

Vision and Policy Intent

The Cook Islands [National Strategy for the Development of Statistics \(NSDS\) 2015–2025](#)—under review in 2023—has a vision that by 2025, the Cook Islands National Statistical System (NSS) in its implementation will achieve statistical excellence for an evidence-based Cook Islands.

The Cook Islands NSDS identifies five strategic objectives to achieve:

- sound legislation and policy framework for statistics,
- better access to, use and communication of statistics,
- enhanced knowledge management,
- effective coordination across all agencies in the national statistical system, and
- implementation of a continuous programme of institutional and human resources capacity building.

Other national policies and plans relevant to the Cook Islands NSS:

- [National Sustainable Development Agenda 2021–2121](#) sets a 100-year vision as well as short-term targets on wellbeing.

National Statistical System

The [Cook Islands Statistics Office \(CISO\)](#), established under the [Cook Islands Statistics Act 1966](#) later replaced by the [Cook Islands Statistics Act 2016](#), is the lead statistical agency, managed by the Government Statistician.

The CISO, a division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, is responsible for collecting, compiling, analysing, abstracting and publishing statistics on economic, financial, production, environmental and social matters.

Other data producers include ministries and other agencies.

Data users include:

- Government agencies
- Politicians
- Private sector
- Media
- International organisations
- Civil society organisations
- General public.

Key Features

The CISO, guided under the Cook Islands Statistics Act 2016, is enacted to produce statistical information that provides value in decision-making for the people of the Cook Islands.

Data collection – most recent population census: [2021 Census of Population and Dwellings](#). Other latest publications include the [Miscellaneous Statistics Sept 2023](#).

Dissemination – The CISO has a [Statistics Publication Calendar](#) that provides target release dates when reports will be available.

Data are disseminated via paper, website, online databases, databanks.

ICT Statistical Infrastructure – CISO developed its own website with links to data tools such as the [Pacific Data Hub](#) and [Cook Islands PopGIS3](#).

It hosts information on economic and social statistics, and census and surveys.

Coordination

The CISO, mandated by the Statistics Act 2016, coordinates the departments' collection, compilation, and dissemination of official statistics and related information.

The Cook Islands NSDS specified that the CISO is responsible for the overall coordination of the NSDS with a dedicated full-time NSDS Coordinator.

A **Statistics Advisory Council** was established under the NSDS with responsibility for oversight of the official statistics produced by all agencies in the NSS.

In 2023, a Data Community of Practice was established bringing together practitioners from all agencies.

Challenges, priorities and opportunities

Key challenges affecting Cook Islands NSS performance as outlined in the NSDS include:

- agencies have limited capacity and processes in place to assess and validate the quality of their outputs,
- neither users nor producers have the capacity, much less the resources, to conform to the NSS,
- capacity for statistical collection, compilation and analysis varies across the sectors, and
- there is no systematic research and statistical information on the public's perception of the government's performance.

Some of the **key priorities** outlined in the NSDS include:

- better statistics use for evidence-based decision-making,
- improving dissemination, communication, coordination and stakeholder engagement,
- data access and sharing,
- increasing analytical capacity, and
- developing human resources.