

Country profile

New-Caledonia

1 OVERVIEW



SIZE
18 576 m²



CAPITAL
Nouméa



CURRENCY
Pacific Franc
fixed rate with the Euro
(1 € = 119,3317 XPF)



OFFICIAL
LANGUAGE
French



POPULATION
268 767
(août 2014)



MEDIAN AGE
31 years old



IDH
0,79
(51st in the world)



GOUVERNEMENT DE LA
NOUVELLE-CALÉDONIE

2 GEOGRAPHIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DATA



GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

New Caledonia is a French overseas territory, situated in the South Pacific, 1 500 km East of Australia and 2 000 km North of New Zealand.

New Caledonia covers 18 576 km² of land and is composed of a main island, the « Grande Terre », and of 3 islands, the Loyalty Islands. Its Exclusive Economic Zone covers 1 450 000 km². New Caledonia is the third biggest territory in the Pacific.

Located 17 000 kilometers away from France, New Caledonia is one of the three French Overseas Territories in the South Pacific, along with French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna.

New Caledonia houses the biggest closed lagoon in the world and 30 per cent of the world's pristine coral reefs.

In July 2008, six coral zones were added to UNESCO's World Heritage.

FAUNA AND FLORA

New Caledonia houses a unique flora and fauna. More than 3 500 species of plants, 4 300 species of animals and 1 000 species of fish have been identified.

New Caledonia's exceptional natural heritage also attracts scientific interests. Indeed, the island is a fragment of the ancient continent Gondwana which drifted 250 million years ago. Some of the unique species which existed at that time have been preserved.

CLIMATE

Exposed to trade winds, New Caledonia enjoys a temperate tropical climate, which alternates between a cool and a hot season. Maximum temperatures (above 30°C) are registered between December and February and the minimums (below 20°C) between June and August.

Climates are quite different on each side of the central range, which separates East and West Coasts. The western side is rather dry and dominated by savannahs of niaouli trees and significant livestock operations.

The eastern side, more humid and luxuriant, houses thick forest which invades the feet of mountains, and a narrower littoral. The island's highest point is the Mont Panié (1 629 m).



GOUVERNEMENT DE LA
NOUVELLE-CALÉDONIE

3 INFRASTRUCTURES

COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURES



New Caledonia can rely on developed communication infrastructures. It benefits from a 5400 km road network. The territory has one international airport, which is one of the biggest platforms in the insular Pacific, as well as 10 domestic airports. The port of Noumea is the biggest in the French Overseas Territories and the ninth in France in tons of merchandise.

New Caledonia also benefits from island-wide high speed internet and mobile networks thanks to the roll out of optic fiber. A submarine cable already links New Caledonia to Australia and a second cable will secure the first soon and enable New Caledonia to become a hub in the insular Pacific.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURES



New Caledonia's public service is comparable to what exists in the biggest countries in the region in terms of development. It is the 4th biggest economy in Oceania with only 270 000 inhabitants.

With the opening of the « Médipôle » in 2016 New Caledonia acquired a world class health facility, including a cancerology unit using state of the art treatment techniques developed in France. Two other significant projects are currently being built and should open in 2018 : the Nouvelle Private Hospital (PHP) and the North Hospital (CHN).

Moreover, in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary education, New Caledonia can rely on a diversified system, including public and private institutions, whose level is comparable to what exists in the most developed European countries. Thanks to the continuous growth of its catalogue of courses, the University of New Caledonia welcomes 30% more students than it did 10 years ago. At the same time, the number of students enrolled in higher degree and preparatory classes has more than doubled.

Finally, New Caledonia Houses an IRD (Research Institute for Development) located in Nouméa, which is the main center for the French Tropical Overseas Territories. The center focuses on the environment, natural resources and health research. The IRD in New Caledonia contributes to the territory's outreach in the region by acting as a link with the institutes based in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Wallis-and-Futuna.



4 INSTITUTIONAL ORGANISATION

New Caledonia is a sui generis collectivity of the French Republic whose institutional foundations are articulated in the Nouméa Accord of 1998. It enjoys a large legislative and administrative autonomy.

THE INSTITUTIONS

■ **France** is represented by the High Commissioner of the French Republic, who holds regal powers (defense, public order, justice, currency, foreign affairs). They are also in charge of legality and budgetary controls regarding local collectivities.

Local institutions include the Congress, the Government, the Provincial Assemblies, the Customary Senate, the Economic, Social and Environmental Council and the Customary Councils.

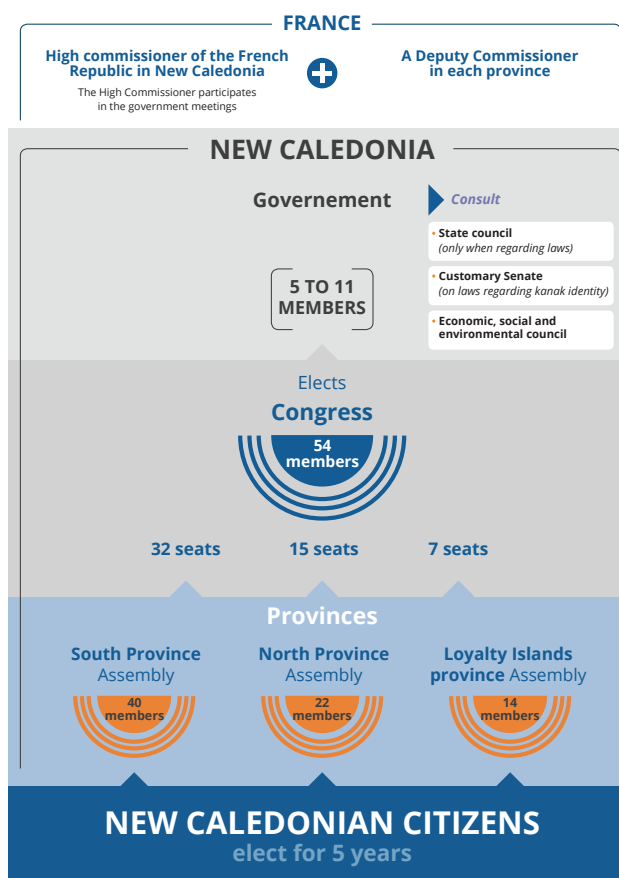
■ **The Congress** is New Caledonia's legislative assembly. It is composed of 54 members, selected from the Provincial Assemblies, who are tasked with voting on deliberations and laws.

■ **The Government of New Caledonia** is the territory's executive branch. It selects the laws and deliberations to be submitted to Congress. It is a collegial government in which every political group existing in Congress is proportionally represented.

■ **The Customary Senate** is composed of 16 members representing New Caledonia's 8 Customary Areas. Its opinion is sought (it can be compulsory or optional depending on the case) on laws regarding kanak identity.

■ **The North, South and Loyalty Island Provinces** each house an assembly composed of members elected for a period of five years by the citizens. The provinces are empowered under common law.

NEW CALEDONIA'S INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION



5 ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL DATA



MAIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS



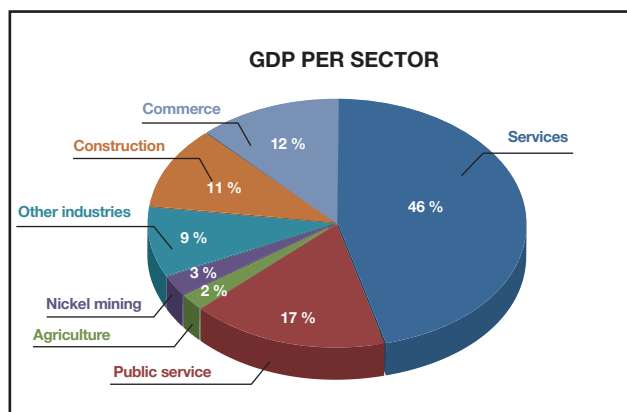
INDICATORS	NEW CALEDONIA
GDP (in billions of USD)	7,6
GDP per inhabitant (in USD)	31 180
Growth rate	2,2 %
Inflation rate	0,7 %
Tax revenues (in millions of USD)	1616,45
Social security cost (in millions of USD)	862,90
Importations (in billions of USD))	2,34
Main import partners	France (27 %) China (11 %) Australia (10 %)
Exportations (in billions of USD)	1,24
Main export partners	China (33 %) South Korea (23 %) Taiwan (9,6 %)

ECONOMIC SITUATION



For the period 2002-2013, the average annual GDP growth rate was estimated at 6.2 % in nominal value and 3.5 % in actual value (that is to say, after adjustment for price variations), boosted by the constructions of two world class nickel production plants.

Because the New Caledonian economy is very dependent on nickel prices, the government launched a plan in 2014 aimed at diversifying the economy to facilitate growth, competitiveness and job creation. Numerous policies were also launched to support innovation, export, agriculture, renewable energies, and the local transformation industry.



NICKEL



The New Caledonian economy is strongly dependent on nickel, which represents approximately 95 per cent of exportations, 20 % of GDP and 20 % of jobs (direct, indirect, and induced). New Caledonia houses about 25 % of worldwide resources and 15 % of the world's reserves.

Three world class plants (the last two represent more than 7 billion euros in investment each), owned by international corporations(Vale, Eramet, Glencore), are located on the main island and a fourth plant, owned at 51 % by New Caledonian public interests was built in South Korea, in partnership with the group POSCO.

Once they reach their full production capacity, these plants, fully supplied by local deposits, will be able to produce more than 200 000 tons of nickel, or 10 % of worldwide consumption. In addition, to this industrial production, New Caledonian miners also export crude nickel ore to Japan and China.

The emergence of new industrial sites, both in terms of production capacity and new technologies, stems from New Caledonia's desire to grow its share of the added value created locally by the industry while also addressing the existing economic imbalance between the provinces in the long term.



TOURISM



New Caledonia can rely on a rich cultural heritage and a variety of landscapes to differentiate itself from the other Pacific Islands. With a capital resembling a French seaside town, New Caledonia embodies the « French Touch » in the Pacific, combined with the Oceanian and Melanesian cultures. In terms of accommodation, the offer is diversified, ranging from stays in traditional tribes to five star hotel chains (Hilton, Sheraton, Le Méridien...). The multitude of activities available on both land and sea, allows the

targeting of a wide range of niche markets. New Caledonia attracts more than 115 000 tourists every year, a number which is growing constantly. In addition, 500 000 cruise tourists visited New Caledonia, which makes it the second cruise port in France after Marseille. In late 2016, the government initiated a new tourism development strategy focused on developing sustainable tourism, encouraging the building of new hotels and reinforcing New Caledonia's reputation in the region and in new markets such as China. The objectives set by the new strategies are 200 000 tourists and more than a million cruise tourists by 2025.



FOREIGN AFFAIRS



In accordance with its institutional status and the principle of shared sovereignty applicable to foreign affairs, according to the Nouméa accord, New Caledonia enjoys a significant amount of autonomy in this area.

The Government foreign policy is articulated around three orientations:

■ **Firstly, the strengthening of its multilateral engagement.** New Caledonia is a member of numerous technical regional organizations. It houses the headquarters of the South Pacific Community (SPC), the biggest of the aforementioned regional organizations, in Nouméa. In 2016, it became a full member of the Pacific Islands Forum, the biggest regional political organization; this accession enables New Caledonia to participate fully in the major regional decision-making processes. New Caledonia also recently became a member of the International Organization of La Francophonie and ambitions to join UNESCO in 2017.

■ **Then, the development of its bilateral relations.** The Government of New Caledonia has strong relationships with several of its neighbors, including Vanuatu, Australia and New Zealand. The Government has initiated an ambitious process aimed at strengthening its political



dialogues with these countries. Cooperation agreements have been signed with Vanuatu and New Zealand, which determine the cooperation priorities with these countries. The same kind of agreement should be signed with Australia and the Solomon Islands by the end of the year.

■ **Finally, the development of a genuine economic diplomacy.** New Caledonia's regional integration greatly relies on its economy's international outreach. The Strategic Plan aimed at supporting New Caledonian exportations, approved in October 2017, articulates a strategy to enhance the profile of New Caledonian economic actors on the international stage.

This foreign policy directly contributes to New Caledonia's institutional emancipation.



DIRECT FOREIGN INVESTMENTS



Direct foreign investments have decreased in New Caledonia due to the end of the financial transfers between the mining group GLENCORE and its holding KNS, which took place during the construction of its plant. However, New Caledonia remains the third biggest destination for foreign investments in the insular Pacific.

The Institutions put in a place a welcoming regulatory framework for foreign investments, which includes different tools such as the tax exemption scheme and public aids.

Year	DFI in millions of USD
2 011	1 344,44
2 012	2 184,76
2 013	1 725,56
2 014	1 393,07
2 015	1 142,02
Average	1 764,60

TRADE RELATIONS SPECIFICITIES



Due to New Caledonia's remoteness its history and its industrial culture, New Caledonians have developed a pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit. Trust, frankness, and a commitment to keep promises are core values in the local economic environment.

Business relations in the workplace are characterized by multiculturalism, which makes it essential to take everyone's

values into account. The Nouméa Accord also states that positions in local companies should first and foremost be filled by New Caledonian citizens.

Foreigners are generally surprised by the New Caledonians' frankness. Indeed, New Caledonians are known to be naturally open-minded, direct and spontaneous while remaining courteous, even when they disagree.



6 ENVIRONNEMENT CULTUREL

CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT



Beyond its contrasted landscapes and its heavenly beaches, New Caledonia possesses significant cultural and human wealth. New Caledonia was discovered in 1774 by Captain James Cook. France took possession of the island in 1853 during the Second Empire. New Caledonia was a settlement where settlers and convicts settled alongside the kanak people who had been present on the island for more than 3000 years.

New Caledonia's culture and its traditions are as interesting as they are diverse thanks to the millennial kanak history and migration waves from France, Asia and Polynesia.

Melanesian Kanak culture with its rites, traditions, dances and ceremonies, is closely linked to land while French culture brings its modernity and way of life. This cultural diversity encourages blending without diluting cultures.

French is the official language and the most spoken in New Caledonia. However, due to New Caledonia's multiculturalism, other languages are frequently used in everyday life. More than 38 different languages are spoken on the island, including 28 kanak dialects.

GASTRONOMY



New Caledonian cooking is original and varied. It is the result of a blend between cultures and evolved throughout the island's history. It is strongly influenced by other culinary traditions, notably Asian and Oceanian. Like metropolitan French people, New Caledonians love food.

The cultural diversity which characterizes the island manifests itself on the plate and diversifies New Caledonian taste. "bougna," the kanak traditional dish, is New Caledonia's most popular culinary specialty. The ingredients used in the dish (fish or white meat, yams, taros, bananas, sweet potatoes) are sprinkled with coconut milk, wrapped into banana tree leaves and steamed in a stone oven, dug in the ground, for several hours.



7 NUMEROUS ASSETS

NEW CALEDONIA CAN RELY ON NUMEROUS ASSETS :



- A favorable geostrategic position. It is situated at the center of the Pacific and at the heart of Melanesia.
- High performing industrial facilities aligned with European standards. The highest development level in the insular Pacific territories thanks to an efficient public service and modern research facilities.
- Stability in terms of justice, health, currency and security.
- High capabilities thanks to a level of training linked to French standards.
- An open, dynamic and prosperous market.
- An exceptional quality of life thanks to its variety of landscapes and environments, its cultural diversity and its way of life which is conducive to the practice of sporting and nautical activities....

FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Department of Regional Cooperation
and External Relations :**

www.cooperation-regionale.gouv.nc

**Yves LAFOY, Official Representative of New Caledonia
to New Zealand :**

yves.lafoy@diplomatie.gouv.fr

**Vincent MELANI,
Export support officer :**

vincent.melani@gouv.nc



GOUVERNEMENT DE LA
NOUVELLE-CALÉDONIE