

Tourism Development in the South Pacific: The Cases of Nauru and Tuvalu

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Abstract

Tuvalu and Nauru are isolated developing island nations located in the South Pacific Ocean. In contrast to the established larger Pacific destinations such as Fiji and Tahiti, the tourism industries on both Tuvalu and Nauru are in their infancy. Tourism development in these remote island nations faces a myriad of challenges which include a lack of infrastructure, environmental susceptibility, economic vulnerability, difficulties with access and considerable distances from major tourist markets. This paper reviews tourism on Tuvalu and Nauru and evaluates their current situation regarding potential tourism development through workshops with relevant stakeholders, surveys and subsequent SWOT analysis. The results of the paper outlined a large number of challenges faced by Tuvalu and Nauru due to their geographic location but also highlighted that both Islands possess fascinating and unique features that have the potential to attract niche tourism markets. A key finding of this paper is that the tourism stimulus or potential attraction can also be the chief threat to the islands' economic survival hence the two edges of the sword. Further research is required to assess the effect of the withdrawal of the Refugee Processing Centre on Nauru's economy and to evaluate the impact of climate change on Tuvalu's society and potential adaption strategies.

Keywords: Climate change; Nauru; SWOT analysis; tourism; Tuvalu

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