



Economic Development Strategy: In harmony with our culture

The Economic Development Strategy outlines where we want our economy to be in ten years. An economy where we work together to build a dynamic, prosperous and inclusive future. An economy that works in harmony with our culture and environment. The Strategy looks at cross-cutting economic issues impacting our Islands, and the challenges and opportunities that we face over the next decade. It provides an outline of the actions we will take to create and set a stronger economic and fiscal foundation for our country.

Objective 3: Developing our people & culture

When we think about the economy, we are thinking about our people. Our people are the key to building our economy and improving our living standards.

Human capital is a key determinant of our economic growth and living standards

We want to increase our population, create more employment, and develop new skills. We want to build on the quality of our schools and create more education opportunities for our young people. We want everyone to have the chance to contribute. Importantly, we want to transform our economy in a way that recognises and celebrates our culture, traditions and values.

Putting our skills on display

Tarani Napa imports and exports products for her business Tarani Crafts and Pearls in Avarua. Tarani is aware of the role she plays in the local economy, "I have contributed to the economy by supporting local products in the past 20 years here. I believe I have inspired many to become businesswomen in their own right and as we can see that at the market now with all those who come to display their talents and skills."

While the shop has been hard-hit by the loss of tourism, Tarani remains upbeat about the future. "Keeping open has helped us become more creative and plan for the future. Hopefully, things will all get better, and we'll have some new ideas to continue supporting the economy in our small way."

Have your say

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) is seeking feedback on the draft strategy by 11 December 2020. Please provide your comments on the draft Strategy:

- online through a short survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SHY6MH5>
- by mail at PO Box 120, Avarua
- by email at MFEM.economics@cookislands.gov.ck, or
- in person at Level 1, MFEM Building, Avarua.





How will the Strategy develop our people & culture?

What does this mean in practice?

Building our skilled population

The size, make up, and skills of a nation’s population are critical determinants of the labour force necessary to sustain economic growth.

Greater efforts to attract Cook Islanders, and their skills, back to the Cook Islands to live and work, and creating stronger linkages with the Cook Islands diaspora.

Increasing our labour force participation rates

In a country with workforce size constraints, greater participation in the labour force by females will help grow the economy.

An increase in maternity leave paid by Government, and greater support for families in the form of early childcare regulation and after-school care.

Increasing our skills base

More people with industry-relevant skills will remove a critical constraint and contribute to future economic growth in the Cook Islands.

A domestic loan scheme for studies in-country, a pilot apprenticeship scheme and strengthened support for vocational training in the Pa Enea.

Building on the quality of our schools

Our education system – primary, secondary and tertiary – provides the foundation for our future labour force.

Strengthened career pathways for secondary students, development of a Tertiary Strategy to align our tertiary system with the future demands of the labour market in a diversified economy and a review of the Government’s investment in our teachers.

Valuing the contribution of our culture, traditions and community values

Cook Islands culture, as well as being important in its own right to individuals and the community, also makes a valuable contribution to the Cook Islands economy.

Strengthened focus on Cook Islands culture and traditions in the school curriculum review, and expansion of current partnerships with local Non-Governmental Organisations to foster continuity of traditional knowledge.

Guaranteeing a productive workforce

A productive workforce is a healthy one. A productive workforce is also one that is readily available to work.

Continued delivery of the Cook Islands Non Communicable Disease Strategy and the development of a new aged care framework.

“Cook Islands’ culture and values is critical to the future of the nation and its people.”

Participant, Economic Development

“Education is critical for securing our future. We need to invest in more in-country study opportunities and scholarships focusing on upskilling people, especially women.”

Participant, Economic Development Conference

