip	\$1,881	\$1,309	\$1,232
Per person per day	\$206	\$154	\$154
Total economic impact per trip	\$2,747	\$2,129	\$2,069
Total economic impact per day	\$301	\$250	\$259

The status of this indicator has been assessed as “**on track**”.

INDICATOR 3.5

Total debt to GDP ratio

Introduction

This indicator uses the Total Debt to GDP as a measure of economic security and financial stability. It assesses the ability of the country to achieve personal and national aspirations and absorb economic shocks while meeting public and private debt obligations. The total debt to GDP ratio is a measure of a country's debt burden in relation to its economic output. It is calculated by dividing a country's total debt by its GDP. A high debt to GDP ratio can indicate financial instability and make it more difficult for a country to service its debt.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2018/19	2020/21				
72.8%	102.1%			<1:1	

Source: National accounts, and Financial Supervisory Commission data; analysis: Economic Advice-MFEM

Comments on methodology

The data for this indicator is sourced from the National accounts, and the Economic Planning Division of MFEM provides the analysis. The ratio is calculated by comparing the combined total of private sector and net government debt to the nominal GDP.

Analysis

The results for three consecutive financial years (as of June 30) are presented in Table 11;

TABLE 11 Total debt to GDP ratio. Source: MFEM – Economic Advice

Sector	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Net private sector debt	281.6M	277.9M	273.1M
Net government debt	77.4M	90.3M	167.8M
Total private and public debt	359M	368.2M	440.8M
Nominal GDP	576.3M	542.3M	349.5M
Total debt to GDP	62.3%	67.9%	126.1%

The results for this indicator indicate an overall increase in total debt since the 2018/19 financial year. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact, leading to a decline in GDP and necessitating additional government debt to support the private sector and protect livelihoods in 2020/21. As a result, we have surpassed the target with a debt-to-GDP ratio of 126%. However, with the reopening of borders, we have observed a subsequent increase in GDP, resulting in a slight decrease in the debt-to-GDP ratio for the additional period of 2021/22.

The status of this indicator is assessed as “**off track**”, but we are gradually moving closer to the target.


INDICATOR 3.6

Cost of doing business and trade

Introduction

This indicator addresses minimising the barriers to doing business in the Cook Islands for Cook Islanders. The cost of doing business and trade refers to the expenses involved in running a business or engaging in trade activities, such as taxes, tariffs, and regulatory compliance. Lowering these costs can make a country or region more attractive for investment and trade, leading to increased economic growth and job creation.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019/20	2021				
Retail bank interest rates for businesses only	ANZ: 10.00 BCI: 7.70 BSP: 9.50				MFEM will develop the target for this indicator alongside the business cost report	
Transportation and freight cost						
Regulatory barriers to doing business						

Source: MFEM – Economics advice, BTIB advise, FSC, MOT

Comments on methodology

Upon reviewing the ERR report, MFEM has concluded that there is no single metric that adequately captures business compliance costs. However, MFEM can monitor various indicators to assess this aspect. These indicators include Business Confidence, bank debt rates, non-residential building consents, employment rate, and balance of payments.

In the future, NSDA2020+ may explore the possibility of revising the indicator set to more accurately reflect the progress and address the complexities involved in monitoring business compliance costs.

Analysis

RETAIL BANK INTEREST RATES

For this indicator we use information from the business loans base rates from the local banks. The findings for the two financial years are set out below.

TABLE 12 Retail Bank Interest Rates. *Source: MFEM – Economics Advice*

Bank	2018/19	2019/20
ANZ	10.50	10.00
BCI	7.70	7.70
BSP	9.50	9.50

The retail bank interest rates for this indicator have remained consistent for BCI and BSP. However, there has been a slight decrease in interest rates for ANZ. ANZ continues to have the highest interest rates, followed by BSP, while BCI offers the lowest interest rates.

TRANSPORTATION AND FREIGHT COST

Data not available at the moment.

REGULATORY BARRIERS TO DOING BUSINESS

Data for the regulatory barriers to doing business indicator is currently not available. This indicator is crucial for assessing the medium-term outcome of reducing business costs and will be measured through the development of the MFEM business cost report in 2023/24.

It is important to note that the Business Trade and Investment Board (BTIB) is responsible for promoting trade, investment, and business in the Cook Islands. BTIB focuses on encouraging the participation of Cook Islanders in trade, investment, and business activities, and monitors foreign investments under the Development Investment Act 1995–96.

The Cook Islands' economy has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, especially due to its heavy reliance on the tourism sector. While it is anticipated that tourism activity and revenues will eventually recover, it is unlikely to reach pre-pandemic levels. Therefore, it is crucial for the country to take action now to foster a more balanced economy for the future. This presents a unique opportunity for the Cook Islands to develop and expand new and existing industries, promoting economic diversification as highlighted in the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) developed by MFEM.

Given the current status, the indicator is assessed as “**of concern**”, emphasising the need to address regulatory barriers and support the development of a more resilient and diverse economy.



GOAL 4

Manage solid and hazardous waste

25 Year Zero Waste Target

Managing solid and hazardous waste is crucial for protecting public health, preserving the environment, and promoting sustainable development. Improper disposal of waste can lead to a range of negative impacts, including pollution, the spread of disease, and contamination of water and soil. Effective waste management practices involve reducing the amount of waste generated, recycling and reusing materials where possible, and disposing of waste safely and responsibly. This requires cooperation and coordination among individuals, businesses, and governments, as well as the adoption of sustainable practices and the development of infrastructure to support waste management efforts. By managing waste effectively, we can create a healthier and more sustainable future for ourselves and future generations.

This goal seeks sustainable management of solid and hazardous waste to avoid adverse effects on the environment, human health and the economy. The results for Goal 4 indicators show that progress towards the goal is “**of concern**”. It has been difficult to find information about hazardous waste however, despite the lack of reporting, management of hazardous waste is known to be an area that continues to need attention throughout the Cook Islands.

INDICATOR 4.1

Recycling rate

(percentage of total waste diverted to recycling)

Introduction

The indicator assesses the level of recycling achieved for products, indicating the proportion of items that are recycled instead of being disposed of in landfills. The recycling rate represents the percentage of waste that undergoes recycling or reuse, as opposed to being discarded in landfills or incinerated. This encompasses various materials like paper, plastics, glass, aluminum cans, and tin cans. A high recycling rate plays a crucial role in mitigating the environmental impact of waste disposal and preserving valuable natural resources. The primary goal is to collect data that supports the diversion of recyclable materials away from landfills and facilitates their secure export to international markets.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
27% of total diversion rate of recyclables					
Rarotonga 5% (plastic only)	Recycled: 725.71 ton Plastic: 69.78 ton Tin: 33.01 ton Aluminium cans: 12.85 ton Glass: 610.07 ton General Waste: 1947.5 ton			>2% annual increase or consecutive years of increase	

Source: ICI-Waste Management Division

Comments on methodology

The information for this indicator is provided by Infrastructure Cook Islands (ICI). The recycling diversion rate is measured by the weight of recycling divided by the total waste generated and converting this to a percentage (dividing by 100) (Recycled/Total Waste X100).

Analysis

To achieve our goal of 'zero waste' and ensure the preservation of our environment, it is essential to prioritise recycling as a fundamental aspect of our strategy. By promoting and supporting responsible recycling initiatives, we can enhance the sustainability of our society and culture as a whole. This indicator specifically examines the annual amount of waste that undergoes recycling.

The Cook Islands face numerous challenges concerning solid waste management. Given their size and isolation, disposing of rubbish imposes significant environmental and financial costs, necessitating a focus on reducing the amount of solid waste sent to landfills.

Figure 3 depicts the results, indicating that on the island of Rarotonga, 27.15% of waste is currently being recycled. However, a substantial 73% consists of other waste, primarily comprising general household waste, including organic materials.

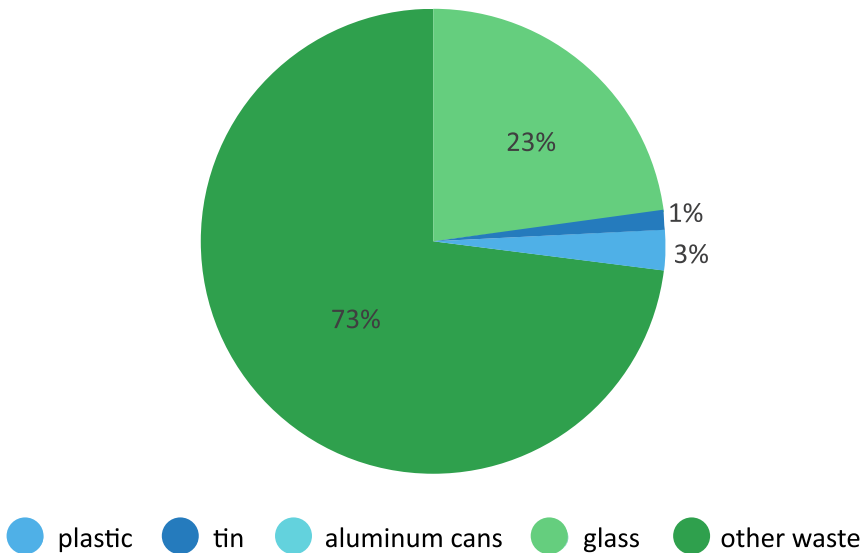


FIGURE 3 Waste Percentage Breakdown Chart. *Source: ICI*

The National Environment Services (NES) in collaboration with Pa Enua Environment officers is actively involved in collecting data and providing guidance to Island Councils regarding the segregation and proper management of recyclable waste. NES is spearheading ongoing survey programs in the Pa Enua region to assess the scope and magnitude of the waste management issue. Extensive surveys have already been conducted in Mangaia, Mitiaro, and Manihiki, generating valuable data for future reference. Additionally, detailed surveys have been completed in Mangaia, Mitiaro, and Manihiki, contributing to data collection for upcoming years (refer to Indicator 4.2).

It is important to note that the Cook Islands National Solid Waste Management Strategy 2013–2016 is currently undergoing a review process, as recognised by NSDA2020+.

The assessment of this indicator reveals “**of concern**” for Rarotonga, where a roadside recycling system is in place, and “**of concern and highlights the need for attention**” in the Pa Enua region, where no established recycling systems are currently in operation.


INDICATOR 4.2

Percentage of hazardous waste accounted for and managed

Introduction

This indicator measures how effectively hazardous waste is managed and disposed of. This recognises the risk that hazardous waste poses to human health and the natural environment. The percentage of hazardous waste that is accounted for and managed varies by country and region. Effective management of hazardous waste involves identifying, tracking, and safely disposing of these materials to prevent harm to human health and the environment. Improving the accountability and management of hazardous waste is critical for promoting sustainable development and protecting public health.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2017	2021				
2,303 E-waste items	N/A			100% disposal of all ODS (HCFC) off island by 2031	

Comments on methodology

No comments on methodology.

Analysis

Hazardous waste represents an extreme risk to our health and the environment, as currently there are few facilities or mechanisms that address this issue. Although no updated data was received for this indicator there are however, programs that are in place to capture, store, and export hazardous wastes, including electronics e-waste (computers, monitors, other electrical appliances), used batteries (lead acid and dry cell batteries) and used oil. Where materials are captured, they are stored until there is sufficient quantity for export. Consolidated materials are stored as follows:

- Electronic waste container at Rarotonga Waste Facility
- Electronic waste collected and stored at General Transport awaiting export
- Whiteware collected and stored at General Transport awaiting export

NES has initiated a waste survey in the Pa Enua to assess the quantity of waste in key categories, including:

- End-of-Life vehicles or parts
- Whiteware waste
- E-Waste

The following provisional estimates are derived from actual surveys conducted in Mitiaro, Mangaia and Manihiki, and are extrapolated to estimate waste on other islands based on population data from the Cook Islands Census 2016.

TABLE 13 Island Recycling Comparison. *Source: NES*

Mitiaro + Mangaia + Manihiki Combined Survey			Est. weight (kg)		Total Pa Enua bulky waste items estimated by population ratio								Pop. ratio
Vehicles	kg	Bulky waste items			Aitutaki	Nassau	Palmerston	Penrhyn	Pukapuka	Rakahanga	Atiu	Mauke	
Car	1857	8	15,413	42	19	1	1	2	4	1	4	3	
Bike	115	99	11,385	506	222	9	7	26	51	9	50	34	
Truck	2800	40	112,000	204	90	4	3	10	21	4	20	14	
Tires	9	35	322	179	78	3	2	9	18	3	18	12	
Batteries	10	82	845	419	184	7	5	21	42	8	41	28	
Tractor	2400	3	7,200	15	7	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	
Agricultural Implements	50	50	350	36	16	1	0	2	4	1	4	2	
Junk or parts	50	40	2,000	204	90	4	3	10	21	4	20	14	
Total Vehicles		314	149,515	1607	704	28	21	82	161	30	158	108	
Whiteware													
Fridge or Freezer	130	35	4550	179	78	3	2	9	18	3	18	12	
Washing Machine	75	15	1125	77	34	1	1	4	1	1	1	5	
Oven Cooktops	80	11	880	56	25	1	1	3	6	1	6	4	
Dishwasher	50	1	50	5	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	
Microwave	10	4	40	20	9	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	
Other Whiteware	10	1	10	5	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	
Total Whiteware		67	6655	343	150	6	4	17	34	6	34	23	
E-waste													
Computers	4	2	8	10	4	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	
Radio or speakers	5	5	25	26	11	0	0	1	3	0	3	2	
IVs	15	14	210	72	31	1	1	4	7	1	7	5	
Air Conditioner	40	1	40	5	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	
Printer	6	1	6	5	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	
Lamps	4	2	8	10	4	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	
Other waste	3	4	12	20	9	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	
Total E-waste		29	309	148	65	3	2	8	15	3	15	10	
GRAND TOTAL		410	156,478	2097									

NSDA2020+ understands Government has identified several legislative activities in the pipeline concerning hazardous waste. These activities include:

- **Passage of the Solid and Hazardous Waste Bill.**

This proposed legislation aims to establish a dedicated framework for the management of solid and hazardous waste. Its purpose is to support the implementation of commitments made under multilateral environmental agreements.

- **Development of an Advance Recovery and Disposal Fee (ARDF) scheme.**

This scheme involves the collection of fees for a variety of products, including vehicles, electronics, and single-use packaging. The implementation of this scheme will be facilitated through the Solid and Hazardous Waste Bill.

This indicator plays a crucial role in closely monitoring, effectively managing, and safely disposing of hazardous waste. ICI-Waste Management has incorporated data collection efforts for the upcoming reporting year.

The status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern**”, indicating the importance of addressing and improving hazardous waste management practices.



GOAL 5

Water and sanitation

25 Year Target of Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

This goal acknowledges the importance of sustainable water and sanitation management in safeguarding the well-being of individuals, the environment, and the economy. The results for Goal 5 indicator indicate that progress towards achieving the goal is deemed “**of concern with signs of improvement**”. Insights gathered from the Census 2021 reveal a rise in the number of properties utilising sanitation systems in Rarotonga and Aitutaki, along with improved access to water. However, it is worth noting that there are limitations in the available data concerning the quality of drinking water in Rarotonga and Pa Enua regions.

Water and sanitation are essential for human health and wellbeing, economic development, and environmental sustainability. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities is crucial for preventing the spread of waterborne diseases and improving hygiene practices. This, in turn, can lead to improved educational outcomes and economic opportunities. Water scarcity and pollution are also major environmental challenges that can have wide-ranging impacts on ecosystems and economies. Sustainable management of water resources and sanitation infrastructure requires collaboration and investment across multiple sectors and stakeholders. By prioritising water and sanitation, we can promote a healthier and more sustainable future for all.




INDICATOR 5.1

Percentage of population with access to sufficient and safe water in their homes


Introduction

This indicator looks at Cook Islanders' access to sufficient and safe water in their homes.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				
% of dwellings on Rarotonga with piped supply to inside	90.8%	93%			>85%	
Inhabited islands outside Rarotonga with less than 50% of dwellings with piped water to inside	98.5% in Northern group with water tanks 87.2% in Southern group with water tanks 50% on Rarotonga with water tanks 58% of all tank water users have piped water to inside their homes	97% 77%				

Source: Census 2021, 2016

% of water quality	63% (community) 61% (schools) *note this is for Rarotonga only	N/A			< 10% <i>E.coli</i>	
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Source: TMO

Comments on methodology

NSDA2020+ consider this as a fundamental right and basic human need that is of the highest priority. This commitment is evident through the country's recent substantial investments in water infrastructure. In cases where centralised water systems are not available, the measurement of water tanks for rainwater harvesting will be utilised.

The information for this indicator is collected from the following:

- **Access** – Census information is used to identify the percentage of dwelling that have water piped tank to the indoors (from public water main and/or own water).
- **Quality** – To Tatou Vai (TTV) water testing at water stations is used. On Rarotonga water quality is tested at the first pipe from the water intake, and the water stations, for compliance with WHO standards. Testing in the Pa Enea is ad hoc.

Analysis

ACCESS TO WATER

According to the Census 2021, the main source of water supply for 85.2% of households in the Cook Islands is connected to the public water mains. In particular, over 90% of households in Rarotonga receive water directly from the public water main. To compile the following table, data from the Census 2016 and 2021 has been utilised.

TABLE 14 Percentage of dwellings with access to water. *Source: Census*

Location	% of dwellings with supply from public water main piped to inside		% of dwellings with supply from own water tank piped to inside or outside	
	Census 2016	Census 2021	Census 2016	Census 2021
Rarotonga	90.8%	93.3%	53.1%	43%
Southern Islands	81.1%	77.4%	87.2%	68.9%
Northern Islands	1.1%	3.5%	98.4%	97.6%
Cook Islands	83.4%	85.2%	63%	51.2%

The results indicate a slight increase in the number of dwellings utilising the public water mains compared to those relying on water tanks. The status and trend for this aspect of the indicator show that it is “**on track, and continuing to improve**” for Rarotonga, while it is “**on track**” for the Pa Enea. The Census 2021 has witnessed improvements in access to water, with a slight rise in the use of the main public water mains. However, there has been a significant decrease in the piping of water from tanks to inside homes.

QUALITY OF DRINKING WATER

According to the Census 2021, the main source of drinking water for households varied. Water stations accounted for 39.9%, while 21.5% reported having their own filtered water piped into their dwellings. On Rarotonga, filtered tap water, bottled water, or purchased water were more commonly used, whereas in the Pa Enua, households heavily relied on rainwater as their primary source of drinking water.

The implementation of the Te Mato Vai project provides the opportunity to improve the provision of drinking water on Rarotonga. Furthermore, the establishment of the To Tatou Vai (TTV) authority ensures regular monitoring and quality control of water supplies. TTV manages the 18 ultraviolet (UV) water stations on Rarotonga, which undergo weekly servicing and testing. The TMO oversees surveillance and testing, focusing on compliance and overall quality assurance for the public.

At the time of this report, the status of E. coli was unknown. It is expected that the TMO will provide an update on this matter in the next report.

The status and trend for the access to water component of this indicator indicate that it is “**on track and continuing to improve**”. However, when it comes to the quality of water, there are elements “**of concern**” that need to be addressed.


INDICATOR 5.2

Percentage of properties using sanitation systems that meet approved standards

Introduction

This indicator looks at the proportion of the properties (both commercial and residential) that are using approved sanitation systems as per TMO Regulations.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2017	2021				
Rarotonga	20.7%	35%			Based on total pop of CI minus the % of HH and sanitation who have access to sanitation facilities	
Aitutaki	N/A	11%				

Source: Census 2021

Comments on methodology

The information for this indicator is collected from the Census 2021 and TMO advice.

Analysis

According to Census data, nearly 100% of households in the Cook Islands have flush or composting toilets, with 90.2% of them located inside the dwellings. This indicates a level of improvement in achieving access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene throughout the country. However, compliance with the Public Health (sewage and wastewater treatment and disposal) Regulations 2014, which specifically apply to Rarotonga and Aitutaki, shows room for improvement. As reported by TMO for the 2021 calendar year, compliance rates are as follows:

Rarotonga 35% compliance

Aitutaki 11% compliance

All other Pa Enua islands, except for Aitutaki, are compliant based on the basic flush toilet standards.

The increased density of development has led to inadequate sanitation systems, posing significant threats to the environment, economy, and public health. It should be noted that the sewage and sanitation regulations apply only to Rarotonga and Aitutaki, and different standards exist for commercial and private dwellings.

The status of this indicator is “**of concern with signs of improvement**”. Efforts are needed to ensure better compliance and address the environmental and health risks associated with inadequate sanitation systems.



GOAL 6

Connecting our nation through infrastructure, transport and ICT

25 Year Target of Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

This goal acknowledges the importance of adequate infrastructure, transportation, and access to information and communications technology (ICT) in enhancing the standard of living, providing essential services, and fostering economic growth and security. The results for Goal 6 indicators indicate that progress in this aspect of Goal 6 is deemed “**of concern with signs of improvement**”. However, no conclusions can be drawn for Indicators 6.2, 6.4, and 6.5 as they have not been reported on. It is anticipated that the data for these indicators will be available in the next iteration, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the progress in these areas.

Connecting our nation through infrastructure, transport, and ICT is essential for creating a more efficient, productive, and prosperous society. A well-connected country enables people to travel and access goods and services with greater ease, making it easier to conduct business and participate in social activities. Additionally, reliable and high-speed internet connectivity has become crucial for education, innovation, and communication. Infrastructure investments can also create jobs and stimulate economic growth, as well as improve the overall quality of life for citizens. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and digital, investing in infrastructure, transport, and ICT will become even more critical for keeping our economy competitive and ensuring our society’s well-being.



INDICATOR 6.1

Connectivity index


Introduction

This indicator measures the following connectivity:

- Broadband connectivity
- Mobile connectivity
- Radio access
- Television access
- Satellite/emergency phone access

Connectivity refers to the state of being connected, either physically or virtually, to a network or system. In today's world, connectivity is essential for communication, collaboration, and access to information. It enables people to connect with each other and with technology, driving innovation, productivity, and growth.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				
Broadband	7.2%	59.7%			<5%	
Mobile		90%				
Radio		57.6%				
TV		87.1%				
Satellite		1x per island				

Source: Census 2021

Comments on methodology

The information for this indicator is collected from the Census 2021 and EMCI.

Analysis

All inhabited islands in the Cook Islands have access to broadband services, ensuring connectivity for residents, businesses, and visitors. There are a total of 630 Wi-Fi hotspots across the country, further enhancing accessibility to information technology and communication services. The following table, derived from the Census 2021 report, illustrates the extent of accessibility to these technologies in the Cook Islands.

TABLE 15 Percentage of dwellings with access to mobile, broadband/internet, radio and TV *Source: Census*

Region	Access to mobile		Access to broadband/internet		Access to radio		Access to TV	
	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021
Rarotonga	77.2%	94.3%	80.2%	61.7%	66.7%	42.6%	89.1%	65.8%
Southern	17.4%	84.6%	15.3%	53.5%	13.7	12%	21.8%	17.3%
Northern	5.2%	85.3%	4.3%	55.65	3.6%	2.8%	5.8%	3.9%

It is evident that there has been a significant increase in cellphone usage in 2021 compared to 2016 across all regions. Additionally, internet access has notably improved in the southern and northern regions. However, there has been a decline in internet services, radio access, and access to television for all three regions, particularly in Rarotonga. NSDA2020+ can speculate that this may be due to the increased reliance on cellphones, which provide internet access and the ability to stream content from platforms like Netflix, offering a wide range of movies and TV shows.

To support communications in the Pa Enua for disaster risk reduction and capacity development, EMCI (Emergency Management Cook Islands) has provided various resources and trainings to the DRM (Disaster Risk Management) Councils. These include:

- Provision of 2 VHF radios per island.
- Provision of 1 satellite phone and conducting several Zoom trainings on its usage.
- Implementation of the VEOCI (Virtual Emergency Operations Center Interface) communications system, which disseminates emergency messages via emails, Messenger, text, and mobile updates to key stakeholders.

The status of this indicator is considered **“on track and continues to improve”**, reflecting positive progress in terms of communications accessibility and infrastructure.

INDICATOR 6.2

Percentage of national infrastructure that are fit for purpose

Introduction

This indicator focuses on evaluating the provision of essential and suitable infrastructure and public buildings for the entire population. The extent to which national infrastructure meets the necessary standards can vary significantly across countries and sectors. Outdated or inadequate infrastructure often gives rise to problems like congestion, power failures, and insufficient public services. Enhancing infrastructure is a crucial responsibility for governments as it ensures sustainable economic growth and promotes the overall welfare of their citizens.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
AssetFinda established	N/A			75%	

Source: Public Asset Register (CIIC)

Comments on methodology

The intended source for this indicator is the Public Asset Register, but it is currently unavailable. Moving forward, it is necessary to establish clear criteria for assessing the types of national infrastructure and public buildings that will be included in the evaluation. Furthermore, there is a need to define the parameters for determining whether the infrastructure is considered 'fit for purpose'. These clarifications will ensure a comprehensive and accurate assessment of national infrastructure and public buildings in future reporting.

Analysis

Currently, data for this indicator is not accessible, but it is expected to be available in the next indicator report. The assessment of this indicator is categorised as “**of concern**”, highlighting the importance of monitoring and addressing any issues that may arise in relation to the fitness and adequacy of our infrastructure.




INDICATOR 6.3

Transport Connectivity Index

Introduction

This indicator assesses the frequency of domestic shipping and air services to the Pa Enua. This is used to assess the extent to which there is adequate transport between the islands.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				
Domestic flights (average inward flights/week)	Southern group Aitutaki: 36.5 Atiu: 7.25 Mangaia: 7.3 Mauke: 4.1 Mitiaro: 2.65				3 flights per week	
	Northern group Manihiki: 0.5 Penryhn: 0.2 Pukapuka: 0.2				0.5 flights per week	
Domestic shipping trips	Southern group: 88 Northern group: 40	Southern Group: 46 Northern group: 96			>11 per island >11 per island	

Source: Ministry of Transport (MOT)

Comments on methodology

The Ministry of Transport (MOT) supplied information from their database, revealing the number of domestic flights and shipping services from the various aerodromes for 2021.

Analysis

AIR TRANSPORT

The following table provides the statistics on the count of domestic flights between the Pa Enua and other locations in both the 2019 and 2021 calendar years.

TABLE 16 Average number of domestic flights per week to Pa Enua *Source: MOT*

	AVERAGE INWARD FLIGHTS PER WEEK			
To Aerodrome	From Rarotonga	From all islands	From Rarotonga	From all islands
	2019		2021	
Southern group				
Aitutaki	36.5	38	14.3	9.9
Atiu	7.25	6.3	9.6	6.2
Mangaia	7.3	7.3	10.9	12.1
Mauke	4.1	4.5	8.3	4.1
Mitiaro	2.65	2.2	5.5	3.7
Northern group				
Manihiki	0.48	0.1	1.7	1.5
Penryhn	0.2	0.08	1.5	1.2
Pukapuka	0.2	0.2	1.2	1.6

Despite the impacts of Covid-19, there has been an increase in the number of flights to and from the Pa Enua. This indicates positive progress in the accessibility and availability of air transport services. Therefore, the status of this indicator is considered “**on track and continues to improve**”.

SHIPPING

The graph presented below illustrates the average number of domestic shipping trips made to the southern and northern groups between the years 2019 and 2021. Upon comparing the results with the trend line, it is observed that there is relatively little variation, indicating a consistent number of voyages over time. However, there is a notable peak in 2017, where the number of voyages to both groups increased. This spike can be attributed to subsidies and national celebrations, which influenced the demand for shipping services during that period.

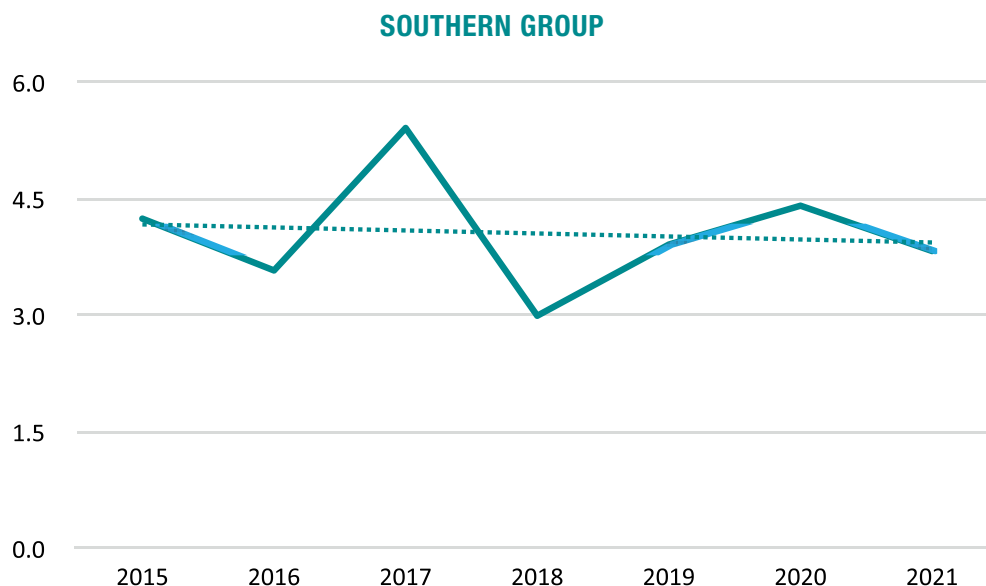


FIGURE 4 Average number of domestic trips to the Southern Pa Enua 2015–2021 *Source: MOT*

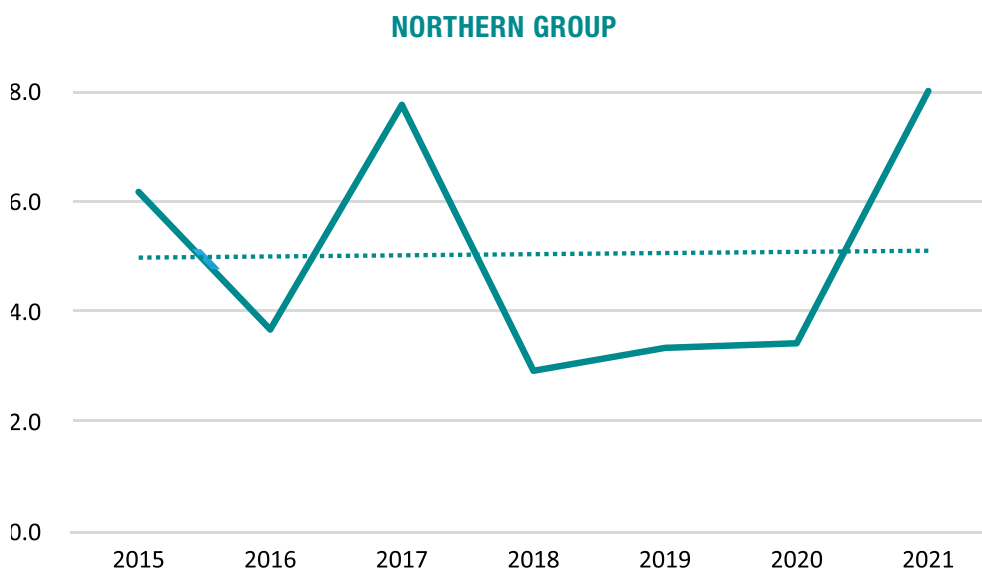


FIGURE 5 Average number of domestic trips to Northern Pa Enua 2015–2021 *Source: MOT*

The status for the shipping component of this indicator is therefore assessed as **“on track”**.


INDICATOR 6.4

Access to official Government data and information

Introduction

This indicator focuses on the accessibility of published information within the government. The establishment of an e-portal has been proposed as a means to improve access to information, and its progress will require ongoing monitoring. Access to information is crucial in enabling an informed public and ensuring equitable access to justice.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
N/A	N/A			100% official publications accessible digitally	

Comments on methodology

The required data for this indicator is currently unavailable. In order to determine the specific type of data and information that will be measured, the government data and information will need to be clearly defined. OPM will be responsible for determining this for future reporting. Currently, there is no centralised repository, and each agency manages access to their respective official publications.

Analysis

This indicator has not been reported on for Year One. Therefore the status of this indicator is assessed as “of concern”.

INDICATOR 6.5

National infrastructure completed and maintained

Air and sea ports, roads, bridges and drainage, telecommunications cables

Introduction

This indicator assesses physical access facilitated by infrastructure, which plays a crucial role in enabling people to access various services essential for development. The status of “**Completed**” indicates that the infrastructure projects were finished within the designated timeframe.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				
Airports	N/A					
Seaports						
Roads						
Bridges						
Drainage						
Telecommunications		Almost 100% of private households				



Source: CIIC, Census

Comments on methodology

The Public Asset Register, which is the intended source for this indicator, is currently unavailable. In future reporting, it will be necessary to provide clarification regarding the specific types of national infrastructure and public buildings that will be assessed. Additionally, there is a need to establish clear criteria for determining whether these infrastructure and buildings are deemed “**fit for purpose**”. This will ensure accurate and consistent reporting in the future.

Analysis

Information regarding the infrastructure component of this indicator is currently unavailable, but it is anticipated to be included in the next indicator report. However, in terms of telecommunications, the Census 2021 report reveals that nearly 100% of private households in the Cook Islands have access to some form of communication system, with only 2.3% of households reporting no access at all. Communications data is also reported under indicator 6.1.

Avaroa Cable Limited (ACL), a Cook Islands limited liability company, was established to manage and operate the Manatua Cable project, which is a fiber optic submarine cable spanning 3,600km. The cable connects Apia in Samoa, Niue, Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Tahiti, and Bora Bora. It was deployed between 2019 and 2020. The Manatua Cable has state-of-the-art fiber optical communications technology, allowing it to operate at speeds of up to 10 terabits per second on each fiber pair. This high-speed broadband capability will facilitate faster connections and support the growth of our digital technology and knowledge economy.

Although there are positive developments in telecommunications, this indicator is still assessed as “**of concern**”.



GOAL 7

Health and healthy lifestyles

25 Year Target of NCD Reduction and Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

This goal focuses on promoting healthy lifestyles by assessing healthcare services, the overall health of Cook Islanders, and their engagement in exercise and sports. The results for the goal 7 indicators show mixed progress, with the overall status reported as “**of concern**”. Premature deaths from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are “**off track with signs of regression**”. Health spending is also a concern and continues to regress. Limited data on the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STIs) and youth engagement is also a concern. The mental health index is a concern, but there are signs of improvement, and average life expectancy is on track and continues to improve.

Health and healthy lifestyles are essential for living a fulfilling life. Good health allows individuals to be productive and active, participate in daily activities and maintain social relationships. Additionally, healthy habits such as regular exercise, proper nutrition, and adequate sleep can reduce the risk of chronic diseases and improve overall wellbeing. Adopting healthy behaviors can also positively impact mental health, reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. Health is a fundamental human right, and promoting healthy lifestyles is critical for preventing illness, reducing healthcare costs, and improving quality of life. Governments, communities, and individuals must work together to create environments that support and encourage healthy living habits.

In 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic had economic and social impacts on the Cook Islands. It provided an opportunity for infrastructure upgrades within the TMO. Additionally, decentralisation of health services took place, establishing ten local Puna clinics and relocating the Outpatients Emergency Department from Rarotonga Hospital to the Tupapa clinic. These local clinics provided accessible primary healthcare services within villages, with nurse’s onsite and doctors rotating between them. Telemedicine was introduced during this period, allowing patients to receive consultations over the phone and request medication refills and essential healthcare. Health specialist visits were suspended in 2020 due to border restrictions, but international medical referrals continued.

INDICATOR 7.1


Rate of premature deaths from non-communicable diseases

Introduction

This indicator measures the rate of premature deaths from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and monitors the rate of annual change, with the intent to reduce this rate over time.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are responsible for a high rate of premature deaths globally. NCDs include conditions such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases. Risk factors for these diseases include unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and alcohol consumption. Addressing these risk factors through prevention and management can significantly reduce premature deaths from NCDs.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2020				
76.34%	85.12%			>3% annual decrease or consecutive years of decrease	

Source: TMO health bulletin 2019/2020

Comments on methodology

The data for this indicator is sourced from the National Health Information Bulletin published annually. TMO defines premature deaths to NCDs as ‘deaths that occur between the ages of 30–69 years’.

Analysis

NCDs pose the greatest health challenge in our country, with high rates of heart disease, diabetes, and other lifestyle-related illnesses affecting the lives of many Cook Islanders each year. This not only impacts the well-being of individuals but also places a significant strain on our healthcare system. On average, over the past four years, 25% of deaths have been attributed to premature NCD-related causes.

The following figure illustrates the trend in premature deaths caused by NCDs from 2016 to 2020. It is worth noting a decline in these numbers since 2018, although they still accounted for 69% of all deaths in 2020.

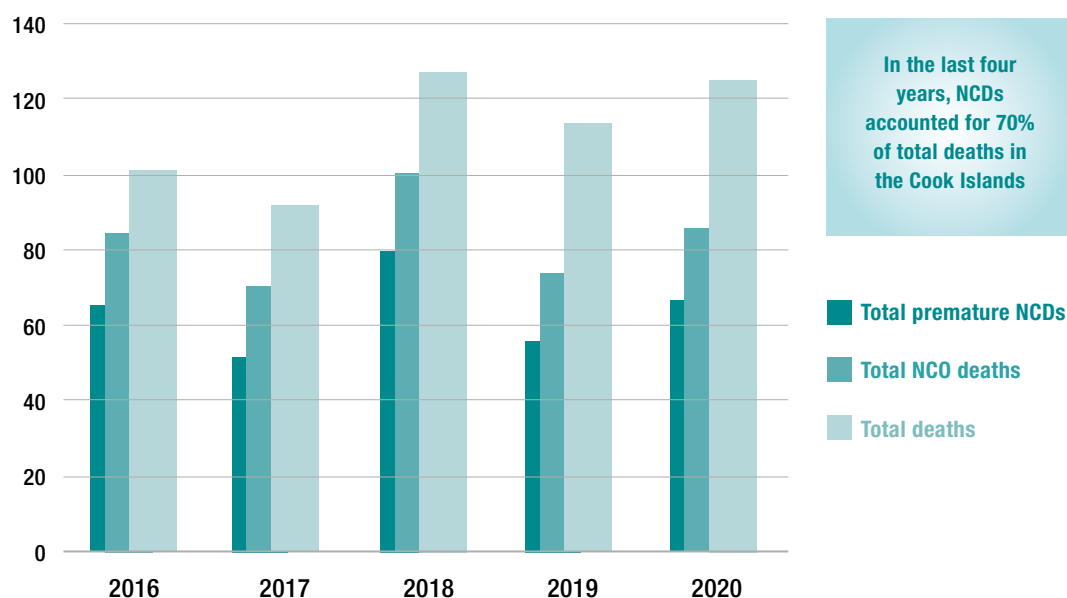


FIGURE 6 Premature deaths from NCDs 2016–2020. *Source: TMO*

Heart diseases are the primary cause of NCD-related deaths in our country, followed by cancer and diabetes. It is crucial to address both the prevention and treatment aspects of these conditions. However, it is important to note that the impact of health interventions and measures can only be observed over extended periods of time, as health outcomes take time to manifest.

Unfortunately, the current status of this indicator has been assessed as **“off track”**, indicating a regression in progress. This underscores the need for intensified efforts and targeted strategies to address NCDs and improve health outcomes in our population.

INDICATOR 7.2

Health spending as a percentage of Government expenditure

Introduction

This indicator looks at how much Government spends on health. As our health system is almost exclusively publicly funded, the amount of the Government spend is crucial for improving the health of our people. Adequate health spending is crucial for ensuring access to quality healthcare services and promoting public health. It is also essential for achieving universal health coverage and reducing health disparities.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019/20	2020/21				
14.8% NZD 17.5M	10.2% NZD 18.5M			>15%	

Source: Budget books

Comments on methodology

This indicator is calculated by taking the TMO annual budget appropriations as a percentage of the gross total appropriations of the local budget. Funding from external sources, including development partners, is not included in this calculation but their contribution is mentioned in the analysis.

Analysis

During the fiscal year 2020/21, the government allocated a consistent level of funding to the TMO, with a slight budget increase of \$1.5 million. This additional funding aimed to support TMO's operations and enhance its capacity to meet the growing healthcare needs of the population.

In addition to the government appropriation, TMO received an additional funding of \$600,000, which was specifically dedicated to hiring critical personnel. This investment was crucial in expanding the Ministry's workforce and strengthening its ability to deliver essential healthcare services.

Furthermore, the Pharmaceuticals administered fund also experienced a boost of \$300,000. This increase aimed to ensure an adequate supply of medicines and medical consumables, supporting the provision of quality healthcare to the community.

However, despite these funding efforts, the status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern and regressing**”. This assessment highlights the need for continued attention and strategic interventions to address the challenges and ensure sustainable progress in the healthcare sector.

INDICATOR 7.3


Prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

Introduction

This indicator measures the percentage of tests annually that come back positive for a sexually transmitted infections (STI).

The prevalence of STIs is a significant public health concern globally. STIs include conditions such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV/AIDS. Factors contributing to the spread of STIs include unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners, and inadequate access to prevention and treatment services. Raising awareness about STIs and promoting safe sex practices is essential for reducing their prevalence.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
13%	N/A			>–2.5% annual decrease or consecutive years of decrease	

Source: TMO health bulletin 2019/2020

Comments on methodology

The information for this indicator is sourced from the TMO health bulletin for the year 2019/2020. It is important to note that no data is available for the year 2021.

STIs have emerged as a significant health concern in the Cook Islands. Reducing the prevalence of STIs is a top priority for the TMO as it indicates safer sexual practices, improved sexual health, and higher fertility rates within the population. Efforts to address and combat STIs are essential for promoting overall well-being and reproductive health in the Cook Islands.

Analysis

According to the TMO, there has been a consistently high number of laboratory-confirmed cases of STIs in the Cook Islands over the past five years. The prevalence of chlamydia remains a significant concern, with a startling 90% increase in diagnosed cases since 2016, as illustrated in Figure 7. Additionally, there has been an increase in gonorrhea cases by 63%, with Hepatitis B and syphilis also showing elevated rates. These trends highlight the urgent need for comprehensive measures to address and combat the spread of STIs in the Cook Islands.

72

41

38

48

149

187

158

24

◀ TOTAL NUMBER NEW CASES

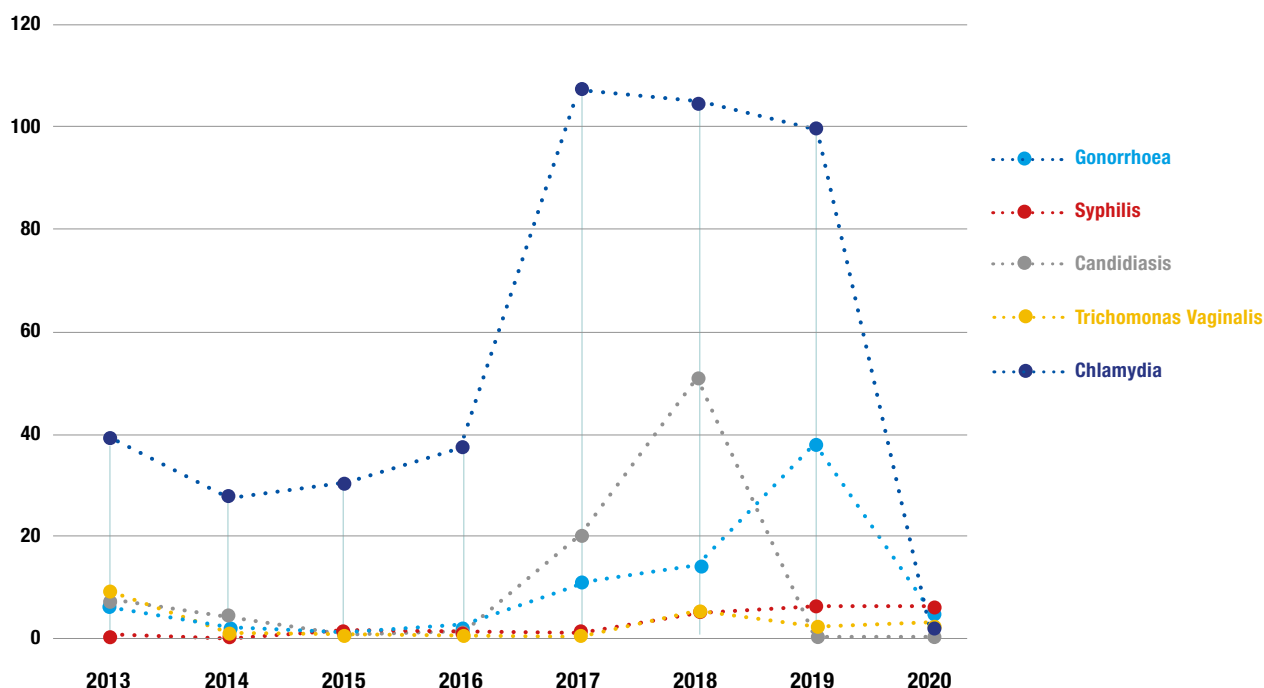


FIGURE 7 Top five STI laboratory confirmed cases, 2013–2020. *Source: TMO*

The incidence of STIs in 2020 is reported to be lower compared to the previous three years, with 1.6 cases per 1,000 population. However, it is important to note that the lack of laboratory data for this period may have affected the accuracy of this figure.

In 2020, TMO implemented empiric therapy for chlamydia, which involved treating all patients with symptoms consistent with chlamydia without initially conducting testing. This approach was chosen due to the high incidence of chlamydia and limited resources for testing consumables.

Although there is no available laboratory-confirmed data for chlamydia, the total number of individuals treated using empiric therapy provides some insight into the chlamydia situation during this period. A total of 86 prescriptions of azithromycin tablets were issued for chlamydia empiric therapy in 2020, indicating that approximately 86 individuals were treated for chlamydia.

Overall, the status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern**”, indicating the need for continued attention and efforts to address the prevalence of STIs in the Cook Islands.


INDICATOR 7.4

Youth engagement in physical activity and sports

Introduction

This indicator assesses the level of engagement in exercise, sports, and other physical activities among young people. It recognises the importance of establishing healthy lifestyle habits from an early age. Measuring the frequency of physical activity participation among children, young people, and adults on a daily and weekly basis is crucial. TMO recommends that adults aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day, while young people are advised to engage in an hour of activity per day. By monitoring the extent of participation in physical activities, we can gain insights into the overall well-being and health habits of individuals at different stages of life.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2016	2021				
36% were active for ≥60 mins /day on 5+ days over 7 days (13–18yrs)	N/A			≥4 hrs per week average participation	

Source: TMO

Comments on methodology

The data required for this indicator is currently unavailable. TMO is the intended source for this information, which is based on the recommendation of at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity. In order to enhance future reporting, it is necessary to establish clear guidelines on how this data will be captured and monitored. By defining the methodology and processes for data collection, we can ensure accurate and consistent measurement of physical activity levels. This will enable us to track progress and make informed decisions to promote and support healthy lifestyles.

Analysis

This indicator has not been reported on for Year One therefore assessed as “**of concern**”.

INDICATOR 7.5

Average life expectancy

Introduction

This indicator measures life expectancy at birth, which represents the average number of years a newborn can expect to live under prevailing mortality conditions.

Average life expectancy serves as a measure of the typical lifespan for individuals and is influenced by various demographic factors, including gender, geographical location, and historical patterns. It reflects the impact of factors such as healthcare accessibility, sanitation practices, educational opportunities, and personal lifestyle choices.

Life expectancy is an essential indicator for assessing the overall well-being and health outcomes of a population. By monitoring changes in life expectancy over time, we can gain insights into the effectiveness of healthcare systems, societal improvements, and public health interventions.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019/20	2021				
Male 82 Female 86	N/A			>6 months increase or consecutive years of increase	

Source: Annual National Health Information Bulletin: TMO

Comments on methodology

This measure of life expectancy is derived from life tables, utilising current age-specific death rates within a specific population. It is calculated separately for males and females. The progress of this indicator is tracked through annual assessments conducted by TMO, and the findings are published in the annual National Health Information Bulletin. These assessments analyze changes in life expectancy at birth, providing valuable insights into the health and well-being of the population.

Analysis

From 2019 to 2020, there was a notable increase in life expectancy at birth, reaching 82 years for males and 86 years for females. These upward trends in life expectancy are positive outcomes and have surpassed the desired benchmarks set by TMO. It is important to acknowledge that despite the burden of NCDs, the extended life expectancy provides individuals with more time for interventions and control measures. This suggests that efforts to address NCDs have been effective in enhancing overall health outcomes. As a result, the status of this indicator has been evaluated as “**on track and improving**”.

INDICATOR 7.6


Mental Health Index

Introduction

This indicator measures the number of reported mental health cases in a year. In addition it looks at diagnosis, access to services and suspected suicide as a measure towards improving mental health care.

Mental health care is crucial for promoting overall health and wellbeing. Mental illnesses can have a significant impact on an individual's ability to function, work, and engage in daily activities. Access to quality mental health care services can help people manage their conditions and improve their quality of life. It is also essential for reducing stigma surrounding mental illness and promoting understanding and empathy towards those who struggle with mental health issues.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				
Number of people with mental health diagnosis in the past 12 months (moderate–severe mental illness)	5.7*	N/A				
Percentage of people accessing mental health services	0	N/A			Yet to be determined	
Suspected suicide or suicide per year		N/A				

* Per 100 population

Source: TMO health bulletin 2019/2020

Comments on methodology

According to TMO, accurate collection of mental health data has been challenging due to poor data entry practices. Furthermore, the absence of epidemiological studies makes it difficult to establish specific targets or make meaningful comparisons. The current indicators, which focus on slight increases or decreases, do not provide a comprehensive understanding of whether mental health services are effectively addressing the overall mental health situation. However, there is currently an ongoing epidemiological study for individuals aged 16 years and above, which will enable TMO to gather more robust data for service delivery and align with international WHO indicators.

To address these limitations, it is suggested to modify the indicators as follows:

1. Access to services: This indicator measures the percentage of people with mental health conditions who are utilising mental health services. The numerator represents the number of individuals accessing mental health services, and the denominator corresponds to the prevalence of mental health conditions determined through the epidemiological study. The target is to reduce the discrepancy between access and prevalence by 50% each year. This indicator can be further divided into subcategories:

1a. Severe mental health

1b. Common mental health

2. Suicidality mortality rate per 100,000: This indicator measures the rate of mortality due to suicidality per 100,000 population. The baseline target is to reduce this rate by 25% annually.

By incorporating these revised indicators, TMO aims to capture a more comprehensive view of mental health services, their accessibility, and the reduction of suicidality rates. These adjustments will enable better monitoring and evaluation of mental health outcomes in alignment with the ongoing epidemiological study and international WHO indicators.

Analysis

According to the TMO health bulletin, there has been a slight increase in the number of newly diagnosed mental health cases in the Cook Islands over the past two years (2019–2020). The incidence rate is reported as 5.7, which equates to approximately 6 cases per 1,000 population. Figure 8 illustrates the prevalence of mental and behavioural disorders within the past year, taking into account the service coverage of Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Atiu, and Rakahanga. It is noteworthy that males constitute the majority (55%) of the mental health population.

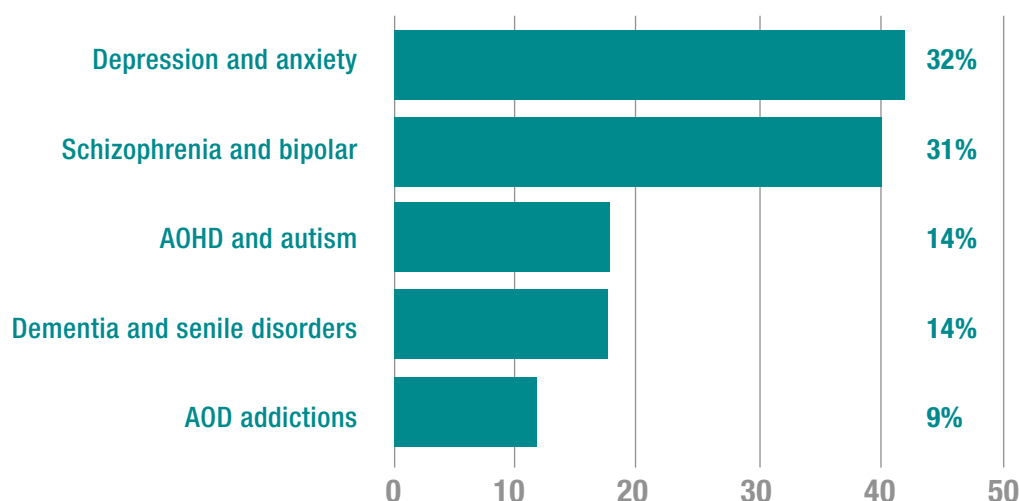


FIGURE 8 Number and proportion of mental and behavioural disorders 2019–2020. *Source: TMO*

Over the past five years, there has been an average annual admission of 36 patients due to mental health conditions. The highest number of admissions, 41, was recorded in the last two years, indicating a 36% increase since 2017. On average, approximately 11 inmates in Rarotonga Prison received long-term treatment for mental and behavioural disorders.

Regarding suicide, a total of 34 deaths resulting from intentional self-harm occurred over the past 15 years, averaging around two deaths per year. The majority of these cases were reported on the mainland of Rarotonga. Figure 9 displays the suicide rates per 100,000 population in the Cook Islands. The data reveals a relatively stable trend, with a peak of five deaths in 2018, followed by a decline to zero deaths the following year. Two deaths were recorded in 2020.

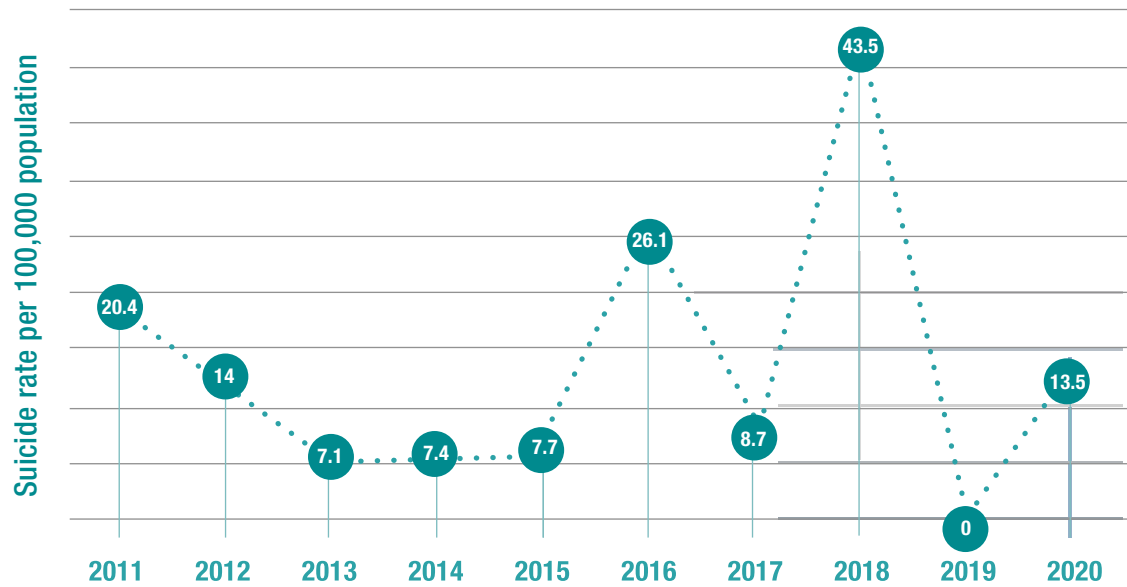


FIGURE 9 Suicide rate per 100,000 2011–2020. *Source: TMO*

The current status of this indicator has been evaluated as “**of concern with signs of improvement**”. However, it is important to note that the TMO has recommended changes to the methodology for the next indicator report in order to better align with the suggested targets. These changes, proposed by the TMO, aim to enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of the indicator in reflecting the desired outcomes. By implementing these adjustments, it is anticipated that the indicator will provide a clearer assessment of progress and ensure more meaningful monitoring of the target.



GOAL 8

Education and innovation

25 Year Target of Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

This goal seeks to improve education and innovation outcomes as this is the key to achieving sustainable development across all sectors. The results for the goal 8 indicators show that they are “**on track with positive progress**” towards the goal across all indicators.

Education and innovation are key drivers of economic and social development. Education provides individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the workforce and contribute to their communities. Innovation, on the other hand, is essential for creating new products, services, and processes that drive economic growth and improve people’s lives. Together, education and innovation can lead to breakthroughs in science, technology and other fields, addressing local and global challenges such as climate change, poverty, and inequality. Encouraging innovation and providing access to quality education is critical for creating a sustainable future and ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to reach their full potential.

INDICATOR 8.1

Cook Islands Māori literacy rates

Introduction

This indicator measures the Māori literacy rates of National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) level 1 students. With influences of modernity and globalisation (such as television and the internet) Cook Islands Māori languages have come under threat with less use of Māori in homes, in the community and especially among young people.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
86% (NCEA level 1)	88% (NCEA level 1)			≥70%	

Source: Education statistics: MOE

Comments on methodology

The NSDA2020+ suggests that the methodology for this indicator continues to look at the NCEA year 11 results which the Ministry of Education (MOE) collects for its annual educational statistics bulletin.

This information is sourced from the MOE Policy and Review Division. It is noted that Māori is a compulsory subject at primary level and early high school level, but becomes an elective choice at NCEA level 1.

Analysis

Māori literacy rates for Year 11 continue to track above target. It is noted during the NSDA2020+ consultations more emphasis is needed on Te Reo Māori.

Based on the year 11 results, the status of this indicator has been assessed as “**on track**”, with a positive trend.

INDICATOR 8.2

Number and participation rates of students in programmes available to school children to strengthen Māori language, culture and understanding

Introduction

This indicator looks at the rates of students involved in programmes strengthening Māori language, culture and understanding.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
N/A	100% of students participate (compulsory)			>2 hrs/week	

Source: MOE

Comments on methodology

Cook Islands Māori as a subject – focuses on language acquisition meaning. Reading, writing and speaking development and is a compulsory component of Education at ECE, primary and secondary level education. For this indicator it is noted the total number of student participation.

To capture the essence of learning and retaining Reo Māori and Peu Māori for future reporting, it is necessary to further refine this indicator. We should consider including specific targets related to language policy and program development in schools. These targets could encompass the following:

- The number of schools that have implemented a relevant and contextualised policy, clearly outlining the methodologies and approaches for teaching and learning Cook Islands Māori language.
- The number of programs or activities per school that actively promote the usage and application of Cook Islands Māori language.
- The percentage of students demonstrating proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing Cook Islands Māori language.
- The percentage of schools providing ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills in teaching Cook Islands Māori language.

Analysis

Cook Islands Māori subjects in schools focus on developing the language and literacy skills of students in reading, writing, and speaking Cook Islands Māori. This is achieved through a variety of experiences, ranging from foundational to advanced levels. Cultural activities are also incorporated to enrich the learning opportunities.

The current language policy supports the development of language policies and programs within schools, recognising both Cook Islands Māori as a first language and as a second language. As per the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education (MOE), all students are required to participate in Cook Islands Māori language and culture programs from Early Childhood Education (ECE) to Level 3. These guidelines are outlined in the Cook Islands Education Guidelines (CIEGS) and Cook Islands Administration Guidelines (CIAGS), as well as MOE policies, namely Te Peu e te Akono'anga Māori and Te Au Reo I roto I te Turanga Apii.

The number of Cook Islands Māori language and culture programs in schools varies, often dependent on their specific focus. The MOE Languages in Education policy acknowledges the differences between languages used and spoken in Rarotonga schools and Pa Enea. The policy allows schools, in consultation with and endorsed by their school committee, to choose a language of instruction model within the policy. The language of instruction can be either Cook Islands Māori or English and is determined by two factors: the language proficiency of the majority of enrolled students and the language preference of the school community.

Once a school has established its language of instruction, it determines the main curriculum document for planning and delivering learning outcomes. The language of instruction accommodates the full curriculum, including skills and out-of-classroom experiences. The second language, which is the language to be learned, is introduced at a designated transition point and is implemented as a subject with a separate curriculum. Over time, the second language is phased in and strengthened. This decision significantly shapes the school's approach to developing and strategically resourcing the Cook Islands Māori language program, which is crucial for sustainability and improvement.

For this indicator it has been assessed as “**on track**”.


INDICATOR 8.3

Literacy and numeracy rates of selected age groups at grade 4 (primary), NCEA level 1 (secondary) achievement

Introduction

This indicator looks at the rates of numeracy and literacy of young people in our school systems. The ability to read and write are basic skills that all members of society require to participate and interact with the world around them. We must ensure that all who leave the education system have these essential skills.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				
Literacy	90% (NCEA L1)	89% (NCEA L1) 47% (primary grade 4)			83%	
Numeracy	84% (NCEA L1)	84% (NCEA L1) 43% (grade 3)				

Source: Ministry of Education (MOE) Annual Statistics Report

Comments on methodology

Information for this indicator is based on primary level 4 or age 8 and NCEA level 1 or age 15 and are assessed against the annual targets set by MOE. Literacy for this indicator focuses on the English language. The data information is sourced from the published MOE Annual Statistics Report. The Cook Islands Māori literacy rate is assessed in indicator 8.1 Cook Island Māori literacy rates.

In the Cook Islands, NCEA achievement is focused on the results 'by enrolment' as it is a measure of the system as a whole and counts every child. NCEA by enrolment figures are based on cohort tracking and is a measure of the efficiency of the system and does not show all assessment results which would in fact increase each of the outcomes.

Target for grade 4 needs to be determined.

Analysis

NCEA Level 1 numeracy rates are seen as steady with literacy rates has a slight decrease compared with the previous year. These slight variations are not too concerning at this stage but overall achievement will continue to be tracked and supported through the Ministry of Education and advisory support. Both literacy and numeracy rates continue to track above their annual targets.

In addition, grade 4 (Primary level) is included into this indicator report. This will be the first entry therefore we should see trends from the next indicator going forward.

The status of this indicator has therefore been assessed as “**on track**”.


INDICATOR 8.4

Number and participation rates of students in programmes to support inclusive education and student wellbeing

Introduction

This indicator measures the number and participation rates of student programmes available to support inclusive education and student wellbeing. Inclusive education and student wellbeing recognises all student entitlement to a learning experience that respects diversity, enables participation, remove barriers and anticipates and considers a variety of learning needs and preferences leading to students feeling safe, valued and a sense of belonging.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
108 (inclusive education)	103 (inclusive education)				
N/A (Wellbeing)	294 (Wellbeing)				

Source: MOE Inclusive Education register, MOE Student Well-being register

Comments on methodology

The data for this indicator is derived from the MOE and captures the total number of students engaged in programs aimed at promoting inclusive education and student well-being. MOE serves as the primary source of information for this indicator.

Analysis

This indicator is a newly introduced measure as part of the NSDA2020+ initiative. CPPO will collaborate with the MOE to establish a target for this indicator in preparation for the next reporting cycle. Given its recent introduction, the status of this indicator is currently assessed as “on track”.

INDICATOR 8.5

Total national research funding and contribution to goal priorities

Introduction

This indicator looks at research funding allocated by government and the contribution it has to the NSDA2020+ goal priorities.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
N/A	NZD 140k				

Source: 2020/21 budget books

Comments on methodology

The data for this indicator is sourced from the annual budget books. CPPO OPM will be responsible for determining a specific target for this indicator.

Analysis

This budget provided under this indicator contributes to Te Puna Vai Marama – Cook Islands Centre for Research and the Centre of Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT) housed under University of the South Pacific (USP).

CEIT was established in May 2017 through a bilateral agreement between the Government of India and the Government of the Cook Islands. Its primary objective is to enhance IT development, education, and scholarship opportunities for citizens of the Cook Islands. The Centre is dedicated to providing high-quality advanced certified training and scholarships to local IT professionals.

The Centre of Research and Policy Studies was created to support the establishment and operations of research and policy studies at USP. MFEM administers the funding for both CEIT and the Cook Islands Centre for Research.

In terms of research in the Cook Islands, OPM-CPPO is responsible for managing the research register in the Cook Islands, which tracks the number of research applications received. In 2021, OPM-CPPO, in collaboration with Cook Islands National Research Committee, reviewed the existing National Research Policy and made amendments to improve it.

The revised policy has been divided into two documents: *Cook Islands Research Ethics: Guiding Principles for Research Involving Human Participants* (with notes on research involving animals) and *Guiding Principles for Research in the Cook Islands*. These documents were shared with the National Research Committee for feedback and recommendations. The final version will be completed and submitted to Cabinet for approval in 2022.

Due to the global and local impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, research applications were limited as border restrictions only allowed entry for Cook Islanders, permanent residents, and work permit holders. However, in 2021, research applications resumed, and research activities were conducted online or through local counterparts authorised to collect data on behalf of the principal investigator. The Cook Islands received a total of 14 research applications in 2021, originating from the Cook Islands, Australia, Belgium, New Zealand, the United States, and Tonga. The research topics covered various areas such as health, wellbeing, education, workforce development, environment, natural heritage, marine studies, social development, and tourism.

This indicator has been assessed as “**on track**”.


INDICATOR 8.6

Tertiary and vocational level completion data

Introduction

This indicator measures the percentage of the resident population that has tertiary and vocational qualifications. This is important to understanding the labour market skill sets available

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2016	2021				
	25.3% of the resident population	28.09% of the resident population			>40%	
Resident population	14,802	11,219				

Source: Census 2016 and 2021

Comments on methodology

The information for this indicator is sourced from the Census 2016 and 2021.

Analysis

According to the Census 2021, approximately 28.09% of the resident population in the Cook Islands holds some form of qualification, which shows a slight increase compared to the previous census.

Efforts to enhance education and qualifications continue through various initiatives. The Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute (CITI) offers a diverse range of programs in Rarotonga and the Pa Enua. These programs are accredited by the Cook Islands Academic Board and registered authorities, while some also carry accreditation from international bodies such as the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. This allows individuals to upskill and receive industry-relevant training.

USP also plays a significant role in providing tertiary education opportunities for those who study with the regional university whilst in country, through the Cook Islands campus.

Financial support to Cook Islanders to access formal tertiary education through the scholarships programme – Te Reinga Akataunga'anga has been in existence for a number of years, allowing many more Cook Islanders access to initial tertiary studies both domestically and abroad.

Status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern**” however there are signs of improvement.

INDICATOR 8.7

Total expenditure on innovation and technology

Introduction

This indicator measures education total expenditure on technology to support educational outcomes and technology.

Total expenditure on innovation and technology is a critical factor in the growth and development of economies. It includes investments in research and development, intellectual property, and technology adoption. Countries with higher levels of investment in these areas tend to have more innovative and competitive industries, leading to increased productivity and economic growth.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
3.7% (technology)	3.8% (technology)			>40%	
N/A (innovation)	N/A (innovation)				

Source: Budget books, MOE

Comments on methodology

The information for this indicator are based on total budget allocated for technology in comparison to MOE appropriation.

To effectively monitor the supportive infrastructure, for this indicator, we should consider various methods. For instance, we can examine asset registers and policies, as well as maintenance programs within the education system. Analyzing the flow of asset management will help determine how it contributes to and justifies the allocation of the budget for IT and innovation in education.

It's important to note that a budget indicator alone cannot fully measure the value of IT integration or the levels of innovation achieved. To gain a comprehensive understanding, we need to assess purposeful and meaningful developments in this field. We should seek to identify what is being developed and for what purpose. By doing so, we can evaluate how these innovations will positively contribute to the quality of life for all Cook Islanders and residents of the Cook Islands.

The NSDA2020+ recommends reviewing the indicator and considering adjustments to the target for total expenditure on innovation and technology in the next report, as it is currently set at a high level.

Analysis

This is a new indicator introduced under the NSDA2020+. Investing in the research, development and uptake of new products, processes and labour force skills is necessary. While there is data for technology, NSDA2020+ suggest we should see trends from the next indicator going forward.

In terms of innovation the EDS has a section on fostering innovation. Investing in the research, development and uptake of new products, processes and labour force skills is also necessary. To capture the benefits of innovation, the Cook Islands economy requires a culture of innovation across all sectors including business, government, education, not-for profits and the general community. Information for this will be available in the next indicator.

As reported in the budget books 2020/21 the Centre of Information and Technology (CEIT) received \$60,000 administered by MFEM. The CEIT aims to increase the pool of local skilled IT professionals, and create IT awareness in the communities on Rarotonga and in the Pa Enua, and facilitate advanced computer and information literacy for adult learners.

Status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern**”.



GOAL 9

Our inclusiveness

Gender, equity and social inclusion

25 Year Target of Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

This goal focuses on our inclusiveness through gender, equity and social inclusion. The results for the Goal 9 show “**little progress**” towards the goal. There is a continuing need to make public facilities more accessible to people with disability, this has been reported as “**off track**” and requires attention. However, Government support towards non-government organisations (NGO’s) is “**on track**”.

Our inclusiveness, which refers to promoting gender, equity, and social inclusion, is crucial for building sustainable and equitable societies. It ensures that everyone, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, or social status, has equal opportunities and access to resources, services, and decision-making processes. Inclusive societies are more resilient, peaceful, and prosperous, as they harness the potential of all members and promote diversity and social cohesion. Investing in gender, equity, and social inclusion can also yield significant economic benefits, as it increases productivity, reduces inequalities, and fosters innovation and creativity. Therefore, promoting our inclusiveness is not only a matter of social justice but also a wise investment for the future.



INDICATOR 9.1

Percentage of political representatives from different demographic groups

Introduction

This indicator measures the percentage of members of parliament (MP) and island councillors that are women, LGBTQ+, youth and persons with disabilities.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				
Women	16% of MP's and Island councillors	No change			25%	
LGBTQ+	N/A					
Youth	1 MP	No change				
Persons with disabilities	N/A					

Source: Cook Islands Parliament and Pa Enua Governance-OPM, Te Tiare, Pride group, CINYC, Persons with disabilities

Comments on methodology

Progress in terms of seats in parliament or the island council can only be measured every four years, corresponding to the duration of their terms, unless a by-election takes place.

Analysis

The following table identifies the percentage of Member of Parliament (MP) and Island councilors who were women in 2018:

TABLE 17 Percentage of MP and Island councilors who were Women in 2018. *Source: Parliament, OPM PEG advice*

Political Level	Percentage of women (2017)	Percentage of women (2018)	Percentage of women (2019)
Members of parliament	17% (four of 24 seats)	20% (five of 24 seats)	25% (six of 24 seats)
Island Councilors	14% (eight of 56 seats)	10% (six of 56 seats)	5% (three of 56 seats)
Total	15% (12 out of 80 seats)	13% (eleven out of 80 seats)	16% (nine out of 80 seats)

The Cook Islands conducted its last general elections in 2018, revealing an increase in political representation at the national level. However, there was a decrease in the number of island councilors, possibly attributed to the elections held in August 2020. It is worth noting the participation of women in elections, as it reflects the level of engagement and active involvement of Cook Island women in seeking political office. Additionally, it is noteworthy that there is one Member of Parliament who falls within the youth age group, highlighting the inclusion of younger individuals in political leadership. The upcoming national general elections in 2022 and island council elections in 2024 will provide valuable insights for future assessments of this indicator. Currently, the status of this indicator is assessed as “**of concern**”.


INDICATOR 9.2

Income disparity between men and other genders

Introduction

This indicator measures the relative pay gap between men and other women

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
1.16:1	No change			>0.95:1	

Source: Census 2016 and 2021

Comments on methodology

This indicator measures the relative pay gap as a male to female pay ratio³. The Census 2021 has been used.

Analysis

The table below compares the male and female incomes (both median and average) from the censuses in 2006 to 2021. The income gap between male and female pay remains, however narrowed in the years from 2006 to 2016.

TABLE 18 Average and Median income between Men and Women. *Source: NSO*

		2006	2011	2016	2021
Average income (gross) Residents 15 years and over with an income	Male	14,297	16,848	20,969	20,209
	Female	11,490	13,243	18,049	18,348
	Male to female pay ratio	1.24:1	1.27:1	1.16:1	1.10:1
Median income (range) Residents 15 years and over with an income	Male	\$10,000 – \$14,999	\$10,000 – \$14,999	\$15,000 – \$19,999	\$15,000 – \$19,999
	Female	\$10,000 – \$14,999	\$10,000 – \$14,999	\$10,000 – \$14,999	\$10,000 – \$14,999

For this the indicator has been assessed as “**of concern**”.

³ Average (or median) male pay minus average (or median) female pay / average (or median) male pay x 100

INDICATOR 9.3

Number of fit for purpose facilities and services for the infirm, elderly and disabled on each island

Introduction

This indicator assesses the number of public facilities such as community centers and commercial buildings that are considered appropriate or fit for purpose for the infirm, elderly or disabled.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
0% (0/59)					
Rarotonga:					
Full access: 0					
Partial access: 20					
Partial/no access: 39					
	N/A			≥90% island and community centres with appropriate facilities	
Pa Enea:					
Full access (Mauke): 4					
Partial access (Mangaia): 8					

Source: Audit of Community and Island Centres (INTAFF)

Comments on methodology

Information for this indicator is obtained from INTAFF, which assesses the level of disability access to public community centers. The concept of being “**fit for purpose**” implies that these centers are constructed in a way that is resilient and able to meet the specific needs of our environment, economy, and society.

Analysis

This indicator has not been reported on for year 1. The status for this indicator is assessed as “**off track**”.

INDICATOR 9.4

Government support to non-government organisations and their support

Introduction

This indicator measures the government budget appropriation to support non-government organisations to support communities.

Governments around the world provide various forms of support to non-government organisations (NGOs) to help them achieve their social and developmental goals. This support includes funding, grants, tax exemptions, and policy reforms. In turn, NGOs provide crucial support to communities in need, including humanitarian aid, education, healthcare, gender, disability and environmental protection.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
NZD 801,000	NZD 1,316M				

Source: National Budget (MFEM)

Comments on methodology

INTAFF administers the fund for this indicator, which is based on the National budget. INTAFF will determine the target for this indicator, ensuring that it aligns with the desired outcomes and objectives.

Analysis

The Cook Islands Social Impact Fund (SIF) is a contestable grant fund administered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The SIF is designed to contribute to the achievement of the national sustainable development plan goals through national social policies developed by the Ministry.

The SIF is fully funded by the Cook Islands Government to support Registered Civil Society Organisations (CSO), Civil Society groups, Sports and Faith based organisations and Community groups. Calls for proposals to access the SIF are made at least once a year for Project Funding, once every three years for Programme Funding and Support and Awareness Funding.

The SIF provides for the delivery of quality services (programme and project) by Civil Society Organisations to meet the needs of those most vulnerable and is focused on priority areas.

PRIORITY AREAS OR FOCUS GROUPS

- Gender
- Children and Youth
- Person with Disability – PWD
- Elderly
- Domestic Violence
- Mental Health

Proposals that meet the needs of one or more of the above priorities may be considered, provided that clear links can be shown.

SOCIAL IMPACT FUND STRUCTURE

The table below shows the SIF three components. Proposals that involve activities in the Pa Enua are also assessed.

TABLE 19 SIF Three Components. *Source: INTAFF*

Component One: Project Funding	Component Two: Programme Funding	Component Three: Support and Awareness Funding <i>This funding is administered in house</i>
<p>This is for small scale initiatives that can be completed within one year for proposals between \$5,000 to \$20,000.</p> <p>Funded recipients under this component: 2020/21 – 14x 2021/22 – 16x</p>	<p>Programme funding is for the delivery of targeted services to a specified priority area for up to three (3) years for proposals between \$50,000 to \$150,000.</p> <p>Funded recipients under this component for 3 years: 2020/21 – 21x</p>	<p>Residual funds after the completion and finalising of Project and Programme towards the end of financial year will be applied towards further supporting the work of SIF including any expenses related to capacity building, monitoring and awareness raising authorised by Secretary of Internal Affairs. All funds of this nature should be disclosed to the SIF Board in a timely manner.</p>

For this the indicator has been assessed as “**on track**”.



GOAL 10

Agriculture and food security

25 Year Target of Food Import Free and Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

This goal looks at our agriculture sector and the role it plays in ensuring food security into the future. The results for goal 10 indicators show that the status is “**on track**”, however there are signs of regression. Agriculture plays a critical role in ensuring food security, which is the availability, accessibility, and affordability of food to meet people's nutritional needs. With a growing global population and increasing environmental challenges, it is essential to have sustainable agricultural practices that produce enough food for everyone. Agriculture also contributes to economic development, providing jobs and income for millions of people worldwide. Moreover, the food system is complex, and agriculture is at its core, ensuring that food is produced, processed, distributed, and consumed safely and efficiently. Therefore, promoting sustainable agriculture practices and investing in food security are crucial to ensure the well-being of people, communities, and the planet.



INDICATOR 10.1


Percentage of food produced locally

Vegetables, fruits, root crops, livestock or crops and meat

Introduction

This indicator looks at measuring how much of the food we buy are produced locally.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
Total local food produced in the Cook Islands was 322,000kg, of which 251,000kg was produced by Rarotonga. Average monthly yield – 27,000kg	Total food produced locally in the Cook Islands amounted to 198,000kg with a total value of \$920,000. Of that total, 168,000kg, with a value of \$817,000, was produced in Rarotonga and the remaining in the Pa Enua.			>1% annual increase or consecutive years of increase of local food production.	

Source: AgIntel (National Agricultural Database) and MOA advice

Comments on methodology

This indicator looks at total food grown and sold at our Punanga Nui market, roadside stalls and supermarkets. This indicator looks at measuring how much of the food we buy are produced locally

Analysis

Whilst we have yet to complete the analysis of the Census of Agriculture and Fisheries 2021 data, there has been a decrease in foods grown and sold locally. This is a result of COVID-19 where our borders were closed and our tourism market diminished drastically in 2021. Farmers scaled back their planting programs in an effort to ensure all produce was sold and to reduce waste.

The Ministry of Agriculture continues to work with all farmers in the Cook Islands to effectively manage their planting programs. Resourcing these farmers with farming inputs and technical advice has ensured that farming and production of locally grown vegetables for consumption has been maintained. Aitutaki, Mangaia and Mauke are consistently supplying vegetables and herbs to Prime Foods and Wigmore's Superstore on Rarotonga.

The following table provides the summary of the total amount of food commodities grown in the Cook Islands.

TABLE 20 Total amount of food commodities grown in the CI. *Source: MOA*

QUANTITIES OF CROPS HARVESTED AND EXPECTED TOTAL VALUE, 2021

	Rarotonga	Aitutaki	Atiu	Mangaia	Mauke	Mitiaro	PaEnua	Total
FRUITS								
Estimated Weight	117,711.0	3,109.0	182.0	1,111.7	11,928.3	1,026.0	17,357.0	135,068.0
Total Value	505,209.66	7,953.75	713.20	3,586.75	38,866.87	2,389.99	53,510.6	558,720.22
ROOT CROPS								
Estimated Weight	35,842.5	6,177.0	146.0	500.0	2,908.5	190.0	9,921.5	45,764.0
Total Value	223,131.74	23,576.17	716.85	2,375.00	14,001.55	950.00	41,619.6	264,751.31
VEGETABLES								
Estimated Weight	14,291.7	108.0	105	297.5	1,554.9	2,065.4	16,357.1	
Total Value	86,099.01	509.17	463.75	1,761.68	5,193.16	7,927.8	94,026.77	
HERBS								
Estimated Weight	612.5	0.0	612.5					
Total Value	2,264.65	0.0	2,264.6					
ALL								
Estimated Weight	168,457.7	9,394.0	433.0	1,909.2	16,391.7	1,216.0	29,343.9	197,801.6
TOTAL VALUE	816,705.06	32,039.09	1,893.80	7,723.43	58,061.58	3,339.99	103,057.88	919,762.95

This indicator has been assessed as “**of concern**”.


INDICATOR 10.2

Total land used for agriculture

Introduction

The rise in tourism and consumerism has coincided with the decline of agriculture as an industry. One consequence of this, especially on Rarotonga, is that land once used for agricultural production has been converted to residential or commercial (usually tourist) use. The less land that is available for agriculture, the greater the limitations on our ability to produce food. We need to ensure that there is land available to increase and improve food production and security.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
237 acres consisting mixed cropping, root crops and vegetable crops	237 acres consisting mixed cropping, root crops and vegetable crops			≥ 0% annual increase in consecutive years	

Source: MOA

Comments on methodology

MOA have yet to complete the analysis of the Census of Agriculture and Fisheries 2021 data which will confirm the amount of land used for Agriculture purposes.

Analysis

In 2019, approximately 237 acres of the total land area of the Cook Islands was used for agricultural purposes (arable and permanent crops). MOA reported a significant decline in arable land suitable for agriculture with an approximate 0.21 per cent annual decrease. This is attributed to the increase in development with the construction of private and commercial buildings. It is likely that this trend will continue as more prime agricultural land is being developed for building and infrastructure purposes, particularly on Rarotonga. As a result, few local commercial growers have expanded their farms to the Pa Enua specifically in Mangaia, Mauke and Aitutaki.

Wandering livestock that ruin areas under agriculture use has also contributed to the decline of total land used.

This indicator is assessed as “**on track**” with a negative trend as the total land used and reserved for agricultural purposes continues to decline. The initiative shown by both MOA and local commercial growers to access land in the Pa Enua for agriculture purposes will require further investment to grow this industry to achieve our goal of national food security.


INDICATOR 10.3

Minimise the impact of a biosecurity outbreak

Introduction

One of the major risks to agriculture is biosecurity threats that come from abroad. Biosecurity breaches such as outbreaks of fruit fly, have threatened entire species of crops and severely impacted harvests and livelihoods. Having adequate biosecurity measures in place is crucial for the survival and growth of our agricultural industry. Biosecurity threats need to be monitored and appropriate policy interventions need to be developed.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
Zero	Zero			Zero outbreaks	

Source: Ministry of Agriculture

Comments on methodology

MOA advised fruit fly trapping, Giant African Snail baiting and Ant surveillance programs continues to be carried out on a fortnightly and 6 monthly basis. Data and reports are regularly completed on the results of these surveillance activities.

Analysis

There has been no pest outbreak since the last major pest outbreak of the Oriental Fruit Fly in 2013 to 2014. The Ministry continues to monitor imports at the pathways (Airport, Seaport and Mail) and private passenger cargo. Regular awareness programs are carried out within the Cook Islands on educating our community to identify or report on suspicious pests such as Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle and Giant African Snails.

Awareness has also been extended to African swine fever and foot and mouth disease that affect livestock. We have had 2 occurrences of stowaway cats found in sea containers and a cane toad.

This indicator is assessed as “**on track**” with no changes from previous year. However, funding needs to be directed in the prevention and surveillance areas so as to maintain this zero outbreak status for all islands of the Cook Islands.

Although “**on track**”, the Ministry continues to monitor this indicator with vigilance and have carried out capacity building programs to support the agriculture officers on each Pa Enua with symptoms recognition and response activities. We also promote vigilance from the community in protecting our borders from the introduction of invasive species and pests. The biosecurity team continues to monitor the importation of produce from overseas ensuring it is free from pest and disease.

INDICATOR 10.4

Reduction of imported herbicide

Introduction

This indicator looks at herbicide importation as a measure to protect soil health. Protecting soil health has been seen to increase yield and protect biodiversity.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2020				
	Fertiliser 68,000kg				
	Pesticides			2% reduction	
	Organic 3,519kg				
	Non-Organic 1,637kg				

Source: Ministry of Agriculture

Comments on methodology

Agricultural pesticides is widely used in the Cook Islands, more so in plantation type crops. The importation, distribution and use of pesticides is of concern as we lack up-to-date legislation to adequately regulate its importation, distribution and use. Farmers often use pesticides with limited understanding of its mode of action and the types of pest it is designed to control. There is also growing concern with the disposal of pesticide containers in the region.

Analysis

In January 2021, the Pesticides Board was revived to review the importation of highly hazardous pesticides that will have negative effects on human health and the environment. As part of the process, the Board placed a maximum quota on the importation of 3 highly hazardous pesticides – Paraquat, Round-Up and Imidacloprid or Confidor.

MOA and the Board are working with the Pacific Community Land Resources Division and the Food and Agriculture Organization in the management of pesticides importation and use, and at the same time, the promotion of ecologically safer alternatives such as mineral and neem oils. The Ministry has been active in promoting organically certified pesticides to our farming communities through our awareness and capacity building programs for farmers and agriculture officers on Rarotonga and the Pa Enua.

For the past 6 years, MOA has been pro-active in the promotion of mineral oils, Neem oils and Dipel Bacillus thuringiensis var kurstaki as an alternative control measure for the control of insect pests including; aphids, whiteflies, leafminers, mites, mealy bugs, caterpillars and scales on food and ornamental crops. These are made available to home gardeners and commercial farmers on Rarotonga and the Pa Enuā. The continuous efforts of the Ministry in promoting these organic pesticides has seen many farmers reduce their use of the more hazardous pesticides as they realise the benefits and effectiveness of such organic pesticides. The Ministry will continue to promote the use of organic pesticides, whilst at the same time, continue to look for other safer options for pest management in crop production, in particular, for weed and disease control.

The status for this indicator is assessed as “**of concern**”.



GOAL 11

Biodiversity and natural environment

 25 Year Target of Net Zero, Zero Waste and Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

This goal recognises the importance of protecting the natural environment for life on land and below water. The goal 11 indicators generally show the indicators are “**of concern**”. Achieving Goal 11 is a significant challenge, particularly on Rarotonga, where the development pressures are greatest. Biodiversity refers to the variety of living organisms and ecosystems on Earth, and it plays a crucial role in maintaining the natural balance of our planet. The natural environment provides us with clean air, water, and soil, and it also supports the growth of food, medicine, and other essential resources. Biodiversity also provides ecosystem services, such as pollination, carbon sequestration, and water purification, which are critical for human survival. The loss of biodiversity and degradation of natural environments have severe consequences for our health, economies, and societies. Therefore, it is essential to protect and conserve our natural environment and biodiversity to ensure a sustainable future for all.



INDICATOR 11.1


State of the reef

includes bleaching and crown of thorns

Introduction

This indicator measures the percentage of live coral cover as a sign of reef health.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
28% for Rarotonga 33% for two Northern group islands (Manihiki and Rakahanga)	N/A for Rarotonga 22% Aitutaki 14% Manuae			Statistically significant improvement; or consecutive years of improvement	

Source: Marine Monitoring Report (CCCI-OPM, MMR, NES)

Comments on methodology

To ensure a comprehensive assessment of biodiversity, it is important to include indicators that measure the biodiversity support for the natural range of coral-resident species in addition to live coral measurements. This approach recognises that some coral species classified as live coral may primarily represent the survival of the fittest species within the measured coverage.

To establish a baseline for a healthy coral reef ecosystem, it is recommended to extend baseline data collection to an area unaffected by land and marine development, such as Suvarrow. This comparative baseline can then serve as a reference point for assessing data from other reefs and evaluating their ecological health.

The Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) is the primary source of information for this indicator, providing data and insights on coral reef conditions and biodiversity.

Analysis

The following table below shows coral coverage from 2019 and 2021:

TABLE 21 Coral coverage from 2019–2021. *Source: MMR*

Island	Coral cover 2019	Coral cover 2021	Rating
Mitiaro	-	-	Not assessed these years
Manuae	-	14%	Poor
Atiu	-	-	Not assessed these years
Aitutaki	-	22%	Poor
Mangaia	-		Not assessed these years
Takutea	-		Not assessed these years
Palmerston	-		Not assessed these years
Manihiki	32%		Not assessed 2021
Rakahanga	35%		Not assessed 2021
Rarotonga	28%		Not assessed 2021
Mauke	-		Not assessed these years

Reefs play a crucial role in safeguarding islands and communities from the impacts of climate change. They serve as essential habitats for local biodiversity and act as a natural barrier against ocean currents and waves. Additionally, they provide valuable food resources, support recreational activities, and serve as a significant attraction for tourists.

In Rarotonga, a survey conducted in 2019 assessed the eastern reefs. The findings revealed an average coral cover of 28 per cent, maintaining a “**fair**” rating. In the Southern Group Islands, marine assessments were carried out by the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) between 2017 and 2020 on 10 islands, excluding Rarotonga.

The status of this indicator is “**of concern**”. Emphasizing the need for attention and action to address the challenges faced by the reefs and their associated ecosystems.



INDICATOR 11.2

Percentage of protected areas

Introduction

This indicator measures the spatial extent of land and ocean which is protected including Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs).

Results

Earlier year		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019		2021				
Land	6% of the Cook Islands	No change reported			< by 1.5%	
Ocean	Marine protected areas of EEZ 16%	Marine protected areas of EEZ 17%			10%	

Source: Records of protected lands (Island Admins, Koutu Nui and NES). NES-Marine Protected Areas

Comments on methodology

The information for this indicator is sourced from the advice provided by the National Environment Service (NES). The use of the term ‘conserved’ in this indicator is based on the guidance and recommendations given by NES.

Regarding the ocean, the reported increase in the percentage coverage of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) from 16% in 2019 to 17% in 2021 is based on updated figures provided, rather than indicating an increase in the establishment of new MPAs.

Analysis

LAND

Between 2020 and 2021, a report commissioned by the Global Environment Fund (GEF) 5 Ridge to Reef project (R2R) assessed and analysed the extent of protected areas in the Cook Islands. Based on the internationally accepted definition of a protected area, the Cook Islands currently has two protected areas that meet this definition:

1. Suvarrow National Park
2. Takutea Island Nature Reserve

The combined area of these protected areas is 280 hectares, or 2.8 square kilometers. In relation to the total land area of the Cook Islands, which is 240 square kilometers, this represents only 1.17% of land being protected. However, it is important to note that the Convention on Biological Diversity recognises that there are often other types of areas that contribute to conservation efforts, known as Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs). These can also be included in national and international reporting.

The report identified the potential existence of as many as 89, if not more, of these types of areas throughout the Cook Islands. They include community conservation areas such as the Takitumu Conservation Area and Takuvaine Water Catchment Area, as well as rauī (prohibition areas), among others. A database was compiled based on existing sources of information, reporting a total area of 44.79 square kilometers, which represents 18% of the land area.

To accurately monitor and report on this indicator, the NES has developed a data collection plan using the EMCI Cook Islands Government Geoportal. Gathering geospatial data for all types of protected areas will provide a mechanism for accurate monitoring and reporting.

Further assessments are necessary to accurately report on protected areas and OECMs/conserved areas across the Cook Islands. NES is currently unable to report any changes to the baseline figure but plans to complete assessments in the coming year to provide an accurate report for the next reporting period.

It is also important to support anecdotal evidence of positive impacts from regeneration in rauī areas with survey data related to those areas and surrounding ecosystems. This will help establish guidelines for protecting areas and specific species in the future.

OCEAN

In 2020, the IUCN Oceania Regional Office provided technical GIS support to Marae Moana through the GEF 5 R2R project. The total area of marine protected areas (MPAs) established under Section 24 of the Marae Moana Act 2017, which encompass a 50nm radius around all islands of the Cook Islands, was calculated as follows:

Southern Group S24 MPAs	=	165,514.93 km ²
Northern Group S24 MPAs	=	174,965.10 km ²
Total S24 MPAs	=	340,480.03 km ²

Considering the total marine area of Marae Moana is 2,000,000 km², the calculated MPA coverage is 17%. These calculations account for any overlaps in MPAs between certain islands (e.g., Ngaputuru) to ensure accurate measurement without double-counting or inflation.

The status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern**” for land and “**on track**” for oceans.

INDICATOR 11.3

Percentage of yield against sustainable benchmarks

Introduction

This indicator measures the reported catch of licensed fishing vessels against ‘sustainable limits’. This acknowledges that we use of ocean resources for economic benefit, in particular fisheries.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
Below maximum sustainable yields (tuna catch only)	Below maximum sustainable yields (tuna catch only)			Below maximum economic yield	

Source: Fisheries Assessment Reports, and Fishing Monitoring Reports (MMR)

Comments on methodology

The data for this indicator is sourced from fishing reports provided by the MMR.

Analysis

The table below shows the Tuna catches from the years 2019 and 2021.

TABLE 22 Tuna Fishery Catch in the Cook Islands EEZ by species (tonnes). *Source: MMR*

Species	2019			2021		
	Longline	Purse Seine	Local	Longline	Purse Seine	Local
Albacore	6,864	0	3	2,367	0	1
Big eye	842	236	1	417	168	1
Yellow fin	1,583	1,032	64	1,295	304	47
Skipjack	587	27,202	7	57	2,100	4
Total	9,877	28,469	75	4,136	2,572	53

In 2021, the recorded catch of tuna species showed a significant decline of 82% compared to 2019. This decline can be attributed to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which restricted the entry of ships into the waters of the Cook Islands. However, as the situation improves and restrictions are lifted, we anticipate observing a more accurate and representative trend in the future.

Furthermore, it is crucial to ensure that individual seafood harvests of various species are in line with sustainable benchmarks and reflect evidence of declining stocks. To monitor the export of species from the Cook Islands, the NES Cook Islands CITES database (Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) maintains records. The reports for 2021 indicate the export of species such as *Pinctada margaritifera* flesh (black-lipped pearl oyster flesh) locally known as korori, and *Turbo setosus* flesh (Rough turban) locally called ariri.

In 2021, a total of 39.71kg of non-CITES species were exported, with the majority being 28kg of *Dendropoma maxima* (Great Worm Snail or ungakoa), followed by *Helicina flavescens* (Yellow necklace shell or ei Pupu) at 6kg. Monitoring species exports provides insights into the demand for specific species and helps identify areas where pressure on stocks may occur. It is worth noting that the low total export of 39.71kg can be attributed to the closure of the Cook Islands' borders during 2021, resulting in fewer travelers seeking permits to export shells, seafood, or corals.

However, it is important to acknowledge that this data does not capture the local harvests of other species such as pa'ua, unga, koura, etc., which must be managed sustainably. Some controls have been implemented based on recommendations from the MMR and are enforced through island authorities.


Given the current situation, the status of this indicator is assessed as “**of concern**”, emphasising the need for continued monitoring and sustainable management practices.

INDICATOR 11.4 Lagoon water quality

Introduction

This indicator assesses the lagoon water quality on three islands Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Manihiki. This recognises the health of lagoons has come under threat due to unsustainable land use practices as well as poor management of lagoon areas.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
Average B–F grade for bacteria levels and water clarity (Rarotonga and Aitutaki)	Average C grade for bacteria levels and water clarity (Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Manihiki)			Average A–B grade for bacteria levels, water clarity and nutrient levels	

Source: Marine Monitoring Report (MMR)

Comments on methodology

MMR assesses the lagoon water on Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Manihiki based on three main variables – bacteria levels (most probable number per 100 ml), water clarity (total suspended solids in mg/L) and nutrient levels (score out of 100). The indicator is an average of the grades given to the variables across the test sites. Average grades are assessed based on the predefined grading system as per below table using a six-level scale with ‘A’ the best score and best outcome, and ‘F’ the worst. MMR tests on the three islands (Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Manihiki) due mainly to tourism on Rarotonga and Aitutaki, and the pearl industry in Manihiki.

TABLE 23 Grading Scale *Source: WHO 2021 guidelines on Recreational Water Quality for Coastal and Fresh Waters*

GRADING SCALE	
Excellent	A
Very Good	B
Good	C
Poor	D
Very Poor	E
Extremely Poor	F

Reference: WHO 2021 Guidelines on Recreational Water Quality for Coastal and Fresh Waters

Analysis

The table below shows the results provided by MMR. The average grade is based on bacteria levels and water clarity.

TABLE 24 Grades for water quality at test sites for Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Manihiki. *Source: MMR*

Test site	2018	2019	2021
Rarotonga marine	C–D	B–C	B–C
Rarotonga stream	C–F	F–C	F–C
Aitutaki marine	C–D	A–D	B–E
Aitutaki stream	E–F	F–D	F–E
Manihiki	A	No data	A
Overall grade average	D	D	C

Based on the data presented in the table above, the marine areas of Rarotonga, Manihiki, and Aitutaki are identified as areas of concern in terms of their condition. Specifically, the marine area of Rarotonga is graded between good and very good, whereas the Rarotonga stream is of concern. Both the Aitutaki marine and stream are also assessed as areas of concern.

To address these concerns and ensure effective monitoring, the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) is actively working towards establishing a laboratory in Manihiki. This laboratory will enhance MMR's capacity and efficiency in conducting water quality assessments, enabling the collection of immediate and accurate data. By improving their capabilities, MMR aims to continue their important work in assessing and maintaining water quality in the region.

The status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern with signs of improvement**”.


INDICATOR 11.5

Economic returns from oceanic and lagoon resources

Introduction

This indicator measures the returns on investments from marine exports including fisheries, black pearl farming and deep seabed mineral mining. One of the main challenges is in balancing sustainable economic returns on resources with protecting and preserving the overall health of the Cook Islands' ocean and lagoon areas.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
NZD 25.2M	NZD 23.5M			>2.5% annual increase or consecutive years of increase	

Source: Budget book 2020/21, Budget book 2021/22

Comments on methodology

There are no comments on the methodology.

Analysis

The average value of marine exports has experienced a slight decrease during the financial years of 2020/21 and 2021/22 compared to the previous year. The COVID-19 pandemic measures have also had an impact on fisheries revenue in the 2020/21 financial year. While fishing activities remain the primary source of revenue, other marine exports include live fish for the aquarium trade, black pearls, and pearl shells.

Over the past 15 years, the pearl industry in the Cook Islands has seen a significant decline. After reaching its peak in 2000 with total pearl exports exceeding \$18 million, the industry has since experienced lows below \$200,000. Although there has been some recovery in recent years, the industry's performance remains relatively low in comparison.

Additionally, the indicator encompasses seabed minerals, even though no harvesting has taken place yet. It is anticipated that future revenues will be generated as this sector develops, with the Seabed Minerals Authority (SBMA) having issued licenses for the exploration phase. The exploration activities will provide the Cook Islands with crucial data and information regarding seabed minerals.

Considering these factors, the status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern**” and requires attention.


INDICATOR 11.6

Biodiversity index

Introduction

This indicator monitors critical ecosystems, scientific and traditional knowledge records and impacts of invasive species on indigenous and agricultural species.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				
Ecosystems coverage:						
1. Native forest						
2. Wetlands		62%			No net loss of critical ecosystems coverage	
3. Coral reefs						
Scientific and traditional knowledge records					3% increase of records	
Impacts of invasive species on indigenous and agricultural species and ecosystems					Increase or no change in prevalence of invasive species	

Source: Biodiversity Report (Natural Heritage Trust and NES)

Comments on methodology

The information for this indicator is sourced from NES and the Statement of Environment (SOE) report.

Analysis

No net-loss of critical ecosystems coverage

NATIVE FOREST

There are three forest type in the Cook Islands, Montane and cloud forests, Makatea atoll forest and littoral forests. According to CIs SOE report approximately 62% of the land area in the Cook Islands is covered by natural forests. While no forest cover assessment has been conducted in the past year, there is a vision to survey all islands in the Cook Islands using LiDAR technology. The information gathered through LiDAR will be instrumental in determining the extent of native forest cover throughout the Cook Islands. This data will contribute to future assessments and monitoring efforts related to the preservation of native forest ecosystems.

WETLANDS

Information on wetlands in the Cook Islands is currently limited. The most comprehensive data available on wetlands is presented in the Cook Islands SOE Report 2018. Wetlands are acknowledged as crucial ecosystems that provide valuable services, including storm buffering and water filtration. Unfortunately, wetland areas are increasingly threatened by development, particularly the backfilling of wetlands on Rarotonga. To ensure the preservation of wetlands, there is a need for improved monitoring and control measures to prevent any adverse impacts resulting from development activities.

NES has strengthened its processes concerning development around wetland areas. This includes seeking engineering and technical advice and implementing a Tier 3 environmental compliance level for projects with significant environmental impacts. The NES is actively working on capacity development to enhance environmental protection in the Pa Enua islands. This involves training, additional resources such as improved internet connectivity, and the provision of a secretariat to support the Island Environment Authorities. Efforts are being made to extend the Island Environment Authority to additional islands in the Pa Enua, such as Mangaia and Pukapuka/Nassau. These initiatives are continuously improving national environmental protection.

While no specific data on wetlands has been collated, it is anticipated that the completion of LiDAR imaging for the Cook Islands will greatly assist in obtaining better information on the distribution of wetlands throughout the islands. This data will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of wetland ecosystems in the Cook Islands.

IMPACTS OF IAS

No reports of serious outbreaks of invasive species on natural and agricultural species and ecosystems have been recorded.

The use of host-specific natural enemies as a form of biological control offers a sustainable approach to mitigate the harmful impacts of invasive weeds. Monitoring of previously released weed biocontrol agents has been conducted to assess their spread and impact on Rarotonga.

In 2021, the African tulip tree flea-beetle (*Paradibolia coerulea*) was released on Rarotonga to control the spread of African tulip trees. The effects of the flea-beetle on African tulip trees and its distribution will be closely monitored.

To address the remaining population of Pacific rats on Motu Kena, a rat eradication program was implemented on the island of Suvarrow. This effort is particularly important considering Suvarrow is home to the world's largest population of frigate birds. Similar rat eradication programs are also being planned for the island of Palmerston. The feasibility study conducted on Palmerston has provided valuable insights and a framework for future eradication programs as per Table 25 below.

Overall, these initiatives aim to prevent and manage the impacts of invasive species, and the experiences gained from the Palmerston study will serve as a useful guide for future eradication efforts.

TABLE 25 Summary of Future Eradication of Palmerston. *Source: NES*

Area	Objective	Output	Outcome
Biodiversity	Rats are eradicated from Home and Cooks motu.	Implementation of the eradication project and subsequent report.	The Atoll is rodent free and remains so.
	All Islands on Palmerston Atoll remain free of rodents.	Implementation of biosecurity and ongoing.	Rats are prevented from ecosystems on the other motu in the Atoll, and Home and Cooks motu ecosystems are improved and maintained in a healthy and functioning state.
		Monitoring and reporting of outcomes.	Long term, seabird numbers increase on Cooks motu.
Community/ Livelihoods	Community is supportive of eradication and ongoing biosecurity.	Community attitudes are reported.	The local community benefits from the eradication.
	Increased food security for the Palmerston community	Measurable increase in agricultural yields reported by the community.	An increased resilience of the community through more secure food production.
Partnerships	Work collaboratively to achieve conservation outcomes with NES, TIS, MOA, and the Palmerston community.	The success of partnerships is reported on.	Capacity and understanding of rodent eradications, island biosecurity and project management is built amongst partners.
Knowledge	Increased knowledge and capacity of in-country organisations and communities with invasive species management.	Individuals from partner organisations and the community are involved in delivering the eradication.	Organisations and individuals have the capacity to provide experience to future invasive management projects. Feedback received from partner agencies.
		Project documented.	Capacity and knowledge are increased and shared.

It is understood that the upcoming UN biodiversity conference (COP15) is scheduled to take place in 2022, where new goals will be established to guide global efforts until 2030 in order to address and reverse the loss of nature.

The NES Data Collection plan for future data collection is focused on three key areas:

- Gathering geospatial data to accurately measure the impacts of development on wetlands and native forests.
- Integrating recorded land development data with environmental impact assessments to better understand the effects on the environment.
- Conducting surveys and gathering historical recollections from elders to obtain insights into changes in species populations, habitats, and overall ecological areas.

Considering the current state of affairs, this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern**”.



GOAL 12

Climate change, resilience, renewable energy and energy efficiency

25 Year Target of Net Zero and Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

This goal looks at the need for climate change action, resilience and building on renewable energy and energy efficiency. It also acknowledges the vulnerability of the Cook Islands and impacts of natural disasters. The results for goal 12 show the status is “**of concern with signs of improvement**”. Climate change is a global challenge that is affecting our planet in many ways, from rising sea levels to extreme weather events. To address this issue, it is crucial to promote resilience and adaptation measures that help communities and ecosystems cope with the impacts of climate change. Renewable energy and energy efficiency are critical components of this effort, as they help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy security. By transitioning to renewable energy sources like solar and wind, we can reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and mitigate climate change. Energy efficiency measures, such as insulation and efficient appliances, can also reduce energy consumption and costs while lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Overall, promoting climate resilience and transitioning to renewable energy and energy efficiency are essential for a sustainable future.



INDICATOR 12.1

Resilience index

Introduction

The main aim of disaster risk mitigation efforts is to reduce the overall vulnerability of our island communities. This indicator seeks to assess the overall resilience of the Cook Islands using an index which considers economic, environment, infrastructural, and social resilience.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				

OVERALL



Economic resilience (Net debt servicing to revenue)

5.1%

6.20%

≤5%



Source: Economic Division Advice-MFEM

Environmental resilience (Coral coverage)

Rarotonga: 28%
Northern group
(Manihiki and
Rakahanga): 33%

Statistically
significant
improvement;
or consecutive
years of increase



Source: MMR

Infrastructural resilience

N/A

N/A

>75%



Source: CIIC

Social resilience

92% of
residential
population
affiliated to a
Christian church

84.4% of
residential
population
affiliated to a
Christian church

>2 hrs/week
community
and church
engagement



Source: Census 2016 and 2021

Comments on methodology

This indicator includes four components that need to be averaged into one indicator:

1. Economic resilience (net debt servicing to revenue – also forms part of Indicator 15.6 Financial responsibility index)
2. Environmental resilience (as per indicator 11.1 state of the reef)
3. Infrastructural resilience (as per indicator 12.2)
4. Social resilience

NSDA2020+ recommends that we modify this indicator from year 2 onwards to effectively accommodate and capture climate change action, including the incorporation of climate finance data. This modification will enable us to accurately assess and track our progress in addressing climate-related challenges.

Analysis

This indicator specifically focuses on economic and social resilience. Based on the data available, there has been a slight decrease in church engagement, with a decrease of 84.4% in 2021 compared to 92% in 2016. It is important to note that the question on religion in the Census was not mandatory, resulting in only 2% of respondents not providing a response. It is possible to speculate that Cook Islanders may have a more open-minded approach to spiritual well-being and may not necessarily affiliate themselves with a specific religion.

However, due to the gaps in the data and the lack of further analysis, the status of this indicator is assessed as “**of concern**”.

INDICATOR 12.2

Percentage of population that have access to protection from category 3 or higher cyclones

Introduction

This indicator measures the percentage of the population that can be accommodated by designated cyclone shelters built to recommended standards. This recognises the vulnerability of the Cook Islands to cyclones and the need to ensure that the community has adequate protection.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
97.42%	98.87%			>90%	

Source: Cyclone shelters (EMCI and ICI), NIIP

Comments on methodology

There are no comments about the methodology.

Analysis

The table provided below showcases the islands that currently have cyclone shelters, as well as those with planned shelters. It also includes the percentage of the Cook Islands population residing on each island in both 2016 and 2021.

TABLE 26 Cyclone shelters in the Cook Islands. *Source: Census, EMCI advice*

Island	Cyclone shelter (s)	Percentage of population (Census 2016)	Percentage of population (Census 2021)
Rarotonga	Yes	72.25	72.34
Aitutaki	Yes	11.36	11.94
Mangaia	Yes	3.31	3.16
Atiu	Yes	2.86	2.57
Mauke	Yes	1.94	1.71
Mitiaro	Yes	1.04	1.02
Manuae	N/A	0.00	0
Palmerston	Yes – New	0.38	0.17
Pukapuka	Yes	2.85	2.98
Nassau	Construction planned for 2022/23	0.52	0.59
Manihiki	Yes	1.43	1.42
Rakahanga	Construction planned for 2022/23	0.53	0.54
Penrhyn	Yes – New	1.52	1.56
Suvarrow	N/A	0.00	0
Takutea	N/A	0.00	0

These results show that the southern group is sufficiently provided with cyclone shelters. The northern group has a couple of vulnerabilities but there are plans to address these with the construction of cyclone shelters in Nassau and Rakahanga. Palmerston and Penrhyn cyclone shelters are under construction and are planned to be completed in 2022. Rarotonga is to identify sturdy community buildings that can be retrofitted as an approved safety shelter.

Emergency Management Cook Islands (EMCI) is predominantly in charge of coordinating operational responses in a case of a disaster happening. This is legislated by the 2007 Disaster Management Act. There are efforts to build capacity in disaster prevention this includes planning and construction of cyclone shelters as well as reviewing and improving current shelter facilities in Rarotonga and the Pa Enua. Any climate change related initiatives by any stakeholders can be potentially financed through international climate financing.

Overall Government need to ensure that all people in the Pa Enua and Rarotonga have adequate protection in time of cyclonic conditions.

The status of this indicator is “**on track and improving**”.


INDICATOR 12.3

Percentage of electrical generation from renewable energy and maintenance of these sites

Introduction

This indicator measures the percentage of electricity which is generated from renewable energy.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
Northern group 100%	No change			100% renewable electricity generation by 2025.	
Southern group close to 100%					
Rarotonga 19.2%					

Source: Annual Statistical Report (NSO-MFEM)

Comments on methodology

There are no comments on the methodology. However it must be noted the energy chart is to be reviewed and may change the target set in this indicator.

Analysis

In the past five years, the Cook Islands have made remarkable progress in achieving their national electricity target. Renewable energy sources now meet the electricity needs of all islands in the Northern Group. Ongoing efforts are focused on transitioning the Southern Group to renewable energy. This indicator monitors the commitment to completing these efforts, with particular emphasis on Rarotonga, where the majority of the population and businesses are located.

According to the 2021 Census, nearly 100% of private households in the Cook Islands have access to electricity, while 1.7% of private households have access to solar panels. It's important to note that this percentage does not include businesses and hotels that have solar panels installed.

Despite the progress made, the status of this indicator is still assessed as “**of concern**”, indicating the need for continued efforts and improvements in achieving sustainable and reliable electricity access throughout the Cook Islands.


INDICATOR 12.4

Annual amount of fossil fuels imported

Introduction

This indicator measures the annual amount of petrol, diesel and LPG imported in order to monitor reliance on fossil fuels.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2020	2021				
Result						
% change over the year	16, 733	16,221(p) 3.05% decrease			>2% annual increase	

Source: Customs Data (Customs-MFEM), National Accounts (NSO-MFEM)

Comments on methodology

This indicator does not include aviation fuel. It must be noted the 2021 results are only preliminary and full results should be available in the next indicator report.

Analysis

In the year 2020, there was a notable decrease in the import of petrol, diesel, and LPG. This decline can be attributed, in part, to the global crisis caused by COVID-19. However, further analysis is needed to fully understand the factors contributing to this decline.

Based on the available information, the current status of this indicator is assessed as “**on track**”. This suggests that despite the decrease in imports during 2020, the overall progress towards the intended goals and targets remains favorable.

INDICATOR 12.5

Percentage of median income spent on electricity and cost recovery

Introduction

This indicator looks at the proportion of income that is spent on electricity needs at the household level.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
14.9% of COIP expenditure – of 9560 median expenditure per annum	N/A			<5%	

Source: HIES 2016, Income Tax Data (RMD-MFEM), Power Audit, metering, reports (TAU and Island Admins)

Comments on methodology

This indicator measures the percentage of real median income that would be spent on purchasing a 200kWh of electricity per month. This is assumed in the NSDA2020+ to be the average household consumption of electricity. TAU has provided the domestic energy tariff⁴.

Analysis

Based on the 2021 Census, the real median income for individuals residing in Rarotonga is \$18,000, while in the Pa Enua it is \$11,000. This represents a significant increase compared to the 2016 Census.

In terms of electricity generation, the first quarter of 2021 saw a total of 6.3 million kWh produced in the Cook Islands, with 2.3 million kWh generated from renewable sources. Out of the total electricity and renewable energy generated, 83.8 per cent was consumed on Rarotonga, followed by 16.2 per cent from the outer islands.

From March 2020 to June 2021, Te Aponga Uira (TAU, the electricity utility provider) supported the Government's ERP (Economic Response Plan) assistance program through an electricity discount scheme. This scheme resulted in savings of over \$11.5 million for 4,452 households and 1,043 businesses on Rarotonga. The scheme aimed to provide support to Rarotonga communities during the economic uncertainties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Considering the progress and achievements outlined, the status of this indicator is assessed as **"on track"**. This indicates that the efforts and initiatives related to income, electricity generation, and support programs have been successful in meeting the established targets and goals.

⁴ First 60 units each month – \$0.68 per unit; from 61–300 units each month – \$0.92 per unit



GOAL 13

Cultural heritage, history, identity and language

 25 Year Target of Reo Māori Vitality and Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

This goal recognises the importance of the Cook Islands culture and its prevalence in all aspects of life. It seeks to promote Cook Islands languages, heritage, history, identity and protect cultural heritage. The results for the goal 13 indicators provide limited information about the progress towards the goal therefore it is marked as “**of concern**”. Cultural heritage, history, identity, and language are essential aspects of our society, representing our shared past, present, and future. Cultural heritage encompasses tangible and intangible elements of our history, such as artifacts, traditions, and practices that reflect our values and beliefs. By preserving our cultural heritage, we can maintain our sense of identity and strengthen our cultural diversity, promoting understanding and tolerance among different communities. History provides us with a deeper understanding of the world around us, helping us learn from our past mistakes and successes. Language is a critical aspect of our cultural identity, connecting us with our ancestors and enabling communication among different cultures. Therefore, it is essential to protect and promote our cultural heritage, history, identity, and language to ensure a more inclusive and respectful society.



INDICATOR 13.1





Vitality of the Cook Islands Māori languages and dialects

Introduction

This indicator looks at the Cook Islands Māori language as a living language that will be passed to the next generations. All measures will be broken down by each island where possible.

- Percentage of Cook Islands Māori Literacy at NCEA level 1.
- Percentage of Cook Islands Māori Spoken daily.
- Percentage of Cook Islands Māori content in the media, in publicly published documents and signage. The target is to have 50% in Cook Islands Māori over the next 25 years.
- Number of new Cook Islands Māori words developed and gazetted⁵.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021	2022	2023		
Cook Islands Māori (CIM) literacy	86% (NCEA L1)	88% (NCEA L1)			≥70%	
Cook Islands Māori (CIM) spoken daily	(data not available)	70.1%			≥70%	
Percentage of Cook Islands Māori (CIM) content in the media, in publicly published documents and signage	(data not available)	(data not available)			50% of CIM content in 25 years	
Number of new CIM words gazetted	300	2,307 (ready to be gazetted)			At least 300 words per year	

Source: Education Report / Statistics (MOE),

⁵ 'To gazette' – to officially announce or publish something: in this case new CIM words introduced into the vocabulary.

Comments on methodology

The methodologies are as follows:

- 1. CIM Literacy** – The NSDA2020+ suggests that the methodology for this indicator continues to look at the NCEA year 11 results which the Ministry of Education collects for its annual educational statistics bulletin. This information is sourced from the MOE Policy and Review Division and is publicly made available on its MOE website. Information has also been provided about the targets and actual results for grades four and eight to illustrate progress at various levels. It is noted that Māori is a compulsory subject at grades 4 and 8, but becomes an elective choice at year 11.
- 2. CIM Spoken daily** – the NSDA2020+ suggests that the methodology for this indicator will look at collecting this information from the Census. This is yet to be determined once information is received from the Statistics Office of cultural related questions which may include the population response to speaking Cook Islands Māori on a daily basis and for an estimate minimum of > 2 hours aggregate per day.
- 3. CIM content visible in the media, in publicly published documents, and signage** – the NSDA2020+ suggests the methodology for this indicator will require stringent monitoring of CIM content in publicly published documents; in this case, focus shall be on newspapers and TV programs with CIM content which are archived. Signage shall be identified on the island with CIM content including Cook Island cultural designs.
- 4. New CIM words gazetted** – this is a new indicator that shall be reported on an annual basis towards the NSDA in ensuring that CIM language and vocabulary is growing to capture new terminologies, especially for the digital world and other areas. Te Kopapa Reo Māori (TKRM – CIM National Language Commission) shall provide the gazetted words which shall be available on its website as well.

Analysis

CIM LITERACY

The table below shows the results for 2018 to 2021 compared with the targets set by MOE. The targets for subsequent years are also identified.

TABLE 27 Māori literacy rates for Grades 4 and 8 and Year 11. *Source: Education Statistics Report 2020*

Level	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	TARGET
Grade 4	75	57	<i>pending</i>	<i>pending</i>	80%
Grade 8	49	45	<i>pending</i>	<i>pending</i>	85%
Year 11 (NCEA L1)	95	86	<i>pending</i>	<i>pending</i>	70%

Māori literacy rates and overall grades is based on reading progress. Overall the results are tracking well for NCEA L1, however there are some concerning results from grades 4 and 8 cohorts. It is noted that the oral (speaking) language also requires some attention. The Ministry of Education is currently putting together the Project Tuatua Māori to address the strengthening of Te Reo Māori literacy in the schools and the Community.

CIM SPOKEN DAILY

Whilst the methodology for this sub-indicator is being progressed in this financial year, activities for Te Reo Māori has been rolled out. The MOCD has conducted a Reo Takanava (language dialects) program on radio from January to June 2022 for the islands of Mitiaro, Mangaia, Manihiiki, Pukapuka, Atiu and Mauke. A minimum average of three new words are posted on Te Kopapa Reo Māori Facebook on a fortnightly basis. The words will have information relating to its source, definition and pronunciation for ease of learning.

The Census 2021 data indicates that 11.4 per cent speak Cook Islands Māori only and 58.7 per cent speak either bilingual or multi lingual. The table below shows the proportion of the population responding to the question in the census 'spoken language at home' broken down by four age groups.

TABLE 28 Language spoken at home (percentage). *Source: Census*

Age group	Local language	Local and other language	Other language
5–14	2.4	10.3	6.4
15–44	3.8	23.0	14.0
45–59	2.8	13.3	5.8
60+	2.5	12.1	3.7
Total	11.4	58.7	29.9

PERCENTAGE OF NEW CIM CONTENT VISIBLE IN THE MEDIA, IN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS AND SIGNAGE

The MOCD conducted a Reo Takanava (language dialects) program on radio from January to June 2022 for the islands of Mitiaro, Mangaia, Manihiiki, Pukapuka, Atiu and Mauke. Four articles published in Te Reo Māori between January and June 2022 by Te Kopapa Reo Māori; and eight published by other contributors.

Discussions were held between the MOCD and the Ministry of Transport (MOT) with regards to road signs in Te Reo Māori and recommendations are being taken in consideration and how this activity will be progressed. A key consideration in regards to the road signs are the using of visuals in lieu of words for safety reasons. Further consideration will be the use of local art designs – traditional and/or contemporary in signage work, such as the Tourism storyboards with the wooden frame with local art.

NUMBER OF NEW CIM WORDS DEVELOPED AND GAZETTED (AT PARLIAMENT)

The MOCD annual report highlighted 2,307 new Māori words were endorsed by Te Kopapa Reo Māori and ready for gazetting at Parliament. The new words are posted on Te Kopapa Reo Māori Facebook on a fortnightly basis following Te Kopapa Reo Māori meetings held on a monthly basis.

The status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern with signs of improvement**”. There are signs of progression with baselines to be established and methodology to be refined for CIM spoken daily and the percentage of CIM visible on media platforms and public documents published.


INDICATOR 13.2

Percentage of Cook Islands articles, artefacts and media
that are catalogued or developed and digitally archived for public access

Introduction

This indicator measures the progress in cataloguing, developing and digitally archiving cultural resources. The Cook Islands has a vibrant history, with the richness of our past embedded in our arts, crafts, documents, sounds and films. We have an obligation to curate these stories, preserve our history, and promote the development of our culture.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2020	2021	2022	2023		
2.32% (Total items accessioned 6,446, of which 150 have been digitised)	No new data made available at the time of this report			>3% annual increase in digital archives	

Source: National Archives (MOCD)

Comments on methodology

The NSDA2020+ suggests the methodology to be a count of archived items that are accessioned and digitised.

Analysis

The MOCD has partnered with the New Zealand Government to assist the digitising of archival items with Nga Taonga under the UTAINA Project. More information to be reported in the 2022 report. Therefore this indicator is reported as “**of concern**”.


INDICATOR 13.3

Average engagement in cultural activities

Introduction

This indicator measures the average engagement of the population in cultural activities to measure cultural awareness through involvement and pride for culture.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2016	2021	2022	2023		
59.7% of the population 15 years and older participate in some form of cultural activity	No change			≥70% of the population engages in at least >2 hrs/ week of cultural activities as identified in the Census	

Source: Census (NSO-MFEM)

Comments on methodology

The NSDA2020+ suggests that the methodology for this indicator will look at collecting this information from the Census.

Analysis

According to the Census 2021, cultural engagement in the Cook Islands stands at 59.7%. The majority of individuals involved in cultural activities are spectators, accounting for the highest percentage at 59.7%. Performers make up 24.3% of the culturally engaged population, while 13.3% are involved in costume making. Composers and choreographers collectively constitute 8.9% of those actively participating in cultural activities.

It is worth noting that composers tend to be older, falling within the age range of 40 to 64 years. On the other hand, choreographers are generally younger, ranging from 20 to 40 years of age. Additionally, 5.5% of the culturally active population are involved in practicing local medicine.

The Census data also reveals that the most active age group in cultural activities falls within the 15–34 years range.

Considering the assessment, the status of this indicator is labeled as “**of concern**”. This suggests that there are areas of attention or improvement needed to enhance cultural engagement within the Cook Islands.

INDICATOR 13.4

Percentage of national cultural heritage places secured, registered and preserved

Introduction

This indicator measures the percentage of National Cultural heritage places include – Marae, Landmarks, and Institutions located in the Cook Islands.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
Baseline data is pending	<i>To be determined in the next report</i>			At least 3 cultural heritage places maintained per year	

Source: MOCD

Comments on methodology

The NSDA2020+ suggests the methodology in identifying the culturally significant heritage sites and registering them, noting the new additions. Further, at least 3 of the sites registered are maintained in collaboration with the heritage site owners.

Analysis

Four maraes on Rarotonga were identified for inspection and their status recorded:

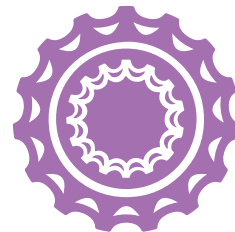
- **Te Miromiro** – Manavaroa Mataiapo's marae in Ngatangia.
- **Manuka** – Vakapora Mataiapo's marae.
- **Maunga Roa** – Tinomana's marae.
- **Tauranga Manu** – Makea Vakatini's marae.

In addition, maraes from the following Nga Pu Toru Islands were identified for inspection and their status recorded:

- **Mauke – Puarakura Marae**. This marae belongs to the Ngati Akatauira. It is quite modern, and still used for ceremonial functions, complete with stone seats for the Ariki, Mataiapo and Rangatira.
- **Atiu – Tiare Oravaru**. Story has it that Captain Cook first landed here in 1777 when he arrived in Atiu.
- **Mitiaro – Te Ava o Tangia**. This is where Tangia first landed when he arrived in Mitiaro.

There are varying degrees of concern with regards to the maintenance of the maraes but the annual inspection will inform of their status of preservation. The National Museum shall release the data in the next report.

The status for this indicator is “**of concern**”.



GOAL 14

A sustainable population

25 Year Target of Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

This goal recognises the challenges of out migration, particularly for the Pa Enua. It seeks to support a sustainable resident population, increase local investment, improve quality of life and promote political engagement. The results for goal 14 indicators give limited information about progress towards the goal and a couple of indicators have not been reported on. Therefore the status of the indicator is “**of concern with signs of improvement**”.

A sustainable population is essential for achieving a sustainable future. Sustainable population management involves balancing population growth with the available resources, ensuring that everyone’s basic needs are met while minimising environmental impacts. This can involve family planning, education, and empowerment of women, as well as promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns. Achieving a sustainable population can help reduce poverty, improve health, and promote social and economic development while preserving our planet’s natural resources. Therefore, promoting sustainable population management is critical for building a more equitable and sustainable world.


INDICATOR 14.1

Resident population of Cook Islanders

Introduction

This indicator measures the number of Cook Islanders that reside in the Cook Islands. Any population is reliant on the economy to provide a market, services and support to each other.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				
Resident population	Rarotonga: 71.9% (10,649)	Rarotonga: 72.5% (10,898)				<p>The resident population to not be less than 15000. Pa Enua not to be less than 30% of the total resident population</p> 
	South: 20.7% (3,072)	South: 20.2% (3,040)				
	North: 7.3% (1,081)	North: 7.3% (1,102)				
	Cook Islands: 14,802	Cook Islands: 14,987				
Resident population of Cook Island Māori (including part Cook Islands Māori)	Rarotonga: 72.6% (7,732)	Rarotonga: 81.7% (8,905)				
	South: 91% (2,795)	South: 94.2% (2,864)				
	North: 96.9% (1,048)	North: 98% (1,080)				
	Cook Islands: 85.8% (12,703)	Cook Islands: 86% (12,849)				

Source: Census 2016, Census 2021

Comments on methodology

Information has been sourced from the Census about both of the following:

- The number of Cook Island Māori resident in the Cook Islands
- The number of Cook Island residents.

Both sets of data are useful for this goal as it is therefore important to also consider the contribution of residents who are not Cook Islands Māori to the economy and the community.

Results from the Census 2021 provide information about the total resident population and ethnic groups. The ability of a population to support a sustainable community and economy cannot be determined by absolute numbers. Other demographic characteristics need to be considered including age, sex, education, and employment status.

Analysis

The table below shows the changes in ethnic composition as a percentage. Between 2011 and 2021 the proportion of the population identifying as Cook Island and part Cook Island Māori is steady whereas the other ethnic group has slowly increased. Most of the Non-Cook Islands Māori residents were located on Rarotonga and an estimated seven per cent were in the Pa Enua.

TABLE 29 Percentage of Ethnic Composition. *Source: Census*

Region / Islands	Cook Island Māori and Part Cook Island Māori residents (%, Number)			%age Other ethnic origin Residents (%, Number)		
	2011	2016	2021	2011	2016	2021
Rarotonga	84%	82%	81.7%	16%	17.9%	18%
Southern Group	96%	95%	94.2%	4%	5.3%	5.8%
Northern group	97%	98%	98%	3%	1.9%	1%
Cook Islands	88%	86%	86%	12%	14%	14%
Rarotonga	8,913	8,734	8,905	1,639	1,915	1,958
Southern Group	3,168	2,909	2,864	122	163	169
Northern group	1,078	1,060	1,080	34	21	11
Cook Islands	13,159	12,703	12,849	1,815	2,099	2,138

It is important to highlight that as of 2021 a National Population policy is in the final stages of completion. This policy holds significant value as it offers the general public an official understanding of the population situation and establishes a clear foundation for government actions to address population-related matters.

With regard to this indicator, its status has been assessed as “**of concern with signs of improvement**”. This suggests that while there are areas of concern regarding the population, there are also positive indications of progress or positive developments in addressing these concerns.


INDICATOR 14.2

Percentage of Cook Islands investment versus Foreign Investment in the Cook Islands

Introduction

This indicator measures the percentage of investment in the country which is by Cook Islanders as compared with direct foreign investment. This recognises the importance of Cook Island ownership of the country's assets and equity in the economy.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
N/A	N/A			To be determined	

Source: BTIB, MFEM

Comments on methodology

The NSDA2020+ suggests that the methodology for this indicator is to be determined by BTIB.

Analysis

No specific data was provided for this indicator; however, a study titled “The Study of Foreign Investment in the Cook Islands” was conducted by MFEM in 2018. The study focused on foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Cook Islands.

FDI in the Cook Islands is primarily governed by the Development Investment Act 1995–96 and the subordinate Investment Code 2003. BTIB serves as the key agency responsible for FDI in the country. Enterprises with foreign ownership exceeding 33% are required to register and obtain approval from the BTIB. Although data on FDI is limited, it is evident that a significant portion of foreign income receipts, driven by the export of tourism services, can be attributed to FDI in the tourism sector. The study identified 116 foreign enterprises operating in the Cook Islands, with the majority operating in the tourism industry.

Anecdotally, there is interest from foreign investors in the Cook Islands. However, the available data from the BTIB does not provide sufficient evidence regarding the potential growth of industries in the primary or secondary sectors.

Given the limited data and concerns regarding the availability of information, the status of this indicator is assessed as “**of concern**”.


INDICATOR 14.3

Foreign Direct Investment as a percentage of GDP annually

Introduction

This indicator measures the percentage of FDI in GDP. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as a percentage of GDP annually refers to the total value of foreign investment into a country’s economy compared to its gross domestic product (GDP) over a year. It is an indicator of a country’s openness to foreign investment and its ability to attract and retain foreign investors.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
N/A	N/A			To have the balance shift away from foreign ownership towards local ownership as far as practical	

Comments on methodology

There is no methodology for this indicator. NSDA2020+ suggest this to be determined in the next report.

Analysis

This indicator has not been reported on for year 1.

The status for this indicator is assessed as “**of concern**”.

INDICATOR 14.4

Voter turnout for the General Elections and the Island Government Elections

Introduction

This indicator measure voter turnout which is the total number of voters as a percentage of total registered votes. Voting in elections is the most direct way that most Cook Islanders can be involved in the political system of our country.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2018	2021				
84.7%	No change			≥75%	

Source: Election Results / Roll (NSO-MFEM and MOJ)

Comments on methodology

The NSDA2020+ suggest this methodology is determined with the advice from the electoral office.

Analysis

The NSDA2020+ is limited to analysing the 2018 general elections. However, it is important to note that the next general elections are scheduled to take place in 2022.

In the 2018 parliamentary general election, the voter turnout was 84.7% among those registered to vote. This is considered a high turnout, especially considering that voting in the Cook Islands is not compulsory and the population is highly mobile.

The table below illustrates the voter turnout rates for the three most recent general elections. The turnout in 2014 was 2.5 percentage points lower than the highest recorded turnout, which occurred in 2006.

TABLE 30 Percentage of voter turnout rates. Source: Election results

General Election year	2018	2014	2010	2006
Voter turnout	84.7%	80.5%	82%	83%

The status for this indicator is “**on track**”.

INDICATOR 14.5

Population Index

Introduction

This indicator assesses the areas that affect the population drain and the factors that contribute to it.

- **Health personnel**

Ratio of health personnel to population

- **Education**

Highest grade of education available on each island and/or the availability of higher education services in-country

- **Working opportunity – employment creation**

This is the equivalent of the middle-class professionals who would return to the Cook Islands if offered a job and salary similar to what they already have abroad, or seek that type of job with all its rewards and so have to migrate in order to get it.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				
Health personnel Ratio per 1000 population		1.7 doctors 8.1 nurses 6.5 allied health workers				
Education Highest grade of education available on each island and/or the availability of higher education services in-country		Rarotonga: 31% (2590) Southern: 18.2% (405) Northern: 22.4% (152)				
Working opportunity – employment creation This is the equivalent of the middle-class professionals who would return to the Cook Islands if offered a job and salary similar to what they already have abroad, or seek that type of job with all its rewards and so have to migrate in order to get it.		N/A				



Source: Census 2021, LFS

Comments on methodology

The methodology are threefold as follow:

i. Health personnel

Ratio of health personnel to population. The NSDA2020+ suggests that the methodology for this indicator looks at the number of health workers / total resident population. Allied health workers definition

ii. Education

Highest grade of education available on each island and/or the availability of higher education services in-country. The NSDP suggests that the methodology for this indicator will look at collecting this information from the Census.

iii. Working opportunity – employment creation

This is the equivalent of the middle-class professionals who would return to the Cook Islands if offered a job and salary similar to what they already have abroad. It also considers individuals who may seek similar employment opportunities with attractive rewards but are currently required to migrate in order to find them. The NSDA2020+ acknowledges that developing a methodology for this indicator will be necessary in order to assess progress and measure success in this area.

Analysis

(i) HEALTH PERSONNEL

By the end of 2020, the health workforce density in the Cook Islands, as identified by the TMO, consisted of 26 doctors, 120 nurses, and 96 allied health workers (headcount). This translates to a density of 1.7 doctors, 8.1 nurses, and 6.5 allied health workers per 1000 population. According to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO), a minimum density of 4.1 doctors and nurses per 1000 population is necessary to achieve high coverage of maternal and newborn health.

These figures highlight that the density of TMO nurses and allied health staff is being met, but there is a shortage of doctors to maintain high coverage of skilled birth attendance. It is important to note that the WHO threshold does not account for a broader range of services and challenges, including non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Given the burden of NCDs in the Cook Islands, there continues to be a shortage of skilled health workers.

The shortage of skilled health personnel remains an ongoing challenge, with the majority of clinicians based on Rarotonga. While the Pa Enua has a small number of doctors, healthcare services are primarily provided by nurse practitioners. Patients requiring further care are referred to Rarotonga Hospital or to New Zealand for medical treatment.

(ii) EDUCATION

The table below shows the number and percentage of highest grade of education per island.

TABLE 31 Number and percentage of highest grade of education per island. *Source: Census*

Island	Census 2016	Census 2021
Rarotonga	20.83% (2251)	23.09% (2590)
Aitutaki	2.19% (237)	2.15% (241)
Mangaia	0.63% (68)	0.48% (54)
Atiu	0.43% (47)	0.37% (42)
Mauke	0.35% (38)	0.38% (43)
Mitiaro	0.19% (20)	0.22% (25)
Palmerston	0.06% (6)	0.10% (11)
Pukapuka	0.15% (16)	0.29% (32)
Nassau	0.04% (4)	0.09% (10)
Manihiki	0.31% (33)	0.34% (38)
Rakahanga	0.06% (6)	0.20% (22)
Penryhn	0.08% (9)	0.35% (39)

According to the Census 2021, higher education has seen an increase in Rarotonga, Mauke, Mitiaro, Palmerston, Pukapuka, Nassau, Manihiki, Rakahanga, and Penryhn. This growth can be attributed to the opportunity provided during the Covid-19 Economic Recovery Phase (ERP), which was administered by MFEM. These islands took advantage of fees-free courses offered by the USP and the CITTI to enhance their skills.

Under the ERP, fees-free courses were delivered by local tertiary institutions, namely CITTI and USP. These courses included upskilling packages, regular courses, and short courses in trades offered by CITTI, as well as select certificate-level courses with a local delivery component offered by USP. The fees-free courses were available from June to December 2020, allowing individuals to acquire new knowledge and skills without financial barriers.

(iii) WORKING OPPORTUNITY – EMPLOYMENT CREATION

No data was provided.

The status of this indicator is “**of concern with signs of improvement**”.



GOAL 15

Our security, a peaceful and just society

25 Year Target of Golden Standard of Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing)

This goal looks at the Cook Islands being a peaceful and just society with effective governance as well as a robust justice system that allows people to be safe and lead productive lives. The results for goal 15 indicators provide limited data therefore the status of goal 15 is reported as “**of concern**”.

Our security, a peaceful, and just society are essential for human wellbeing and sustainable development. Security is not just about protecting people from external threats but also ensuring their safety from internal threats, such as crime, violence, and discrimination. A peaceful society is one where people can live together harmoniously, resolving conflicts through peaceful means. A just society promotes fairness, equality, and respect for human rights, ensuring that everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources. Achieving security, peace, and justice requires collective action, involving governments, civil society, and individuals, to promote social inclusion, rule of law, and democratic governance. A secure, peaceful, and just society is fundamental for achieving sustainable development and ensuring a better future for all.


INDICATOR 15.1

Justice accessibility index

Introduction

This indicator looks at a number of variables which represent the accessibility and effectiveness of our justice system.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
Criminal: 4.63 months	N/A			<6 months median time to resolve cases	
Civil: • Family and protection • Monetary claims	N/A				
Land: • Judge related • Justice of the Peace (JP) related	N/A				
Court and legal complaints: • Lawyers • Land agents • MOJ Staff • Judges • JPs • Process	N/A			>85% of complaints	

Source: MOJ

Comments on methodology

This indicator is intended to measure access to justice based on four components of the justice system:

- **Criminal**. Number of cases.
- **Civil**. Number of cases relating to family and protection and monetary claims.
- **Land**. Median time to resolve land cases relating to Judge cases and Justice of the Peace (JP) cases.
- **Court and legal processes**. Percentage of complaints relating to lawyers, land agents, MOJ staff, Judge, JPs and processes.

The information for this indicator is provided from Ministry of Justice (MOJ).

Analysis

MOJ is currently unable to readily provide information required to measure this indicator.

The status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern**”.

INDICATOR 15.2 Rates of domestic violence

Introduction

This indicator looks at the annual incidence of (reported) domestic violence (DV). This has significant impacts on our society that go well beyond the direct injuries that occur

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2020	2021				
Total domestic violence incidents	73	83			>2% annual decrease, or consecutive years of decrease	

Source: Police

Comments on methodology

This indicator considers reported domestic violence⁶ incidents on an annual basis from police reports. There are limitations to the data provided by police as most of the data is from Rarotonga with minimal information from the Pa Enua.

Analysis

The table presented below provides data on reported domestic violence (DV) offenses registered by the Police during the 2021 period. A total of 83 DV offenses were reported, indicating a 12% increase compared to the previous year when 73 offenses were recorded. The figure below also highlights the locations where these offenses took place, with a significant number of incidents reported in the Vaka Te Au o Tonga area.

TABLE 32 Number of reported DV reported to Police. Source: Police

2020	2021
73	83

⁶ Domestic violence is now defined in s91 of the Family Protection and Support Act 2017. Related terms are defined in 2292-96 of that Act.

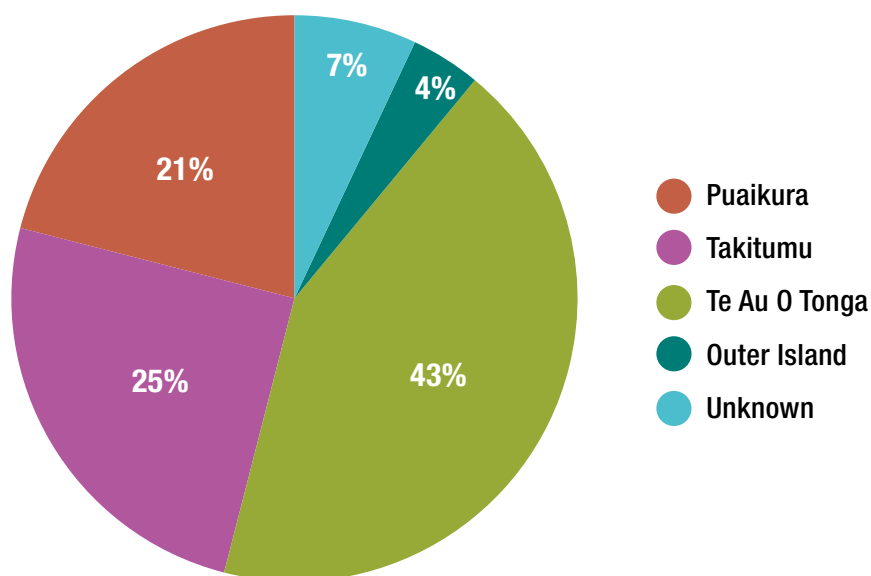


FIGURE 10 DV Vaka Locations. *Source: Police*

All incidents involving disputes and arguments between spouses, partners (current and ex), and family members are classified as domestic violence. The Police have implemented a No Drop Policy to address assaults on females, ensuring that all such cases are pursued through the court system. In situations where a volatile situation arises, the Police can issue a Safety Order, which mandates a five-day separation period to allow the parties involved to calm down. Protection Orders imposed by the court are diligently enforced by the Police.

Regrettably, the status of this indicator is assessed as “**of concern**”, indicating a concerning trend in the handling of domestic violence cases.


INDICATOR 15.3

Motor vehicle accidents

Introduction

This indicator measures the annual incidence of Motor vehicle accidents and the demographics most affected.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
95% 96 of 101 motor vehicle crashes are due to alcohol or reckless driving	60% 59 of 151 motor vehicle crashes are due to alcohol or reckless driving			>2% annual decrease, or consecutive years of decrease	

Source: Police

Comments on methodology

The data used for this indicator pertains to all reported motor vehicle crashes on both Rarotonga and the Pa Enua, as documented by the Police.

Analysis

According to the Police statistics for 2021, there has been a notable increase in the number of motor vehicle crashes, with a total of 151 reported incidents. This figure represents a concerning trend in road safety. However, it is encouraging to note that out of these 151 crashes, only 59 were identified as alcohol-related. This indicates a decrease in alcohol-related crashes compared to the figures from 2019, reflecting positive efforts in addressing the issue of drunk driving.

Despite the decrease in alcohol-related crashes, the overall status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern with signs of improvement**”. This assessment emphasizes the need for concerted efforts and interventions to improve road safety measures and reduce the occurrence of motor vehicle crashes.

INDICATOR 15.4

Reoffending rate

Introduction

This indicator measures the rate of reoffending of previously convicted criminals. This will relate to supervision and custodial related reoffending rates and is broken down to alcohol related and violence related and also high risk and youth reoffenders.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
Alcohol related	N/A				<div>Reduce 2% annually</div> <div><div></div></div>
Violence related	N/A				
High risk	N/A				
Youth related	N/A				

Source: Police

Comments on methodology

For the purposes of this indicator, reoffending is considered to occur when an offender commits a further chargeable offence within a 12 month period. This would be based on all offences registered by the Police each year. The information for this indicator is provided by the Ministry of Corrections (MOC).

Analysis

MOC is currently unable to readily provide information required to measure this indicator. The status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern**”.


INDICATOR 15.5

Average performance of Government ministries as per the OPSC Annual Report to parliament

Introduction

This indicator looks at the annual performance of Government ministries as assessed by the Office of the Public Service Commissioner (OPSC). Government ministries must effectively work with civil society organisations, traditional leaders, and communities to achieve our national development goals.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
71% of key deliverables across 62 outputs or divisions met expectations and above	85% of key deliverables across 70 agency outputs met expectations and above			Performance meets expectation	

OPSC annual report 2021

Comments on methodology

The OPSC Report for 2021 presents results achieved by the 14 public service ministries that report annually to the Public Service Commissioner. It does not include the Ten Island Governments (who report to the Mayor), the five Crown, seven statutory agencies, or the eight state owned enterprises (who report to their respective Boards).

Analysis

The OPSC report 2021 identified a total of 330 key deliverable monitored across 70 agency outputs. A total of 64% achieved above average performance with 22% meeting expectation and 7% needs improvement or their performance is in development. The report highlighted concerns with recruiting people with key competencies as well as capacity and systematic constraints of the public service agencies to deliver on key services. Many ministries identified capacity issues in human resources resulting from the increased workload heightened by COVID-19 and retaining employees.

The total workforce population of the fourteen Public Service Ministries has decreased by 215, from 1,362 to 1,147. The age profile shows that the largest number of employees in the Public Service is in the 51 years to 60 years age group. While the Cook Islands Public sector labour force indicates a high number of females, the Pa Enua labour force is predominantly male sitting at 330 males compared to 68 females, which reflects the nature of work in the Pa Enua (which is primarily manual labour).

The status of this indicator is assessed as “**on track and continues to improve**”.




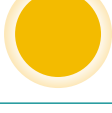
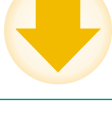
INDICATOR 15.6

Financial Responsibility Index

Introduction

This indicator reviews the index and encompasses eight variables which include the financial responsibility ratios Government used as a financial management benchmark. This indicator ensures Government manages public funds in a prudent and financially sustainable manner.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				
OVERALL						
Tax Revenue to GDP	28.3	20.04			≤25%	
Personnel Expenditure to Revenue	36.0	43.05			≤40%	
Personnel Expenditure to Structural Revenue	39.0	43.70			≤45%	
Net Operating Balance (\$M)	0.8M (0.2% of GDP)	-72.96 (-20.9% of GDP)			Maintain operating surplus	
Net Debt Servicing to Revenue	5.1	6.20			≤5%	
Net Debt Servicing to Structural Revenue	5.5	6.30			≤7%	
Overall budget balance to GDP	-5.0	-20.92			within -/+ 2%	
Net Debt to GDP	17.4	38.21			≤30% and 35%	

Source: MFEM – Economics advice

Comments on methodology

This indicator has eight components averaged into one index:

- Tax Revenue to GDP
- Personnel Expenditure to Revenue
- Personnel Expenditure to Structural Revenue (exclude grants, withholding tax, seabed and fishing revenue)
- Net Operating Balance
- Net Debt Servicing to Revenue
- Net Debt Servicing to Structural Revenue
- Fiscal Balance to GDP
- Net Debt to GDP.

For the purpose of this indicator this benchmark is preferred however further revisions to this indicator will need to be done and will be reflected in the next reporting year.

Analysis

The table below provides the figures for eight fiscal ratios for the year 2019/20 and 2020/21.

TABLE 33 Fiscal Ratios. *Source: MFEM*

Fiscal ratio	Benchmark	2019/20	2020/21
Tax Revenue to GDP	≤ 25%	28.3	20.04
Personnel Expenditure to Revenue	≤ 40%	36.0	43.05
Personnel Expenditure to Structural Revenue	≤ 45%	39.0	43.70
Net Operating Balance (\$M)	Maintain an operating surplus	0.8M (0.2% of GDP)	-72.96
Net Debt Servicing to Revenue	≤ 5%	5.1	6.20
Net Debt Servicing to Structural Revenue	≤ 7%	5.5	6.30
Fiscal Balance to GDP	Cannot exceed a deficit of 1.9%	-5.0	-20.92
Net Debt to GDP	≤ 30 and 35%	17.4	38.21

Based on the provided table (Table 33) of fiscal ratios, it is evident that there are several areas of concern regarding the fiscal health and performance.

Firstly, the tax revenue to GDP ratio exceeded the benchmark in 2019/20 but fell below it in 2020/21, indicating a decrease in tax revenue relative to the size of the economy.

Secondly, both personnel expenditure ratios, in relation to revenue and structural revenue, exceeded their respective benchmarks in 2020/21, suggesting a higher proportion of spending on personnel compared to the generated revenue.

Furthermore, the net operating balance reflects a deficit in both years, with a significant decrease in 2020/21. This indicates that expenditures have outpaced revenues, resulting in a negative operating balance.

Additionally, the net debt servicing ratios, both in relation to revenue and structural revenue, exceeded their benchmarks in both years, indicating a higher level of debt obligations relative to the available revenue.

The fiscal balance as a percentage of GDP shows a deficit that exceeded the benchmark in both years, highlighting challenges in achieving a balanced budget and fiscal sustainability.

Moreover, the net debt as a percentage of GDP increased significantly in 2020/21, surpassing both the 30% and 35% benchmarks. This indicates a higher level of debt relative to the size of the economy.

These findings emphasise the need for careful financial management, revenue generation, and expenditure control to achieve fiscal sustainability and meet the established benchmarks.

It is important to note that in the 2019/20 fiscal year, the Government introduced the Medium-term Fiscal Strategy (MTFS) 2019/20 to 2022/23, aiming to strengthen the strategic focus of expenditure and tax decisions. The strategy includes fiscal rules related to net debt, fiscal balance, expenditure growth, and cash reserves.

The impact of the COVID-19 global outbreak in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years had significant effects on business viability, employment, and Government revenues. The Government implemented the Economic Response Plan (ERP) to support the private sector during this challenging period.

Considering these factors, the overall status of the indicator has been assessed as “**of concern**”, indicating the need for attention and measures to address the observed fiscal challenges.

INDICATOR 15.7


Parliamentary index

Introduction

This indicator measures the following;

1. The regularity with which elected members congregate to debate matters of public importance.
2. Legislative pipeline to completion and
3. Select Committee effectiveness on decisions.

Results

	Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
	2019	2021				
Sitting days	16 days	19 days			40 sitting days	
Legislative pipeline	20 Acts passed	17 Acts passed				
Select Committee	1 committee completed its work: • <i>Infrastructure Select Committee</i>	4 committees completed their work: • <i>Agriculture Bill Select Committee</i> • <i>Privileges Select Committee</i> • <i>Public Accounts Committee</i> • <i>To Tatou Vai Select Committee</i>				

Source: Parliamentary Records (Parliamentary Services)

Comments on methodology

The information for this indicator is from the Parliamentary services. There are no comments about the methodology.

Analysis

Parliament convened for a total of nineteen days in the 2021 calendar year. This equates to 47.5% of the target sitting days of 40 days for the year. A 7.5% improvement on 2019 figures. The ability of Parliament to sit more often was hindered by Covid-19 related travel restrictions for Members based in the outer islands and conflicting schedules for Government members.

The table below presents the total of 17 key legislations were passed in 2021. This figure represents 15% less compared to the 2019 figures.

TABLE 34 Total of Legislations Passed in 2021. *Source: Parliament*

1	Agriculture Act 2021, No. 4
2	COVID-19 (Extension of Duration and Regulations) Amendment Act 2021 No. 13 (1)
3	COVID-19 (Cook Islands National Superannuation) Act 2021, No. 3
4	Cook Islands Immigration Act 2021, No. 16
5	Constitution Amendment (No. 29) Act 2021 No. 8
6	Companies Amendment Act 2021 No. 12
7	Appropriation Act 2021, No. 5
8	Judicature (Validation of Notification of Land Division Applications) Act 2021, No. 11
9	International Relationship Property Trusts 2021, No. 14
10	Income Tax (Company Residence) Amdt Act 2021, No. 17
11	Immigration Act 2021 No. 9 COVID-19 (Extension of Duration) Amendment 2021, No. 6
12	COVID-19 (Extension of Duration and Regulations) Amendment Act 2021 No. 13
13	Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility Act 2021, No. 15
14	Police Amendment Act 2021, No. 1
15	Remuneration Tribunal Amendment Act 2021, No. 7
16	Seabed Minerals Amendment Act 2021, No. 2
17	To Tatou Vai Act 2021 No. 10

Four Select Committees completed their work and reported to Parliament – Agriculture Bill Select Committee; Privileges Select Committee; Public Accounts Committee; To Tatou Vai Select Committee. This was a 75% improvement on the 2019 figures.

The status of this indicator has been assessed as “**of concern with signs of improvement**”.

INDICATOR 15.8

Ratification and implementation of international human rights conventions

Introduction

This indicator measures the International Conventions the Cook Islands has signed up to and whether they have been incorporated into domestic laws.

Results

Earlier year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Target	Current status and trend
2019	2021				
Not reported	180 treaty arrangements				

Source: Cook Islands Multilateral Treaty Arrangements (MFAI)

Comments on methodology

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAI) has provided the information for this indicator. However, the NSDA2020+ suggests that a target for this indicator will need to be determined.

Analysis

This indicator is a new addition under the NSDA2020+. By the end of 2021, the Cook Islands had signed up to 180 treaty arrangements, which are managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration (MFAI). However, it is necessary to further investigate whether these conventions have been incorporated into law. Additional information regarding this matter will be provided in the next reporting year.

The status of this indicator is currently assessed as “**of concern**”.

Conclusion

This report covers the first year of the NSDA2020+ and provides an overview of the progress made towards the 15 NSDA2020+ goals. It includes information on 73 indicators used to measure this progress. The data presented is primarily for either the 2021 calendar year or the 2020/21 financial year, depending on the data collection period. The following summary provides an overview of the results obtained for the indicators and their implications for progress towards the corresponding NSDA2020+ goals.

Overall, the National Indicator Report provides a snapshot of the sustainable development of the Nation across a wide range of indicators. The report highlights both areas of progress and areas that require attention, providing policymakers and stakeholders with the information they need to make informed decisions. By tracking progress over time, the report can help to ensure that policies and interventions are effective in achieving their intended outcomes, and that the Nation is on track towards achieving its goals and objectives and vision towards Turanga Memeitaki. It must be noted that this is a snapshot of sustainable development and does not elaborate on all work being undertaken in respective thematic areas and that this does not reflect the performance of agencies.

Areas that are a challenge and need addressing:

- **Wellbeing measures, data and information**

As this is the first annual indicator report under the NSDA 2020+ we have found things that can be done better. These include measures, data and information systems which are crosscutting and crucial for better decision making. This is a work in progress which will see improvement with progressive indicator reports and completion of the Wellbeing 4 Life Strategy currently under development.

- **General data and information systems**

Ensuring that we are getting good data that is on time. This is a challenge across government which needs to be addressed. Planning towards addressing this is needed noting that there are ongoing developments in this area.

- **Our people**

creating the enabling environment as we aspire to Turanga memeitaki no te katoatoa – wellbeing for all. This will take a concerted effort in developing the best way to do this work over the next generation or 25 years to meet our golden standard of wellbeing target by 2046. It's about ensuring that our people are comfortable, healthy and happy within a thriving Nation.

We hope that this report provides a baseline for improvement into the future towards our vision of Turanga Memeitaki and our global responsibility towards the attainment of regional and global aspirations.

Kia Manuia



GOAL 1 Wellbeing for all




The results show the indicators are “**of concern**”. However, it is important to note that the data used for these indicators is limited, as there is either no data or very little data available. We anticipate that more data will become available starting from Year 2 onwards, which will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the situation.

Indicator	Status and trend
1.1 Employee wellbeing index	
1.2 Youth wellbeing index	
1.3 Family wellbeing index	
1.4 Elderly wellbeing	
1.5 Parents and infants wellbeing	



GOAL 2 Welfare and equity

The results show significant progress towards the goal, with the majority of indicators being considered “**on track**”. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations associated with the data used for these indicators. The reliance on income tax records poses a challenge as it excludes certain individuals with lower incomes, resulting in a partial representation of the overall picture.

Indicator	Status and trend
2.1 Percentage of people under ‘minimum liveable income’	
2.2 The Gini Coefficient – measure of income inequality	
2.3 Real growth in the lowest 20% of incomes	





GOAL 3 Economy, employment, trade and enterprise

The results show the goal is “**of concern with signs of improvement**”.

Indicator	Status and trend
3.1 Real median income	
3.2 Real GDP (aggregate)	
3.3 Growth in non-tourist related industries	
3.4 Visitor yield	
3.5 Total debt to GDP ratio	
3.6 Cost of doing business in trade	



GOAL 4 Manage solid and hazardous waste

The results indicate that progress towards the goal is “**of concern**”. Unfortunately, it has been challenging to gather information specifically about hazardous waste. However, despite the lack of reporting, it is widely acknowledged that the management of hazardous waste remains an area that requires ongoing attention throughout the Cook Islands.



Indicator	Status and trend
4.1 Recycling rate	
4.2 Percentage of hazardous waste	





GOAL 5 Water and sanitation

The results show that progress towards the goal is “**of concern with signs of improvement**”. Information from the Census 2021 indicate an increase of properties using sanitation systems in Rarotonga and Aitutaki as well as access to water however there are limitations with data on the quality of drinking water in Rarotonga and Pa Enua.

Indicator	Status and trend
5.1 Percentage of population with access to sufficient and safe water in their homes	
5.2 Percentage of properties using sanitation systems that meet approved standards	





GOAL 6 Connecting our Nation through infrastructure, transport and ICT

The results demonstrate that progress is “**of concern with signs of improvement**”.

Indicator 6.2, 6.4 and 6.5 has not been reported on so no conclusions can be drawn. It is expected that the data will be available in the next iteration.







Indicator	Status and trend
6.1 Connectivity Index	
6.2 Percentage of national infrastructure that is fit for purpose	
6.3 Transport connectivity index	
6.4 Access to official government data and information	
6.5 National infrastructure completed and maintained – air and sea ports, roads, bridges, drainages and telecommunications cables	



GOAL 7 Health and healthy lifestyles

The results show mixed progress towards the goal with the overall status reported as “**of concern**”.

- The rate of premature deaths from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is “**off track with signs continuing to regress**”.
- Health spending is also “**of concern and continues to regress**”.
- The prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STIs) and youth engagement is “**of concern**” due to limited data.
- Mental health index is “**of concern with signs of improvement**”.
- Average life expectancy is reported as “**on track and continues to improve**”.

Indicator	Status and trend
7.1 Rate of premature deaths from non-communicable diseases	
7.2 Health spending as a percentage of Government expenditure	
7.3 Prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)	
7.4 Youth engagement in physical activity and sports	
7.5 Average life expectancy	
7.6 Mental Health index	



GOAL 8 Education and innovation



The results show “**on track with positive progress**” towards the goal across all goal 8 indicators.

Indicator	Status and trend
8.1 Cook Islands Māori literacy rates	
8.2 Number and participation rates of students in programmes available to strengthen Māori language, culture and understanding	
8.3 Literacy and numeracy rates of selected age groups at grade 4 and NCEA level 1 achievement rates	
8.4 Number and participation rates of students in programme to support inclusive education and student wellbeing	
8.5 Total National research funding and contribution to goal priorities	
8.6 Tertiary and vocational level completion data	
8.7 Total expenditure on innovation and technology	



GOAL 9 Our inclusiveness

Gender, equity and social inclusion

The results show little progress towards the goal and are therefore “**of concern**”. There is a continuing need to make public facilities more accessible to people with disability, this has been reported as “**off track**” and requires attention. However, Government support towards non-government organisations (NGO’s) is “**on track**”.

Indicator	Status and trend
9.1 Percentage of political representatives from different demographics	
9.2 Income disparity between men and other genders	
9.3 Number of fit for purpose facilities and services for the infirm, elderly and disabled on each island	
9.4 Government support to non-government organisations	





GOAL 10 Agriculture and food security

The results show that the status is “**on track with signs of regression**”.

Indicator	Status and trend
10.1 Percentage of food produced locally	
10.2 Total land used for agriculture	
10.3 Minimise the impact of a biosecurity outbreaks in the country	
10.4 Reduction of imported herbicide	





GOAL 11 Biodiversity and natural environment

The results show the indicators are “**of concern**”. Achieving Goal 11 is a significant challenge, particularly on Rarotonga, where the development pressures are greatest.

Indicator	Status and trend
11.1 State of the reef	
11.2 Percentage of protected areas	
11.3 Percentage of yield against sustainable benchmarks	
11.4 Lagoon water quality	
11.5 Economic returns from oceanic and lagoon resources	
11.6 Biodiversity index	



GOAL 12 Climate change, resilience, renewable energy and efficiency

The results show the status is “**of concern with signs of improvement**”.

Indicator	Status and trend
12.1 Resilience index	
12.2 Percentage of population that have access to protection from category 3 or higher cyclones	
12.3 Percentage of electrical generation from renewable energy and maintenance of these sites	
12.4 Annual amount of fossil fuels imported	
12.5 Percentage of median income spent on electricity and cost recovery	

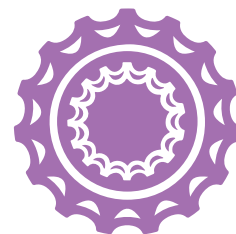




GOAL 13 Cultural heritage, history, identity and language






The results have been assessed as “**of concern with signs of improvement**”. There are signs of progression with baselines to be established and methodology to be refined for CIM spoken daily and the percentage of CIM visible on media platforms and public documents published.

Indicator	Status and trend
13.1 Vitality of the Cook Islands Māori languages and dialects	
13.2 Percentage of Cook Islands articles, artefacts, media that are catalogued or developed and digitally archived for public access	
13.3 Average engagement in cultural activities	
13.4 Percentage of national cultural heritage places secured, registered and preserved	



GOAL 14 A sustainable population

The results give limited information about progress towards the goal and a couple of indicators have not been reported on. Therefore the status of the indicator is “**of concern**”.

Indicator	Status and trend
14.1 Resident population of Cook Islanders	
14.2 Percentage of Cook Islands investment versus foreign investment	
14.3 Foreign Direct Investment as a percentage of GDP annually	
14.4 Voter turnout for general elections and island government elections	
14.5 Population index	



GOAL 15 Our security, a peaceful and just society

The results provide limited data therefore the status of goal 15 is reported as “of concern”.

Indicator	Status and trend
15.1 Justice accessibility index	
15.2 Rates of domestic violence	
15.3 Motor vehicle accidents	
15.4 Reoffending rates	
15.5 Average performance of government ministries	
15.6 Financial responsibility index	
15.7 Parliamentary index	
15.8 Ratification and implementation of international human rights convention	





Our Vision of Wellbeing

An empowered, innovative and environmentally conscious people who are grounded in our culture and languages, with the highest quality of wellbeing in life.

