



Challenging Economic Statistics in the Pacific

Perspectives from
PFTAC, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu



Which Statistics?

- ◆ *National Accounts (NA), incl price indicators (CPI, import prices, etc)*
- ◆ *Balance of Payments (BOP), incl Int Investment Position & trade statistics*
- ◆ *Government Finance Statistics (GFS)*
- ◆ *Monetary & Financial Statistics (MFS)*
- ◆ *Employment/Unemployment*



Media Report

- ◆ *The Australian* (Pacnews) reported on November 21 (selected quotes from report by Australian Treasury Department):
 - “Region sinking in economic mire”
 - “Average incomes in PNG and the Solomons are only marginally above \$US500 a year, which is the level of sub-Saharan Africa.”
 - “Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands and Vanuatu - no real economic growth in the past 20 years.” =>GDP



Media Report (ctd)

- ◆ “Rapid population growth in Melanesia has made it hard for nations such as PNG and Solomon Islands to achieve growth in income per person.” =>economic or social statistic?
- ◆ “Agriculture has only a limited ability to absorb a rapidly growing labour supply and is, in any event, declining as a share of Pacific economies.” =>employment and GDP
- ◆ “Private investment was also low at between half and two-thirds of the average level for developing countries.” GDP and BOP/IIP



Media Report (ctd)

- ◆ “The Pacific islands depend heavily upon commodity income to support their budgets. Whenever commodity prices are high, the additional government revenue is spent but there is no ability to reduce public spending when they fall.” =>GDP, prices, GFS
- ◆ “Samoa, which embarked on a programme of economic reform in the mid-1990s, and the Marshall Islands are the only nations that have consistently run surpluses.” =>GFS
- ◆ “Aid provides important support to many nations, although it has been in long-term decline. The level of aid in PNG was \$US40 a head, compared with an average of \$US31 in Africa.”
=>BOP, GFS



Source of data?

- ◆ The newspaper article does not state its sources
- ◆ Agencies sometimes are not aware of national data and “create” their own estimates!
- ◆ First place to look is country’s website – but “official statistics” not limited to what the NSO produces
- ◆ PRISM, hosted by SPC



[Feedback to PRISM]

PRISM

Home About PRISM Resources MDGs Economic Social Tourism Environment Other

NATIONAL DATA

- American Samoa
- Cook Islands
- Fiji
- French Polynesia
- FSM
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- Marshall Islands
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- New Caledonia
- Niue
- Palau
- PNG
- Pitcairn Islands
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu
- Wallis et Futuna

Uploading NSO web pages to test sites at SPC

There has been a significant improvement in this area. NSOs whose websites are hosted at SPC are now experiencing less problem when uploading their web pages to their test sites, especially after revamping their NSO Internet websites.

Uploading NSO websites to their test sites at SPC has been a concern at the start of the PRISM project. This improvement will contribute to timely data posted on the PRISM website.

Training attachment - Guam Bureau of Statistics webmaster

Mr. Calvin A Saruwatari, webmaster for the Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans undertook a one week training attachment at SPC. The purpose of this training was to revamp the Bureau's Internet website, update and expand coverage of the site's content.

The training was conducted from 13 - 17 November 2006.

NEWS AND DEVELOPMENTS FROM STATISTICS OFFICES

Solomon Islands

The Solomon islands Statistics Office (SISO) has currently released the final reports on the 2005/06 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) jointly funded by Ausaid and New Zealand Government. The report features results both at national and provincial level.

[View or download the reports.](#)

Marshall Islands

A survey of businesses and employees, coordinated by the National Training Council (NTC) in conjunction with the Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO), has recently been conducted. The survey was part of an in-depth regional analysis implemented by the Pacific Islands Forum and funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). This study will lead toward a Pacific-wide plan on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

FIGURES AT A GLANCE

INTRODUCING THE PACMACK INDEX

PRISM TRAFFIC INCREASING

MDG DATA - INFANT MORTALITY RATE (IMR)

PACIFIC IS. POPULATION PROJECTIONS - 2006

Country	Total	Males	Females
Fiji Is.	831,263	422,308	408,955
New Caledonia	238,035	120,040	117,995
PNG	6,187,108	3,196,582	2,990,526
Solomon Is.	487,237	250,913	236,324
Vanuatu	221,417	113,034	108,383
FSM	110,218	56,030	54,188
Guam	167,371	85,337	82,033
Kiribati	93,527	46,169	47,358
Marshall Is.	55,981	28,650	27,331
Nauru	10,131	5,159	4,972
CNMI	84,487	37,997	46,490
Palau	20,044	10,767	9,277
Palau	20,044	10,767	9,277
Am. Samoa	63,308	32,257	31,051
Cook Is.	13,572	6,997	6,574
Fr. Polynesia	258,709	132,571	126,138
Niue	1,591	798	793
Pitcairn Is.	50	26	24
Samoa	185,234	96,233	89,002
Tokelau	1,398	694	704
Tonga	99,298	50,678	48,620
Tuvalu	9,652	4,786	4,866
Wallis et Futuna	15,260	7,657	7,603

Notes:
1. Population estimates and projection are



Country Statistics Websites

- ◆ <http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/>
- ◆ <http://www.spc.int/prism/country/sb/stats>
- ◆ <http://www.spc.int/prism/country/tv/stats>



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News Releases

Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2005/06 - final results

The Solomon Islands Statistics Office (SISO) has finally released the report on the HIES 2005/06. The report features results at both national and provincial levels.

➤ [Read or download the reports here](#)

Consumer Price Index - June 2006

The index for the month went up by 1.5% from 330.8 in May to 335.8 for June. This increase was mainly from imported items, specifically Kerosene (from \$6.26/litre to \$6.76/litre), whilst for market prices which fluctuate constantly, also rose by 7.1%.

➤ [Click here for more information](#)

Merchandise Trades

The merchandised trade balance in June records a deficit of \$154.2 million, an increase of 10.3 per cent from the preceding quarter. This is a drop of \$41.3 million (21%) from the corresponding quarter a year ago. The total export for the June quarter is \$228.5 million, a drop of 0.4 per cent from the preceding quarters.

➤ [Click here for more information](#)

Visitor Arrivals - June Quarter 2006

International arrivals to Solomon Islands during the June quarter 2006 totaled 6,054 persons. Arrivals classified as visitors totaled 3,141 marked an increase of 13.7% from previous quarter and 8.1% increase from the corresponding quarter a year ago.

➤ [Click here for available data](#)

Annual Business Survey - 2003

This bulletin provides statistics compiled from information supplied by business enterprises in response to the 2003 Survey of Business Activities (SBA). The statistics cover employment and financial information for both private and government business enterprises listed on the business register maintained by the Statistics Office, Department of Finance and Treasury.

➤ [Key results and summary tables are available here](#)

KEY STATISTICS

Population

2003 Mal	231,267
Fem	217,019
2004 Mal	237,626
Fem	222,484
2005 Mal	242,927
Fem	228,339
2006 Mal	248,944
Fem	234,139

CPI - Annual Ave. Inflation (%)

2001	7.4
2002	7.1
2003	10.3
2004	9.1
2005	7.0
2006 Apr	7.6
2006 Jun	

Merchandise Trades

Exports (fob SBD '000)

2005 Mar	166,375
Jun	188,770
Sept	207,870
Dec	225,795
2006 Mar	229,487

Imports (cif SBD '000)

2005 Mar	383,550
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FIJI ISLANDS BUREAU OF STATISTICS

The Official Statistical Agency for the Fiji Government



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Our Latest Releases

Overseas Merchandise Trade Statistics, September 2006

Provisional data on Fiji's total imports for the month of September 2006 was FJD275.3 million, domestic exports was FJD55.0 million and total exports was FJD92.7 million.

Click [here](#) for more information on the Overseas Merchandise Trade Statistics, September 2006.

Visitor Arrival 2004[p]

Provisional visitor arrivals first exceeded the 500,000 mark in 2004, reaching a record of 502,765. This represented an increase of 16.7% over the previous high of 430,800 recorded in 2003.

Click [here](#) for more information on the Visitor Release 2004.

Consumer Price Index, October 2006

The All Item Consumer Price Index [CPI] for the month of October 2006 registered an increase of 0.1 percent over September 2006 [141.1] and now stands at 141.2.

Click [here](#) for more information on the Consumer Price Index for October, 2006.

Visitor Statistics - November 2004

Provisional visitor arrivals for November 2004 totalled 40,940 and it represents an increase of 14.3% [5132] over the November 2003.

Click [here](#) for more information on the Visitor Statistics, November 2004.

Hotels & Tourist Accommodation, Quarter 2, 2006

An increase of 6.6% was recorded for Rooms Available for quarter 2, 2006 when compared to the same period in 2005. Total Room Nights occupied was 356,261 for quarter 2 representing an increase of 0.1%.

Click [here](#) for more information on the Hotels & Tourist Accommodation, Quarter 2 2006.

KEY STATISTICS

POPULATION

31st Dec 2005 (prov est)	
Fijians:	463,432
Indians:	316,093
Others:	66,560
TOTAL:	846,085

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Annual Average Inflation Rate	
2000	1.1
2001	4.3
2002	0.8
2003	4.2
2004	2.8
2005	2.4

VISITOR STATISTICS

Visitor Arrivals	
2003	430,800
2004	502,765

OVERSEAS TRADE [FJD000]

Total Imports	
2004	2,501,639



Who Produces What?

	GDP	BOP	GFS	MFS
Cook Islands	Y	Y	Y	
Fiji	Y	Y	Y	Y
FSM	Y	Y	Y	y
Kiribati	Y	Y		
Marshall Islands	Y			
Nauru				
Nue				
Palau	Y			
Papua New Guinea	Y	Y		Y
Samoa	Y	Y	Y	Y
Solomon Islands	Y	Y		Y
Tonga	Y	Y		Y
Tuvalu	y			
Vanuatu	Y	Y	Y	Y



Metadata

- ◆ Sources and Methods
- ◆ Timeliness
- ◆ Access
- ◆ Confidentiality rules, etc
- ◆ General Data Dissemination System (GDDS)

GDDS Metadata

Fiscal Sector

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Coverage		Periodicity		Timeliness	
GDDS	Current Practice	GDDS	Current Practice	GDDS	Current Practice
Comprehensive Framework					
Central Government Operations					
Producing and disseminating comprehensive data on central government transactions emphasizing: (1) coverage of all central government units; (2) use of appropriate analytical framework; and (3) development of a full range of detailed classifications (tax and nontax revenue, current and capital expenditure, domestic and foreign financing) as relevant.	Same coverage as recommended for the budget general government sector on a cash basis. In the 2005 Budget Supplement included a GFSM2001 Statement of Government Operations on a cash basis. Data for non-budget general government sector collected annually by the Bureau of Statistics for national accounting purposes but not currently incorporated in fiscal reporting.	Annual	- Monthly (restricted dissemination) - Quarterly - Annual	6-9 months	- Quarterly: 4 months - Annual: 11 months
<i>General government or public sector operations data, strongly encouraged where subnational levels of government or public enterprise operations are of analytical or policy importance.</i>	<i>Local government data collected annually by the Bureau of Statistics for national accounting purposes but not currently incorporated in fiscal reporting.</i>	Annual	Not applicable.	6-9 months	Not applicable.
Central Government Debt					
Producing and disseminating comprehensive data on central government domestic and foreign debt, with breakdowns (debt holder, instrument, currency, etc.) as relevant.	Same coverage as recommended	Annual	Annual	6-9 months	4 months (external debt); 6 months (total debt)
Data Categories and Indicators					
Central Government Aggregates					
Revenue, expenditure, balance, and financing with breakdowns (debt holder, instrument, currency), as relevant.	Same coverage as recommended	Quarterly	Quarterly and Annually.	1 quarter	Quarterly: 1-4 months Annual: 11 months
<i>Interest payments</i>	<i>Same coverage as encouraged</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>Annual</i>	<i>1 quarter</i>	<i>11 months</i>
Central Government Debt					



GDDS

- ◆ Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, Solomons have published metadata
<http://dsbb.imf.org/Applications/web/gdds/gddscountrycategorylist?strcode=FJI> for Fiji
- ◆ Five other countries have drafted metadata but yet to finalise



Support for Economic Statistics?

- ◆ At present, just me full time, plus a few experts I engage
- ◆ SPC provide TA on HIES and CPI
- ◆ StatisticsNZ assist with PCTrade
- ◆ Ad hoc TA from ADB (Palau, RMI and FSM recently), UNESCAP
- ◆ Far more resources being put into social/demographic statistics at present, focus on MDG measures



Issues

- ◆ Resources
- ◆ Economic statistics require ongoing commitment, not “projects” (except for initial development). Users need time series!!
- ◆ Integration and coordination across government agencies - standards (definitions, classifications, etc) – key role of NSO