

The ADRI-Sustineo Pacific Index – measuring commitment to development in the Pacific

By Andrew Rowe
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The Pacific Index is the result of research collaboration between Sustineo and the Alfred Deakin Research Institute at Deakin University. The 3-year project was partly funded by an ARC Linkage grant and the results will be presented at the official launch in Canberra on Tuesday 6 May.

In contrast to the idyllic paradise often presented in the popular media, Pacific island countries continue to face many profound development challenges. In the last few decades they recorded the lowest and most volatile regional per capita growth rates, the worst progress towards the MDG of halving income poverty, and there are widespread concerns regarding the control of diseases.

These facts are even more sobering when placed in the context of foreign development aid to the region having doubled since 2002. Many Pacific island countries have received some of the highest amounts of aid relative to GDP and population.

It is clear that rich countries need to do more, and do things differently to address these rather considerable development challenges. This effort needs to be targeted sensibly towards those key policy areas that will have the greatest impact – not just foreign development aid, but also those other drivers of growth and development.

The ADRI-Sustineo Pacific Index is derived from the well-known Commitment to Development Index (CDI) produced by the Center for Global Development. It will provide a relative measure of the contribution rich countries make in supporting development in the 14 Pacific island nation states of Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Nauru, Niue, Tuvalu, Samoa, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The Pacific Index will be presented as a ranking across the seven policy areas of foreign aid, trade, finance, migration, environment, security, and technology. This will display the donor countries that have the greatest commitment to development in each policy area, and conversely reveal those countries contributing the least relative to others.

This will be a powerful tool for policy advocacy, and help to hold rich countries to account

for their claims of supporting development across the Pacific. At a deeper level, the research offers the opportunity to influence policy development and program delivery in the Pacific.

So what does the inaugural 2014 Pacific Index reveal? Which country displays the greatest commitment to development in the Pacific? What countries are at the top of the index rankings? What countries are at the bottom of the rankings?

To find out the answers attend the launch on Tuesday 6 May - register [here](#).

We think the results may surprise some, and will certainly stimulate an interesting conversation that will feed into the current dialogue on benchmarking the aid program and, more generally, into discussions on the relevance of rich country actions to developing countries.

About the author/s

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