



Economic Development Strategy: Our environment

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 set a stronger economic and fiscal foundation for our country.

Objective 5: Greening our economy

While we build our economy, we want to ensure that we are protecting our environment.

Our Islands are known for their clear water and pristine beaches, while we transform and grow, we want to ensure we protect what we have. To do this we need to ensure we are using fewer resources, generating less emissions and better managing our waste. We also need to ensure we are preparing for the impacts of climate change and natural disasters that may impact our Islands.

Investing wisely in managing and protecting our natural environment will improve economic growth and well-being using fewer resources and generating fewer emissions.

Powering our islands

The Cook Islands Government is rapidly increasing the amount of power produced from renewable energy sources. One of the goals of the project was the installation of mini-grid solar power systems in the Northern Islands. Previously, electricity was provided by diesel generators, usually for around 12 hours per day. Power supply was affected by issues of reliability, maintainability, capacity and access to adequate, regular diesel supplies.

Using the latest equipment and smart metering, the systems can be supported remotely. Pa Enua residents have also been trained to maintain and operate the systems themselves. Now with full-time power, there has been an improved quality of life, reduced impact on the environment and increased economy activity.

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 written submissions 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 make us greener?

Improving our eco-efficiency

Eco-efficiency means growing our economy while decreasing our environmental impact – by using fewer resources and generating fewer emissions.

Preparing for climate change

In addition to doing our bit to prevent climate change, we also need to prepare for the impact of extreme climatic events.

Planning for economic disaster recovery

The better prepared we are for the economic impacts of a natural disaster, the faster we can recover.

Sustainable management of our economic waste

A greener economy also means finding better ways to manage the waste – solid (landfill), liquid (sewerage) and gas (air pollution) – generated by our economy.

More effective environmental regulation

A greener economy means better regulation and enforcement of the sustainable use of our environmental resources.

What does this mean in practice?

More investment in reliable, affordable, renewable energy, greater use of smart energy technology and support for sustainable management of our key natural resources, such as Marae Moana and our inland water resources.

More investment in cyclone shelters and water system upgrades in the Pa Enua and foreshore strengthening in Rarotonga.

Maintaining Government disaster insurance cover and access to other sources of disaster recovery funding, developing a comprehensive post-disaster economic recovery action plan.

Construction of a new sewerage system for Muri, a sanitation masterplan for Rarotonga and a new solid and hazardous waste management legal framework.

A new National Environment Act that will promote economic growth in harmony with our environment, including a more robust environmental impact assessment process to assess new developments.

‘Waste management is a priority. We are a tiny island, we can’t afford to create more waste.’

Participant, Mauke Consultation

‘We should be forward thinking around drought and climate change, particularly in the Pa Enua and the north. Need to innovate to improve our resilience.’

Participant, Economic Development Conference