

**Linkages between Tourism and Agriculture in South  
Pacific SIDS: the case of Niue**

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A thesis submitted to  
Auckland University of Technology  
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of  
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

2012

New Zealand Tourism Research Institute (NZTRI)  
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## Glossary

AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AUT	Auckland University of Technology
AUTEC	Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
EEZ	Economic Exclusive Zone
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IHT	<i>International Herald Tribune</i>
MIRAB	Migration (M), Remittances (R), Aid (A) and Bureaucracy (B)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NIOFA	Niue Island Organic Farmers Association
NZ	New Zealand
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
NZTRI	New Zealand Tourism Research Institute
PACRICS	Pacific (PAC) Rural Internet Connectivity System (RICS)
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SIDSNET	Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Network (NET)
SMTE	Small and Medium Tourism Enterprise
SOPAC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPTO	South Pacific Tourism Organisation
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
WWOOF	Willing Workers on Organic Farms
WTO	World Tourism Organization

## **Attestation of Authorship**

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Evangeline Singh

### **Ethics Approval**

As this thesis used surveys that included human participants, ethical approval was required from AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC). Approval was received on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008: Ethics Application Number 07/224.

## Acknowledgments

*Even when it hurts, even when it's hard, even when it all falls apart, I run to you my Lord, lover of my soul and healer of my scars. You alone steady my heart as a voice deep within reassures me that above every human power is the Almighty's supreme power that never fails the humble heart. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, Amen. I give praise to the Lord and Mother Mary for their unconditional love and blessings.*

I would like to express my deepest heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to those without whose support and contribution this thesis would not have seen a successful completion. First and foremost, I would like to say a very special 'thank you' to my primary supervisor Professor Simon Milne, for his tremendous support, encouragement and assistance throughout my 'PhD journey'. No words will ever be enough to truly express my sincere appreciation to Prof Simon Milne, who was my best mentor and guide with an endless aura of positivity during the periods of 'high and low swells' of my journey. Thank you Prof Simon Milne for your never ending 'words of wisdom' and trust in me. Secondly, I am extremely thankful to my secondary supervisor, Associate Professor John Hull for his overwhelming assistance and awesome words of encouragement. Thank you Associate Prof John Hull for always 'cheering for me' and supporting me to a successful completion of my thesis.

My special thanks goes to the research participants – to all the growers, village councils and community members, business operators, government officials and tourists in Niue. Without the valuable opinions, precious contributions and strong support from these research participants, this thesis would certainly not have looked the same. I would like to say a very warm and heartfelt 'thank you' to all the people of Niue for their support, smiles and contribution during my stay on the island – thank you for making me feel welcome, sharing with me your food and accepting me as part of your family.

To my friends at AUT and the team at NZTRI and School of Tourism and Hospitality, especially those that have been my companions at some point in this journey towards completing my PhD – thank you very much for all the warmth you shared with me. Due to the vast number of friends that have brought meaning to my life at some stage of this journey it is not possible to name all of them but nevertheless their memories will always remain in my heart.

Last but not the least I would like to dedicate this PhD thesis to my parents, Mr and Mrs Singh for teaching me the value of hard work, honesty and trust in God.

To all the people that I have mentioned and to those that I may have missed out, that have contributed in one way or another to the success of this thesis and to the readers of this thesis, I would like to say thank you and God bless.

## Abstract

Tourism is playing a growing role in many Pacific Island economies. Even in the smallest MIRAB (Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy) economies, tourism is seen as an area of policy significance by governments and donors. One area that is often highlighted as having potential to enhance the local benefits of tourism is the creation of linkages to agriculture. The research question of this thesis is: What is the potential within Niue to create linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors? Specifically, the research examines the:

- characteristics of tourism and agriculture and their existing linkages, and
- constraints to, and facilitators of, tourism–agriculture linkages.

The research also explores the:

- value of a mixed-methods approach to understanding tourism–agriculture linkages, and
- contribution of tourism–agriculture linkages within the contexts of dependency, regulation and MIRAB approaches.

The research outcomes will not be specific only to Niue, but will also be relevant for understanding the complexities involved in nurturing tourism–agriculture linkages for other ‘islands’ in the Pacific.

There were 284 responses received from the online tourist survey. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 29 growers, 34 tourism operators and 12 government officials. Informal discussions were held with ten elders, three village councillors and 60 tourists in Niue.

The current tourism–agriculture linkages in Niue are minimal: there is limited availability of any formalised agriculture- and village-related experiences. This research shows a latent demand for ‘local and unique’ experiences – something that can allow tourists to get a ‘sense of place’ and improve tourism–agriculture linkages incrementally over time.

This research highlights that growers can meet some of the demand for local produce that are in season. The increasing number of small-scale tourism enterprises and village projects reflect the participation of Niueans in tourism. Attempts made by the administrators of tourist websites in Niue to provide up-to-date information imply their desire to enhance tourists’ and locals’ experiences of tourism. The governments

of both Niue and New Zealand are eager to reduce Niue's sole reliance on MIRAB by nurturing a yield-based tourism industry.

Tourism in Niue will continue to exist as a small-scale activity and its linkages to agriculture will be limited due to its inability to overcome a number of constraints. Inconsistent availability of local produce, lack of supply of tourism experiences, limited promotion of local experiences, and the lack of an overarching strategy hinder tourism–agriculture linkages. Limited fertile soil and water, seasonality of local produce, population decline, heavy dependence on MIRAB, and poor collaboration between stakeholders further compound the barriers to tourism–agriculture linkages.

No one theoretical framework is really suited to understanding the potential to nurture tourism–agriculture linkages. This study has attempted to integrate the approaches of MIRAB, dependency and regulation theories in the Niue context. MIRAB approaches show the importance of migration and remittances and add a deeper understanding to the phenomenon of returning Niueans. Regulation theory provides an understanding of visitor demand, networking between small enterprises and the critical role of government in tourism. Dependency theory brings into focus the continued dependent and uneven relationship between the global system and local factors. The integration of these three theoretical approaches shed light on the challenges facing many of the 'islands' in the Pacific.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter initially discusses the rationale of the study, highlighting the immediate economic challenge facing Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific and the role of tourism in sustaining livelihoods and stimulating sectors of the economy, including agriculture. The chapter then provides a brief overview of Niue and outlines the proposed conceptual framework for this study. The chapter concludes with the research questions and an overview of the structure of the thesis.

### **1.1 Rationale for this Research**

South Pacific SIDS, including Niue, face an immediate problem of sustaining livelihoods due, in some part, to the decline in the ability of the agriculture sector to generate income, employment, foreign exchange and sustain economic growth (Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008a, 2008b; SIDSNET, 2007; Prasad, 2003). As the agriculture sector has struggled or declined, another sector, tourism, has grown in significance in many nations and has been highlighted as a development industry in most Pacific SIDS (Milne, 2010a, 2010b; WTO, 2006, 2001; UNESCAP, 2000). Tourism is an important sector in Niue and other Pacific SIDS and is considered a key tool for creating opportunities for economic growth and stimulating other sectors of the economy including local agriculture (Panakera et al., 2011; Milne, 2010c; WTO, 2006).

Research suggests that in order for tourism to create economic linkages to agriculture, the stakeholders of the two sectors in Pacific SIDS will have to consider a range of environmental, social, technological and management issues (Prasad and Roy, 2008, pp. 170–171; SPC, 2008, p. 53). For example, the Niue Government now has a framework for sustainable development that acknowledges the interdependence between viable populations and sustainable environmental and economic resources management. The Niue Government has also emphasised the need for good governance and effective policy-making in this framework (SPC, 2008, p. 53; WTO, 2001).

The role of stakeholders such as government officials and local communities in the formulation of policies is necessary to promote tourism sustainability, encourage

entrepreneurship and support the diversification of the agriculture sector in Pacific SIDS (Panakera et al., 2011; Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008a; 2008b; WTO, 2001).

This study focuses on the particular case of Niue, a nation that is part of the group of smaller Pacific SIDS that Bertram and Watters (1985) and Bertram (1999; 1986) referred to as MIRAB (Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy) economies: Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. The MIRAB model attributes the continued survival of these island nations to the persistence of migration, remittances, aid and bureaucracy that do not conform to export-led growth and private-sector development (Bertram, 1999).

In all the smaller Pacific SIDS, the tourism industry is small scale with relatively small tourist numbers. The agriculture sector in the smaller Pacific SIDS is mainly at the subsistence level (Panakera et al., 2011; Stanley, 2004, p. 1–3). This research uses the case of Niue to explore the linkages between tourism and agriculture. There is a relative lack of in-depth information available on these linkages in all Pacific SIDS including the very smallest ‘micro-states’. There is also a lack of information available on the characteristics of potential tourists and the types of tourism products and services offered by Pacific SIDS, including the smaller island nations. The lack of comprehensive data on visitor characteristics, spend per tourist, and industry linkage structures is a constant factor that continues to hinder the development of yield-driven tourism strategies in Pacific SIDS (Milne, 2006). Given the close link between yield enhancement and visitor experience it is imperative that visitor data does not just contain demographic information but also psychographic material—with a focus on satisfaction. The tourism industry in Niue and other Pacific SIDS desperately needs an effective decision support system based on robust data (Milne, 2010b; 2010c; 2008a; 2008b).

This thesis highlights approaches and methods that can enable these short comings to be addressed. In other words, this study shows a methodological approach that is useful in gaining a deeper understanding of the tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue – a smaller Pacific SIDS. Consequently the findings of this research provide insights into the characteristics of the two sectors and a profile of tourists in Niue – something that is of importance to understanding linkages between tourism, agriculture and local food.

Niue is an exemplar of an island in the Pacific that is struggling to nurture the linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors and supporting the development of a higher-yield tourist industry that is closely linked to the local economy – something that will help to boost the sustainability of the two sectors and foster economic growth in the long term. The case of Niue provides an understanding of the challenges and potential opportunities in building a small-scale tourism industry in other SIDS, especially those characterised by MIRAB economies.

## **1.2 Agriculture and Tourism**

Agriculture production is vital to the economies, food security and social well-being of Niue and other Pacific SIDS (FAO, 2004). The decline of the agriculture sector's ability to sustain livelihoods and promote economic growth is a result of the inability of many Pacific SIDS to exploit economies of scale and minimise production costs. This is due to their limited land area, population, domestic market and natural resources (EU, 2007, p. 35; Tisdell, 2002; Hook, 2002; Chandra, 1995). High production costs are exacerbated by the expense of developing infrastructure, training and technology needs, and the significant transportation costs associated with the remoteness of SIDS in the region (Prasad and Roy, 2008, p. 165; Adams, 2002; Hook, 2002). A scarcity of fertile land, and difficult market access, compound the barriers to agricultural sustainability (EU, 2007, p. 35).

Small domestic markets limit the opportunities for local substitution of imported agricultural products, thus increasing SIDS' reliance on imports and international markets. This means Pacific SIDS are more vulnerable to global commodity price fluctuations (Hall, 2009; Connell, 2007; IHT, 2006; Cohn, 2003). Island nations concentrate on exporting primary agricultural products and have relatively few global trading partners (Sharma, 2006; FAO, 2004). Interregional trade among the islands is limited, and Australia and New Zealand (NZ) remain the key trading partners due to the relatively short distance and the cultural and political bonds between them and the Pacific SIDS (Sharma, 2006; FAO, 2004).

The agriculture sector's declining ability to sustain economic growth in Pacific SIDS (Hall, 2009) has exacerbated the rate of rural–urban drift (World Bank, 2000). If rural areas are not developed to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities, then it is

predicted that by 2020, more than 50% of the population of Pacific SIDS will be living in urban areas (Storey, 2003; World Bank, 2000). Rapid urbanisation has worsened the social and health problems associated with unemployment and poverty, putting pressure on governments of island nations to provide essential services (EU, 2007, p. 35; AUSAID, 2006; McVey and King, 1999, p. 56).

Overseas migration rates and remittances to Niue and other SIDS in the region are projected to decline due to economic pressures and the restructuring of regulatory environments. Although aid to island nations is not expected to diminish significantly in the future, it will be carefully scrutinised by the donors (Ratha et al., 2008; AUSAID, 2006; Appleyard and Stahl, 1995). The region suffers from a shortage of skilled labour, and the majority of Pacific nations emphasise human development in their development strategies (EU, 2007, p. 35). In order to move beyond MIRAB, it is essential to boost local economic growth, while still sustaining the culture and identity of the islands and their natural resource base (AUSAID, 2006).

Tourism is considered a key tool by many Pacific SIDS for creating opportunities for economic growth (Panakera et al., 2011; WTO, 2006; Government of Niue, 2008a; 2008b; Milne, 2005, 1992). The tourism industry in Niue is based around small-scale visitor activity (Hall, 2009; Connell, 2007; de Haas, 2000, p. 168; Berno and Douglas, 1998). Pacific SIDS, and especially the MIRAB nations, face barriers that constrain development of the tourism industry including distance from neighbouring countries, limited transport links and vulnerability to natural disasters (Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008a; 2008b; Connell, 2007; Sisifa, 2000). The cost of airfares and the lack of information and awareness in the source markets such as New Zealand and Australia have made it difficult to achieve or sustain the tourist numbers needed for a viable industry in MIRAB nations.

For Pacific SIDS that are faced with immense problems in their struggle for economic growth, tourism provides a supplement to agriculture as a source of income, employment and foreign exchange. Tourism opens up new markets that are not subject to the tariffs, quotas and other barriers to trade that continue to limit the growth of island nations' agricultural commodity exports (Connell, 2007; Ayres, 2002, p. 146; WTO, 2001; McVey and King, 1999, p. 56).

Researchers argue that linkages between tourism and agriculture in Pacific SIDS can create opportunities for employment and income generation as well as help to maintain local cultural identities and natural resources (Berno and Oliver, 2010, pp. 14–16; Milne, 2009a; Berno, 2006, p. 209; Prasad, 2003; Berno and Douglas, 1998; Milne and Nowosielski, 1997). The substitution of foreign imports with local supplies increases backward linkages to the surrounding economy (Berno as cited in Veit, 2009, p. 23; Milne, 2005; WTO, 2004). The demand for local products from the tourism industry can not only help to stimulate agriculture output but also potentially encourage practices such as traditional methods of planting that involve minimal chemical use; it can also create a local cuisine that incorporates cultural preparation methods and locally grown organic produce (Sims, 2009; Meyer, 2007).

Research shows that linkages between tourism and agriculture may fail to emerge for a number of reasons: imported food is cheaper than local produce, hotels accept an opportunity cost to ensure superior quality and regularity of supply, and tourism operators are not fully aware of the type and quantity of locally grown produce (Sims, 2009; Telfer and Wall, 1996; Brohman, 1996). Sometimes local farmers do not want to change their traditional crop production because they lack information on the types and quantities of food needed by the tourism industry, are unable to maintain regular supplies, and/or they feel inhibited from dealing with small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMTes), (Berno and Oliver, 2010, p. 14; Telfer and Wall, 1996; Brohman, 1996; Belisle, 1983).

Supply or production-related factors can also constrain the development of linkages between tourism and agriculture. To this extent the nature of the local farming approach can influence the level of linkage between tourism and agriculture – a subsistence-based agriculture will somewhat constrain the development of linkages between the two sectors. The seasonality of locally grown produce and the quality and cost of local production can further limit the linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors (McGehee and Kim, 2004). Expanded sales of local produce and adequate entrepreneurship will lead to adding value in tourism and encourage producers and marketing agents to develop standards of quality control and supply regularity (McGehee and Kim, 2004; Torres, 2002; Cole and Parry, 1986, p. 10).

For the purpose of this thesis, 'local food' will be used to refer to locally grown produce and cuisine made from mainly Niuean produce or prepared from a mix of local and imported products. A key linkage between tourism and agriculture sectors is the supply of local produce to café and restaurant operators. By incrementally increasing the amount of local produce used in cooking meals for tourists instead of solely relying on imported ingredients, leakages of tourism earnings can be reduced (Martinez et al., 2010; Berno as cited in Veit, 2009, p. 23; Sims, 2009; Berno as cited in Young and Vinning, 2007, p. 41, 43). To this extent, the researcher will explore the intricacies involved in the supply of local produce to the tourism industry and the types of meals available for tourists.

In this thesis, 'agriculture' will be used more broadly to refer to the cultural and village-based lifestyle that mainly revolves around food and agricultural activities – something that is intertwined into a central part of the daily life of Niueans. Culture and village-based activities that revolve around food production and consumption provide an opportunity for tourists to participate in agriculture-related experiences – something that can create some linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue (NZTRI, 2009; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Hall and Sharples, 2003, p. 5). To this extent, the researcher will examine the complexities involved in the opportunities available for tourists to participate in local agriculture-based experiences through village and culture-related activities in Niue.

### **1.3 The Case of Niue**

Niue is the world's largest and highest raised coral atoll and a SIDS in the South Pacific. It is situated in a central position in Polynesia, with Tonga to the west, Samoa to the north and the Cook Islands to the east; New Zealand lies 2400 kilometres to the south-west (Figure 1.1). Niue and other SIDS in the South Pacific face an immediate and widespread challenge of unemployment, which creates poverty, frustration and, potentially, social instability and crime (Prasad and Roy, 2008, p. 165; AUSAID, 2006). These island nations lack diversity in their economies which are largely focused on the traditional agriculture sector, fisheries in some cases and the tourism industry. The agriculture sector in Niue is mainly subsistence-based, with taro and drinking coconuts

the only agricultural commodities that are exported to NZ, and even this is on an ad hoc basis (Government of Niue, 2007a, 1989).

**Figure 1. 1 Location of Case Study: Niue**



Source: World Atlas (2011; <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/oceania/nu.htm>)

Niue has limited natural resources. While its land mass is only 259 square kilometres, it does have a significant marine environment — its Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ) covers approximately 390,000 square kilometres (de Haas, 2002). Niue is approximately 73 kilometres in circumference, with two distinct terraces of porous limestone. The upper terrace, which is 60 metres high at its highest point, slopes steeply to a 0.5-metre coastal terrace, ending with high cliffs that are 20 metres or more above sea level. A rugged fringing reef, which is in places more than 100 metres wide, surrounds the island (Government of Niue, 2007a). Due to the terrain of atoll and porous limestone, the soil is generally poor, with highly leached coral residues, a mixture of volcanic ash or debris, and no surface water (Heyn, 2003).

As Niue does not have the vast stretches of beach offered by other Pacific SIDS, its tourism industry differs from theirs, attracting tourists that are different from the typical ‘sun, sand, sea tourists’. The limited promotion and marketing budget for

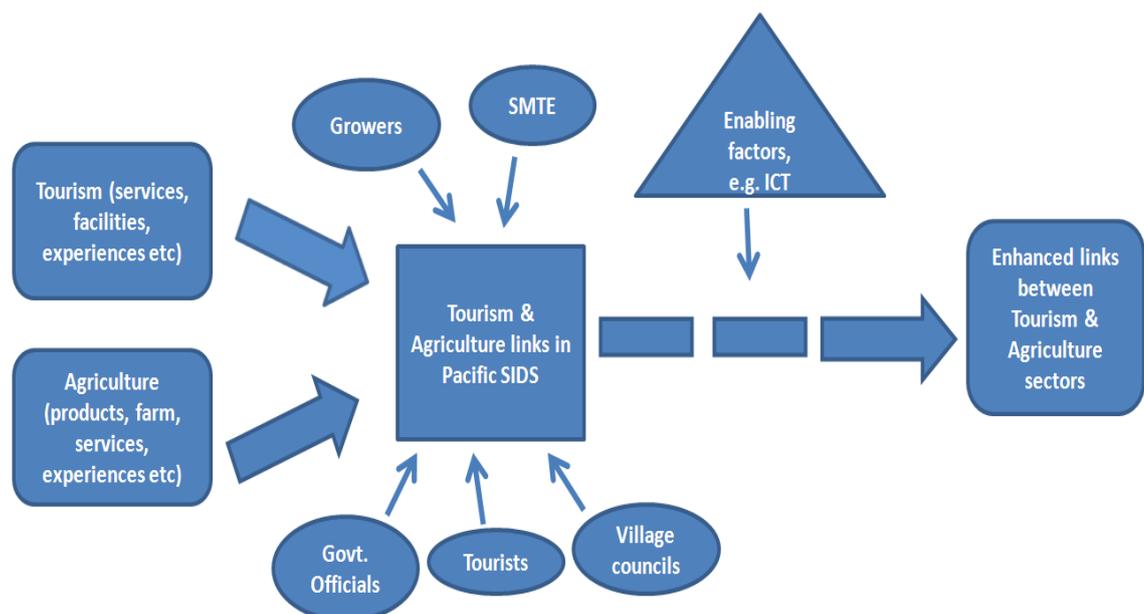
tourism in Niue and its limited accessibility is reflected in the relatively small numbers of tourists travelling to the island: in 2009 there were just 4662 visitors, according to recent data from Statistics Niue (2010). Niue has experienced a poor history in establishing a regular and reliable air link, with Polynesian Airlines, Air Nauru and Royal Tongan Airlines having serviced the isolated island in the past (Taumoepeau, 2009; Connell, 2007; de Haas, 2000, p. 171; Sisifa, 2000).

Supporting a small-scale tourism industry has been the target for aid focused on community development in Niue. For example, over the past 10 years, substantial amounts of aid money have been given by donors to Niue with the understanding that the island would develop its tourism industry in order that there would be less reliance on outside sources of aid (Connell, 2007; de Haas, 2000, pp. 172–173; Cole and Parry, 1986, p. 10). Tourism growth remains a major focus of national government development strategies in Niue (Government of Niue, 2008a; Connell, 2007).

### 1.4 Proposed Conceptual Framework

The linkages between the agriculture and tourism sectors in Pacific SIDS are complex. An exploration of the interactions between the stakeholders in the two sectors, as illustrated by a proposed conceptual framework for this research, is designed to enhance understanding of these linkages and how they may be nurtured (Figure 1.2).

**Figure 1.2 Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Linkages between Tourism and Agriculture in South Pacific SIDS**



The research focuses on the following stakeholders: tourists, growers, SMTEs, government officials and village councils. The thesis explores the ways in which each of these stakeholder groups interact with each other and their perspectives on the issues and factors surrounding the linkages between tourism and agriculture. The active role of government in the formulation of appropriate tourism policies is necessary to promote the industry's sustainability, encourage entrepreneurship and support the creation of linkages to the local agriculture sector (Aref et al., 2010; Timur and Getz, 2009; WTO, 2001).

Research shows that local communities and other stakeholders often focus on the benefits and economic well-being of integrating agriculture and tourism activities (Iorio and Corsale, 2010; Meyer, 2007; Milne and Nowosielski, 1997). Efforts to maintain local agricultural resources and sustainable tourism activities require the recognition of a people-centred approach, where stakeholders can contribute at their own level to achieve 'holistic' development (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011; Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; FAO, 2004; Jamal and Getz, 1995). Local community participation in tourism planning and ownership is a key element for sustainable development (Timur and Getz, 2009; WTO, 2006; Key and Pillai, 2006; Harrison, 2004; UNESCAP, 2000; UNEP, 1996; ICLEI et al., 1996, pp. 8–9).

## **1.5 The Research Questions**

This thesis uses the case of Niue to examine the linkages between tourism and agriculture in a smaller Pacific SIDS, and in particularly MIRAB economies (Bertram (1999; 1986; Bertram and Watters, 1985). The Niuean case has broader implications for other bigger Pacific SIDS because all of these nations feature small islands. The case of Niue highlights issues that are relevant to SIDS everywhere, and especially to the nations in the Pacific that are struggling to gain relief from being highly dependent on MIRAB economies by nurturing a small-scale tourism industry. Research findings will be valuable to policy-makers in designing appropriate tools and strategies for sustainable tourism development in Pacific SIDS.

### **The key research question of this thesis is:**

What is the potential within Niue to create linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors?

**The supporting questions of the research specifically within Niue are:**

- What are the characteristics (i.e. size and structure) of the agriculture and tourism sectors?
- What are the existing linkages between tourism and agriculture?
- What are the constraints and facilitators for creating linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors?

The research also:

- Demonstrates the value of adopting a mixed-methods approach and involving multiple stakeholder perspectives in understanding the complex inter-connectedness between tourism and agriculture.
- Contributes to the literature on the linkages between tourism and agriculture, and on the economic development of SIDS, particularly in MIRAB economies.

Overall, this thesis provides broad insights beyond the case of Niue: its findings can also be applied to SIDS in the Pacific and elsewhere. In particular, the findings of this research will aid the understanding of the challenges and potential opportunities that 'an island' faces in the struggle to develop a sustainable, yield-focused tourism industry.

## **1.6 Structure of the Thesis**

Chapter 2 discusses the sustainable development of agriculture and tourism in Pacific SIDS and the concept of developing linkages between the two sectors. The chapter then focuses on the constraints that limit the linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors. These constraints focus on the factors that hinder the supply and promotion of local produce and agriculture-related experiences to the tourism industry. The chapter also sheds light on the lack of an overarching strategy for fostering the linkages between the two sectors.

Then the chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks used to understand tourism and its links to economic development in South Pacific SIDS. The chapter firstly discusses dependency theory, and its application to tourism development in Pacific SIDS. The chapter then reviews the MIRAB approach to understand economic development among the islands including Niue. The framework provides a locality-

specific focus that is missing from the other theories – but at the same time the MIRAB model pays scant attention to tourism’s role in the development of the local economy. The chapter then focuses on regulation theory and the concept of a ‘shift’ from mass to alternative forms of tourism in the region, and on what this entails for attempts to develop more sustainable forms of tourism in Pacific SIDS.

Chapter 3 outlines the choice of a post-positivist research paradigm. Then the chapter discusses the use of a case-study approach in order to strengthen our understanding of the linkages between agriculture and tourism development in Pacific SIDS. The chapter also reviews Niue’s economy and, specifically, its agriculture and tourism sectors. The complexities of the inter-sectoral analysis being undertaken and the lack of prior data in this area necessitate a mixed-method approach to the research. The underlying biases involved in the use of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis are discussed, and the chapter focuses on how these weaknesses can be overcome through the triangulation of methods.

The chapter then focuses on the research process and outlines the pre-field-work and field-work phases of the study. The chapter outlines the characteristics of the stakeholder groups involved in the semi-structured interviews and online survey. A discussion is provided on how the research participants were selected and the process involved in interviewing or surveying them.

Chapter 4 presents findings on the current status of the agriculture sector in Niue, with a major focus on its size and structure. The chapter provides insights into the characteristics of growers and their role in the production of local produce for sale. The characteristics of plantations are examined in the chapter, including size of the plantations and types of local produce grown for sale.

The current characteristics of the tourism industry in Niue are also examined in this chapter, including its size and structure. The chapter explores the characteristics of SMTEs. The chapter reviews the government’s role in providing financial and technical assistance for tourism development on the island, including loan policies and business advice prior to SMTE set up.

The discussion then focuses on the basic profile of tourists visiting Niue, including their nationality, number of nights spent on the island, employment, education and travel companion(s). The important elements that influenced tourists to

travel to Niue are also examined. The chapter explores tourists' expenditure on the island and the sources of information that they use when planning their trip. Then the chapter concludes with the researcher's reflection on the nature of tourism development suitable for Niue. The demand for local agriculture-related experiences by the small-scale tourism industry is instrumental in fostering the linkages between tourism and agriculture in the long term.

Chapter 5 focuses on tourists' demand for, and satisfaction with, local food and agricultural experiences during their stay in Niue. The chapter provides an insight into the tourism sector's linkages with agriculture, including the sources and cost of local and imported produce. Emerging stories of agriculture-related experiences for tourists provided by local operators are examined in depth. The chapter then highlights the agriculture sector's linkages to tourism, with a major focus on the supply, cost and quality of local produce and on village initiatives to provide agriculture-related experiences for tourists. Popular websites that supply online tourism information are audited in order to examine what they present in the way of culture, agriculture, food and village-based experiences for tourists prior to their travel to Niue.

The evolving nature of tourism raises important questions about the ability of the regulation and dependency approaches to come to terms with the realities of the industry's development in Niue. The rise of the 'new tourist' provides Niue with the opportunity to increase visitor yield and nurture tourism's linkages to the local economy, especially the agricultural sector. However, the lack of information on locally grown produce and agriculture and village-related experiences on local websites tends to reduce opportunities for economic linkages in Niue and potentially reinforce pre-existing colonial economic structures and dependency.

Chapter 6 discusses the constraints that limit the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue. The chapter focuses on the constraints related to the supply and promotion of local produce and agriculture-related experiences to the tourism industry. The constraints related to the non-existence of an overarching strategy for tourism and agriculture are also discussed in depth. The impact of these constraints will be compounded if the number of tourists increases significantly, that is if Niue attempts to shift from a small-scale community-based activity to a mass tourism destination. The chapter then discusses the way forward for Niue and the role of

stakeholders in fostering a tourism industry that is linked to the local economy. Then the chapter uses the examples of the 'home garden projects' in Tuvalu, Kiribati and Nauru to reflect on the opportunities to earn additional income and stimulate agricultural production and consequently make incremental improvements in the quality of people's lives.

While MIRAB will remain in place for some time to come, there is little evidence to show that local communities in Niue and the New Zealand Government are willing to accept the model as a prescription for future (in)action. While there is continued uncertainty over what the future holds, the island nation has some ability to move away from being solely reliant on MIRAB structures through nurturing a small-scale tourist industry that is grounded in the local economy. Finally the chapter reflects on the regulatory role of the governments of Niue and NZ to support a sustainable tourism industry on the island. Clearly, the extent to which both governments will be able to facilitate any emerging and/or possible linkages between tourism and the local economy will determine the strength of these linkages between the two sectors in the long-term.

The final chapter briefly reviews the critical issues facing Pacific SIDS, with a major focus on economic development and the need for the sustainable development of two key sectors: tourism and agriculture. The chapter highlights research findings and key constraints that limit tourism's linkage to local agriculture. A strong emphasis is placed on the imbalance between the demand for, and supply of, local products, that currently hinders the development of linkages. The chapter also highlights the importance of websites and effective marketing and promotion to support the outcomes of networking and inter-sectoral cooperation on Niue.

Chapter 7 then highlights the contributions of the study beyond Niue, as the implications of some of the lessons learned from the Niuean case have reverberations to other islands in the South Pacific. The researcher highlights the evolved conceptual framework for this study: that shows the factors that have an influence on the level of linkage between tourism and agriculture. The researcher also sheds light on the research methodology used in this study and its value in conducting future research in Pacific SIDS.

The chapter points out specifically the key academic contributions of the research to the MIRAB, dependency and regulation theories. The researcher reflects on these theories and how they have contributed to the understanding of tourism and agriculture linkages in Niue. The governments of both Niue and New Zealand are committed to supporting and nurturing a high-yielding small-scale tourist industry through various government-initiated projects aimed at building the capacity of local communities on the island. Although the dependency structures that have dictated Niue's links to New Zealand are not predicted to change in the foreseeable future, the cases of emerging success stories of tourism enterprises show signs of the community's participation in the industry and their unwillingness to rely solely on MIRAB structures. The increasing tourist demand for 'local and unique' experiences, combined with the rise of internet-based marketing platforms, opens up new opportunities for Niue to tap into tourism. The chapter then discusses a research agenda for future studies. The research findings provide an insight for Niue and Pacific SIDS stakeholders into developing appropriate policies and community-development projects that will stimulate tourism's link to the local economy.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter reviews the literature on the linkages between tourism and agriculture and the role of key stakeholders, especially the government, local communities and tourists, in nurturing the linkages between the two sectors. The chapter then discusses the reasons why linkages between tourism and agriculture often fail to emerge or remain limited. In order to gain a deeper understanding of what influences the linkages between tourism and agriculture, it is important to explore the underpinning theories that provide insights into tourism, agriculture and economic development – something that is largely missing from the literature on the linkage process in Pacific SIDS. This chapter reviews major theoretical frameworks that have been adopted to understand the economic development of Pacific SIDS and the role that tourism plays in that process. To this end the chapter provides insights into how the frameworks add to the understanding of tourism and agriculture linkages in Pacific SIDS.

### **2.1 Agriculture and Tourism in Pacific SIDS**

Agriculture and tourism are two key sectors in Pacific SIDS because they generate revenue and employment. Research states that the development of linkages between agriculture and tourism can help the two sectors develop sustainably (Mason and Milne, 2006; Harrison, 2004). The development of linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors could have the potential to sustain future economic development and increase income for local communities. There are opportunities for farms to develop product lines to market directly to restaurants, hotels and resorts, and to expand into agri-tourism (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011; Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; University of Hawaii, 2006; Butler, 1995, p. 39). Although linkages between agriculture and tourism have the ability to sustain resources for future social, economic and ecological benefits (CGIAR, 2005; Flyman, 2003; Busby and Rendle, 2000), the linkage concept has not yet been fully exploited in Pacific SIDS. The nurturing of linkages between tourism and agriculture represent an important potential mechanism to stimulate the traditional local agriculture sector and to improve the distribution of the benefits of tourism to rural people (Burnett, 2007; Mason and Milne, 2006).

A key way to enhance the benefits of tourism is to expand backward economic linkages by increasing the amount of local food used in the tourism industry (Berno and Oliver, 2010, p. 16; Sims, 2009; Busby and Rendle, 2000; Telfer and Wall, 1996). With food comprising approximately one-third of all tourist expenses, linkages to agriculture are critical to reducing foreign-exchange leakages and increasing local multiplier effects (Mason and Milne, 2006; Torres, 2003; Torres, 2002). If a high proportion of food is imported for tourist consumption, there is a commensurate loss of both foreign exchange and opportunity to expand and diversify the local food-production and processing sectors, including potential employment and income (Sims, 2009; Telfer and Wall, 1996).

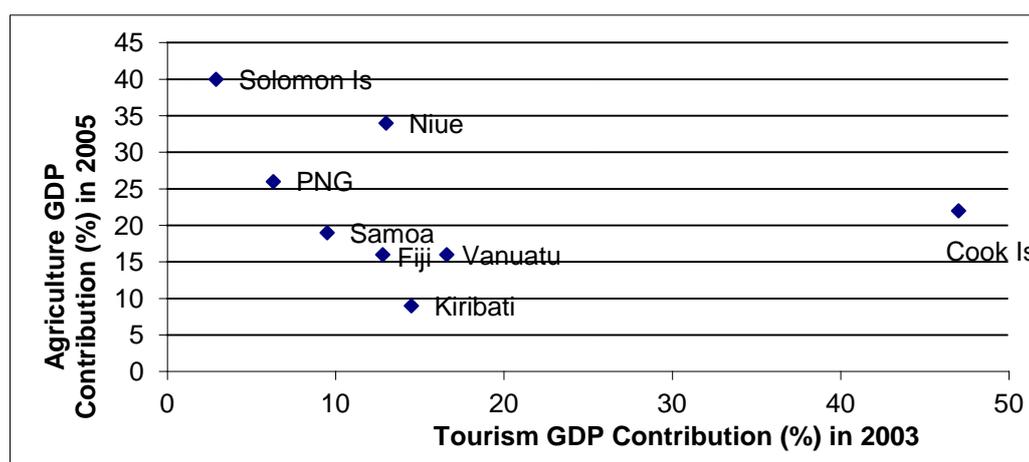
The failure of farmers to cater for the demands of local food required by tourism will result in a loss of economic benefits offered by the industry, and the minimal local multiplier effect will potentially lead to negative attitudes towards tourists among the locals (Berno and Oliver, 2010, p. 14; Telfer and Wall, 1996; Belisle, 1983), (Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2. 1 Benefits of Tourism and Agriculture Links**



For Pacific SIDS, tourism has the potential to promote agriculture development by boosting the demand for locally grown speciality products and increasing the amount of local food used in the tourist industry (Milne, 2010b, 2010c, 2009b; MacDonald, 2001, p. 13; Milne and Mason, 2000; Telfer and Wall, 1996; Milne, 1997, 1992). For many Pacific SIDS, the agriculture and tourism sectors are significant contributors to their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (see Figure 2.2), with agriculture usually contributing more than tourism. In the Solomon Islands, the agriculture sector contributes significantly more towards the country's GDP (40%) than the tourism industry (2.9%). However, in the Cook Islands, the tourism industry contributes more towards its GDP (47%) than the agriculture sector (22%). In the case of Niue, although the tourism industry contributes significantly towards the country's GDP (13%), the agriculture sector remains the highest contributor (34%).

**Figure 2. 2 The Contribution of Agriculture (2005) and Tourism (2003) to GDP in Pacific SIDS**



Source: FAO (2005); South Pacific Travel (2003).

Use of local food encourages promotion of locally raised and grown products in preference to imports. When meals are prepared using traditional recipes with locally grown produce, leakages are negligible (Martinez et al., 2010; Berno as cited in Veit, 2009, p. 23; Berno as cited in Young and Vinning, 2007, p. 41, 43). The intensive labour required for the production of food contributes greatly to tourism employment. Sustainable farming and the small manufacturing and hospitality sectors benefit from the income generated. The optimum use of locally grown produce by the tourism industry enriches the tourist experience (Amira, 2009; Hashimoto and Telfer, 2006;

Torres, 2003; Belisle, 1983). When tourists taste local cuisine, they experience a new culture and lifestyle that is part of the destination.

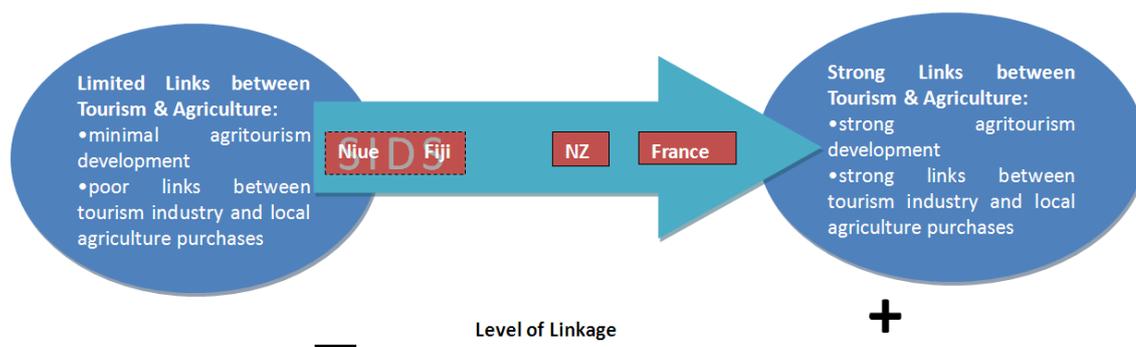
Local food and beverages on holiday play an important role in introducing tourists to new flavours and different traditions at destinations (Kim et al., 2009; Sims, 2009). The 'new tourist' and opportunities associated with food and culture provide Pacific SIDS the option to increase the production of agriculture beyond the subsistence level in order to improve the linkages between and ensure the sustainability of the two sectors (Trunfio et al., 2006; Hashimoto and Telfer, 2006; Deneault, 2002, p. 1). There are potential economic benefits for island nations when farmers and local communities in Pacific SIDS share their knowledge, traditions and culture with tourists (CGIAR, 2005; King, 2003). The already existing market for local food and culture provides Pacific SIDS the opportunity to expand both their agricultural and tourism industries in order to achieve sustainable development.

On a continuum of tourism and agriculture linkages, the level of linkage between the two sectors in Pacific SIDS is minimal (see Figure 2.3). The tourism industry in Pacific SIDS experiences high economic leakage through the importation of foodstuffs (Milne, 2009a; Berno as cited in Veit, 2009, p. 23; Berno as cited in Young and Vinning, 2007, p. 41, 43); Berno, 2006, p. 216). In order to enhance tourism benefits to Pacific SIDS, backward economic linkages need to be increased by optimising the amount of local food used in the industry (Berno, 2006, pp. 216–217). For example, accommodation and restaurant operators need to purchase and promote local food, produce and drinks. In order to maximise tourism benefits, local communities need to adhere to 'buy local' campaigns and use local renewable resources rather than external sources, such as local materials for packaging (Timur and Getz, 2009; Hall, 2005c, p. 151).

The availability of farm-based experiences in Pacific SIDS is very limited (Berno, 2006, p. 216) especially compared with developed countries (Weaver, 2006, pp. 43–44; Sharpley and Vass, 2006) (see Figure 2.3). The strengthening of linkages between tourism and agriculture in Pacific SIDS requires consumer demand and a range of technological, educational, environmental, social and management issues to be addressed (Keller, 2005). Without effective planning, as well as the cooperation of tourism beneficiaries and stakeholders, the industry may fail to take advantage of the

potential economic benefits associated with these linkages. To build a sustainable industry, it is important that local communities are aware of opportunities in agri-tourism and the more general linkages between the tourism industry and agriculture sector (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011; Lee, 2008).

**Figure 2. 3 Continuum of Tourism and Agriculture Links in Pacific SIDS**



The importance of maximising local participation in the development of policies (Key and Pillai, 2006; Haywood, 2000, p. 168) for successful tourism initiatives in Pacific SIDS is emphasised by both South Pacific Travel (formerly known as the South Pacific Tourism Organisation) and the South Pacific Forum Secretariat (Doorne, 2004). Tourism planners and policy-makers are being encouraged to develop local community participation in tourism planning, provide entrepreneurs access to capital, training and market information, and promote optimum use of local goods and services (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011; Milne and Ewing, 2004; Wilkinson, 1997, p. 33).

Farmers in Pacific SIDS represent a core element of local communities, and their participation is important in the planning and implementation of tourism strategies (Milne, 2008b). The active participation of farmers and broader communities can assist the industry to equitably share the benefits to locals, preserve socio-cultural, historical and natural resources essential for tourist experiences, and increase mutual benefits among tourists and hosts through better understanding between them (Musselwhite, 2007; Hatton, 1999, pp. 50–51; Murphy, 1988).

SMTEs play an important role in the creation of livelihoods and generation of income as they have the potential to widen the opportunities available for current and potential entrepreneurs (Wattanapruttipaisan, 2003). SMTEs are considered the engine of economic development as they stimulate ownership and entrepreneurial skills, are flexible and adaptable to tourism demand-supply markets, diversify tourist

products and services, and contribute to trade (Lee, 2008; Szabo, 1996). Tourism entrepreneurs in Pacific SIDS contribute to the development of the industry through the services they offer for tourists, such as accommodation, catering and leisure activities.

In order to create linkages between tourism and agriculture, the governments of Pacific SIDS play a critical role in initiating collaboration between the stakeholders of the two sectors. Pacific SIDS governments also play a key role in providing motivation and technical and business training for enterprise creation and facilitating accessibility to major inputs, especially capital (Keller, 2005). To create and influence the demand for linkages between tourism and agriculture in Pacific SIDS, governments are active players in marketing their nations and promoting the linkages between the two sectors.

## **2.2 Challenges in Linking Agriculture and Tourism**

Tourism's linkage to the local economy, and especially to the agricultural sector, is not well explored in the literature. Many researchers argue that tourist-driven demand for local food and agriculture-related experiences will encourage farmers to increase and diversify production (Henderson, 2009; Tao and Wall, 2009; Mitchell and Faal, 2008; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Ashley et al., 2005a; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Marcotte, 2003). Studies suggest that predicted inter-sectoral linkages often fail to materialise and increased food imports attributable to tourism can damage local agriculture and drain foreign exchange reserves. Research has focused primarily on the impacts of tourism development on local agriculture, as well as factors influencing the strength of linkages between the two sectors (Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; Ashley et al., 2005b; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Torres, 2002).

Government planners and policy-makers emphasise the potential positive impacts, particularly the creation of new markets for agricultural products. However, upon closer examination, various negative impacts emerge (Iorio and Corsale, 2010; Hoermann et al., 2010; Meyer, 2006; Torres, 2003). Tourism development is often associated with increased demand for imported food, resulting in foreign exchange leakages and competition with local production. Tourism typically fails to stimulate local agriculture and in some cases it is associated with a relative decline in production

(Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; Hoermann et al., 2010; Tao and Wall, 2009; Meyer, 2006).

The potential for tourism to promote local agricultural development, nevertheless, is widely recognised (see Table 2.1) (Iorio and Corsale, 2010; Hoermann et al., 2010; Tao and Wall, 2009; Mitchell and Faal, 2008; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Ashley, 2006; Ashley et al., 2007; Marcotte, 2003). Scholars note cases of tourism demand stimulating the production of high-value regional speciality foods and local fresh produce. They suggest that this industry may help boost the export of locally grown speciality products.

**Table 2. 1 Positive and Negative Impacts of Tourism on Agriculture**

Positive impacts of tourism on agriculture	Negative impacts of tourism on agriculture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of vegetable and fruit enterprises to supply tourism</li> <li>• Increased profitability of local agricultural production</li> <li>• Shift to more sustainable farming practices</li> <li>• Diversification of local farming</li> <li>• Investment of tourism earnings to improve local agriculture</li> <li>• Reduced dependency and vulnerability to agricultural crises and reversal of out-migration</li> <li>• Production for tourism of fresh produce and high-value speciality foods unique to a given region is considered to have potential</li> <li>• Tourism holds potential to open export markets for local speciality products as tourists acquire exposure to new foods</li> <li>• Stimulation of agricultural development</li> <li>• Creation of new market opportunities</li> <li>• Providing farmers with increased or supplementary income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competition for land and labour</li> <li>• Increased rural-to-urban migration to tourism poles resulting in abandonment of farming</li> <li>• Increased consumption of imported foods that compete with local production and result in foreign exchange leakages</li> <li>• Failure to stimulate local agriculture and in some cases, triggering reduction or stagnation of production</li> <li>• Inflated land values</li> <li>• Inflated food prices</li> <li>• Changes in cropping patterns</li> <li>• Decline in agricultural production</li> <li>• Deterioration of the natural resource base</li> <li>• Uneven distribution of tourism benefits</li> </ul>

Adapted from: Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; Hoermann et al., 2010; Iorio and Corsale, 2010; Henderson, 2009; Mitchell and Faal, 2008; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Ashley, 2006; Meyer, 2006; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Torres, 2003; Marcotte, 2003; Momsen, 1998, p. 121; Telfer and Wall, 1996; Latimer, 1985

Some researchers highlight competition between the two, with tourism drawing precious land and labour resources away from agriculture (Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; Hoermann et al., 2010; Tao and Wall, 2009; Meyer, 2006). The competition for resources such as land, water and time between tourism and agriculture can result in the former's shift towards a less sustainable farming practice to increase production for the latter industry (Tao and Wall, 2009; Bolwig et al., 2008; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Forsyth, 1995; Belisle, 1983).

Tourism may also increase agricultural pressure on the environment. The existence of an alternative source of income to agriculture may decrease the perceived opportunity cost of land and, therefore, encourage farmers to neglect soil-conservation measures or adopt exhaustive short-term cultivation. Extraction of labour from agriculture may also remove farmers skilled in land management. There is also a general trend that the younger generation do not want to work in agriculture, although some researchers feel that cannot be totally blamed on tourism; rather it is part of a more general phenomenon of a 'decline of the prestige of agricultural work'. Other researchers, however, do believe that tourism has a part to play in the loss of young workers, saying the demise of agriculture can be attributed largely to the emergence of tourism as a viable alternative to a chronically unstable agriculture sector (Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; Hoermann et al., 2010; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Telfer and Wall, 1996).

Many factors are thought to influence both the characteristics and strength of linkages between tourism and agriculture and may be categorised into demand-, supply- or production-related, and marketing and intermediary factors (see Table 2.2). One principal demand-related factor influencing linkages is the nature of tourism development. Studies note a trend for foreign-owned or managed enterprises to depend heavily on imports, thus developing only weak links to local production (Hoermann et al., 2010; Smith and Xiao, 2008; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007). Hotel industry size and class also appear to have an influence with larger and higher-end hotels preferring imported foods over locally grown products (Henderson, 2009; Meyer, 2006; Torres, 2002). Much of the research examining tourism and agriculture linkages has focused on hotel food-procurement patterns while failing to address the main force driving hotel purchasing, namely tourist food consumption and preferences (Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; Henderson, 2009; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Ashley et al., 2006; Torres, 2003; Telfer and Wall, 1996). Understanding the tourist consumption patterns is critical to the analysis of linkages between tourism and agriculture. There is a paucity of studies which examine tourist food consumption and its role in stimulating or deterring tourism and agriculture linkages (Henderson, 2009; Smith and Xiao, 2008; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Ashley et al., 2005b; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Momsen, 1998, p. 126).

**Table 2. 2 Factors Constraining Tourism and Agriculture Linkages**

<b>Constraining factors</b>	<b>Nature of constraints</b>
Supply- or Production-related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of sufficient, consistent and guaranteed quantity of locally produced food</li> <li>• Seasonality of local produce</li> <li>• Inadequate quality of local production</li> <li>• High prices of locally produced foods</li> <li>• Local farming systems' small economies of scale</li> <li>• Poor growing conditions (soil, rainfall, topography)</li> <li>• Nature of existing local farming systems, (i.e. plantation instead of food crops)</li> <li>• Lack of capital, investment and credit</li> <li>• Lack of technical skills and agricultural training available to farmers</li> <li>• Technological limitations</li> <li>• Farm labour deficit attributable to competition with tourism sector</li> <li>• Farmers may want to maintain crops and do not want to diversify into produce demanded by tourism</li> <li>• Export farming may be given the best land; restrictions on expansions</li> <li>• Distribution of land ownership</li> </ul>
Demand-related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreign-owned, large and high-end hotel preference for processed and imported foods</li> <li>• Immature tourism industry preference for imported and internally supplied foods</li> <li>• Certain types of tourists (i.e. mass and foreign) have preferences for imported and/or home-country foods</li> <li>• Tourists' and chefs' distrust of local food owing to sanitation, hygiene and health concerns</li> <li>• Foreign or internationally trained chefs' preference for imported foods</li> <li>• Hotel managers are used to existing products and long-standing existing suppliers and do not consider new local options</li> <li>• Hotels pay for goods received after 30 or 90 days and local producers cannot operate with this (lack working capital)</li> <li>• Seasonality of demand for local produce</li> </ul>
Marketing and Intermediary-related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to promote local foods</li> <li>• Poor or inadequate transportation, storage, processing and marketing infrastructure</li> <li>• Mistrust and lack of communication and information-exchange between farmers, suppliers and the tourism industry</li> <li>• Entrenched monopoly marketing networks that prevent local farmer access</li> <li>• Corrupt local marketing networks that limit local producer access</li> <li>• Bureaucratic obstacles and informal nature of local farming operations</li> </ul>

Adapted from: Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; Hoermann et al., 2010; Martinez et al., 2010; Buijtendijk, 2009; Henderson, 2009; Bolwig et al., 2008; Mitchell and Faal, 2008; Smith and Xiao, 2008; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Ashley, 2006; Ashley et al., 2006; Meyer, 2006; Ashley et al., 2005b; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Marcotte, 2003.

Another important factor that influences demand for local products is the promotion of regional foods. Tourists who have more knowledge of the local market or whose preferences are aligned with the local market will represent a demand that is more likely to have a positive impact on the host economy (Henderson, 2009; Ashley et al., 2007; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Torres, 2003; Momsen, 1998, p. 126). Researchers suggest the opportunity for creating demand for local foods is greatest

among certain nationalities and with more adventurous non-mass tourists. Tourist tastes appear to be diversifying with the emergence of post-Fordist alternatives such as ecotourism and adventure tourism. The 'new tourists' in the post-Fordist era demand fewer Western amenities and are more open to trying indigenous cuisine based on locally produced foods (Smith and Xiao, 2008; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Hall and Sharples, 2003, p. 20; Forsyth, 1995; Belisle, 1983).

The globalisation of food consumption and diet may create a greater demand for local speciality products and indigenous cuisine (Henderson, 2009; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007). With increasing specialisation of consumer demand, the average international tourist now has more exposure to a wider variety of ethnic dishes and products (Hall and Sharples, 2003, p. 18). These increasingly urbane visitors are more likely to be experimental and seek out 'exotic' and 'indigenous' foods, and thus stimulate a greater demand for local products. They are also likely to express a higher demand for more health-conscious, environmentally friendly organic products that small, artisanal producers mainly produce without expensive imported chemical amendments (Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Torres, 2002; Belisle, 1983).

Studies suggest numerous supply- or production-related factors that may foster or constrain the development of tourism and agriculture linkages. These factors include issues such as climate, the nature of local farming systems, and the quality, quantity, reliability, seasonality and overall price of local production (Hoermann et al., 2010; Buijtendijk, 2009; Bolwig et al., 2008; Ashley, 2006; Ashley et al., 2005a; Telfer and Wall, 1996). If the cycles of the peak tourism seasons and harvest times are not synchronous, then this will have implications for the potential inputs local agriculture can have to the tourism industry.

As Ashley et al. (2005a) point out, the quality, quantity and reliability of local supplies may be inadequate to meet visitor demand – or at least may be perceived to be so by buyers. Therefore the hotels and restaurants may be forced to import food to meet the increase in demand in the peak season (Hoermann et al., 2010; Buijtendijk, 2009; Ashley et al., 2005b; Momsen, 1998, p. 126; Telfer and Wall, 1996). The level of local technological capabilities and the existence of food-processing facilities also

influence linkages. The inconsistent production and supply of local produce can be attributed to a variety of factors, including a shortage of capital, credit and investment in the agrarian sector and lack of technical skills (Smith and Xiao, 2008; Ashley et al., 2006; Torres and Momsen, 2004).

Marketing-related factors also play a critical role in defining tourism and agricultural relationships (Bolwig et al., 2008; Ashley et al., 2007; Ashley, 2006). A lack of communication and exchange of information between the tourism industry and local producers represents a significant constraint. One of the most important marketing issues is the availability and quality of regional transportation, storage and distribution infrastructure necessary to facilitate linkages. The hotel supplies manager is often operating under a tight capital budget and as a result cannot afford to keep a large inventory of local produce in cold storage (Hoermann et al., 2010; Torres, 2002; Telfer and Wall, 1996). Researchers argue that intermediary factors can also have an influence on the linkages between tourism and agriculture but have received less attention in the literature (Ashley et al., 2006; Meyer, 2006; Torres, 2003). Examples of intermediary factors include entrenched monopoly marketing networks, mistrust between producers, suppliers and tourism industry representatives, corrupt marketing networks, and the informal nature of local farming operations.

Due to the communal nature of land tenure in rural communities, local growers remain primarily individual, small-scale, informal and unorganised as a group. Thus, not only are economies of scale very limited, leading to higher production costs, but also poor coordination between the growers can lead to frequent gluts and vulnerability to *coyote* market control (Smith and Xiao, 2008; Torres, 2003). As small individual producers, they lack adequate transport and cold-chain infrastructure and must therefore sell their products to intermediaries who come to them at the farm gate or regional markets and who dictate prices (Meyer, 2006; Torres, 2003). Another major marketing obstacle is that tourism markets are currently dominated by a few deeply entrenched suppliers. Corruption plays a role in perpetuating this monopoly as it is common for a supplier to pay 'kickbacks' to hotel chefs and food buyers (Smith and Xiao, 2008; Torres and Momsen, 2004).

One should not ignore the need to support local products and services. Strong government action is required to generate positive linkage effects especially in

developing countries where many foreign-owned tourist enterprises rely on imported produce and have established tourist preferences and where the agriculture sector is probably not immediately geared to meet the needs of tourist demand. Without active government intervention, it is difficult to see how enhanced linkages between tourism and agriculture can be generated with a commensurate impact on the proportion of tourist expenditure retained within the economy (Iorio and Corsale, 2010; Meyer, 2006; Ashley et al., 2005b; Torres, 2003; Jenkins and Henry, 1982).

Overall, the studies (Milne, 2009a; Berno as cited in Veit, 2009, p. 23; Berno as cited in Young and Vinning, 2007, p. 41, 43; Berno, 2006, p. 216) that have attempted to comprehend the potential to link tourism and agriculture in Pacific SIDS have largely failed to provide a theoretical understanding on the linkages between the two sectors. To this end, the next section of this chapter attempts to shed light on the relevant theoretical models and approaches that can help to enhance the understanding of the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Pacific SIDS.

## **2.3 Towards an Understanding of Tourism and Agriculture Links in Pacific SIDS**

This thesis relies on three bodies of theory to provide a clearer understanding of the links between tourism and agriculture in Niue and potential for further linkages between the two sectors. The bodies of theory discussed in this thesis are dependency theory, MIRAB approaches and regulation theory.

### **2.3.1 Dependency Theory**

The fundamental characteristics of Pacific SIDS economies are argued by many to be explained by reference to dependency theory (Watts, 2006, p. 93; Hall, 1996, p. 82; Craig-Smith, 1996, p. 39; Britton, 1983, pp. 1–2). Dependency theory (Frank, 1966), argues that Western countries have developed as a result of the expropriation of surplus from the Third World. It is argued that the growth of Western countries has been due to the reliance of Third World nations on export-oriented industries which are notoriously precarious in terms of world market prices (Sofield, 2003, p. 51; Corbridge, 1993, p. 179). Dependency theory uses the notion of centre–periphery relationships to highlight this unequal relationship, with the centre as the locus of

economic power within a global economy (Mowforth and Munt, 2009, p. 49; Watts, 2006, p. 93; Britton, 1983, p. 2; Frank 1966).

Dependency theory states that the development of core regions is predicated on the underdevelopment of the periphery, both within capitalist countries and in the Third World (Corbridge, 1993, p. 179; 1986, p. 21; Roxborough, 1979, pp. 55–56). Subsequently, centre and periphery are locked together with the former appropriating surplus value from the latter (McKay, 2004, p. 54; Corbridge, 1986, p. 22; Palma, 1981, p. 21). Dependency theorists argue that the persistence of underdevelopment in the Third World is not a result of their undeveloped state but is due to the way in which capitalist countries have manipulated the economy. Sofield (2003, p. 51) and Corbridge (1993, p. 179) point out that capitalist development through the export of raw materials from the periphery to the core leads the Third World to underdevelopment and backwardness.

The economic exploitation of the Third World requires and involves not only economic domination, the question of power and politics is also intrinsically linked with the notion of dependency. While political domination is required to create or maintain dependency, it is the degree of economic exploitation and the extent to which this can be maintained over time which determines the level of dependency (Worsley, 1999, p. 33; Soete, 1981, pp. 182–183). Dependency theory focuses precisely on the creation and maintenance of exploitation of the Third World, i.e. on the existence of a set of structural mechanisms that obstruct the growth of the economy and prevent its filtering down to the masses in 'dependent' economies, while creating exactly the opposite conditions in 'dominant economies' (Soete, 1981, p. 183).

Dependency theory implies that in order to remove the external obstacles, each periphery country should dissociate itself from the world market and opt for a self-reliant development strategy, and scholars advocate that a more-or-less revolutionary political transformation is required to enable this (Servaes, 1999, p. 34). The interdependence between the economies of the Third World and the metropolises assumes that the latter can expand and become self-sustaining while the former's economies are dependent on the expansion of the metropolitan states (Saul and Leys, 2006, p. 112; dos Santos, 2003, pp. 278–279).

Trade relations are based on monopolistic control of the market, which leads to the transfer of surplus generated in the Third World to the metropolises. The financial relations of the Third World with the metropolises are based on loans and the export of capital, which permit the latter to receive interest and profits, increase domestic surpluses and strengthen control over the economies of the developing world. For the dependent nation, trade relations with the dominant metropolitan country represent an export of profits and interests that carry off part of the surplus generated domestically, leading in turn to a loss of control over their productive resources (Saul and Leys, 2006, p. 112; dos Santos, 2003, pp. 278–279).

As the Third World begins to emancipate itself economically and politically, cultural dominance increases (Saul and Leys, 2006, p. 112). Whereas the former colonialists were largely out to plunder economically profitable areas, the emerging technological evolution of the communication media contributes to a new cultural and ideological dependency (Dillon, 2010, p. 229; Servaes, 1999, p. 35). Dependence has created peculiar social structures in the periphery, especially a 'parasitic comprador' ruling class that typically manages the exploitation of the locals on behalf of the centre, exports the products of their labour and purchases from abroad goods, allowing it to live in luxury amidst the squalor of a despoiled land (Dillon, 2010, p. 229; dos Santos, 2003, pp. 278–279). The high living standards of the ruling class in the periphery and transfers to the centre are possible only because of the extremely high rates of exploitation in the periphery (Saad-Filho, 2005, p. 139).

Dependence is based on a coincidence of interests between the elites based in the centre and the peripheral comprador class that marginalises and exploits the masses. Profits are made by transnational companies through the unequal relationship between the centre and periphery. The transfer of resources depresses incomes, welfare standards and investment in the periphery, and produces a distorted growth pattern favouring the production of primary products for exports. The relations binding the centre and the periphery have generated a process of 'development of underdevelopment', which is not a transitional stage through which countries must pass but, rather, a condition that plagues regions involved in the international economy in a subordinate position (Saad-Filho, 2005, p. 139; Worsley, 1999, p. 33).

Critics of dependency theory state that the approach places too much emphasis on the role of global factors than the local context in the process of economic development in an underdeveloped country (Saul and Leys, 2006, p. 112; Servaes, 1999, p. 35). Dependency theory has been criticised for creating a polarisation between development and underdevelopment, a subjective or voluntaristic interpretation of history. Critics also argue that the dependency theory primarily adopts an economically oriented analytical method (Dillon, 2010, p. 229; Servaes, 1999, p. 35).

McKay (2004, pp. 45–46) criticises dependency theory by arguing that the economies of the underdeveloped countries cannot develop in the ‘trickle down’ manner because the processes of global change that give rise to prosperity in the developed countries result in them being simultaneously impoverished. Dependency theory implies that the dependency of the Third World on Western countries is a ‘conditioning’ process where each change in the interests and policy of the metropole has produced and continues to produce a similar process in the inner workings of the dependent society. Metropolitan economic interests determine the nature of dependent relations, and also the social class structure and political control in the dependent society (Dillon, 2010, p. 229; Berberoglu, 1992, pp. 26–27).

Critics of dependency theory argue that it is important to understand that dependence is not merely an ‘external’ economic phenomenon expressed in terms of economic relations; rather, it is a political phenomenon which includes the entire institutional framework of the dependent society (Berberoglu, 1992, p. 27). Some commentators argue (Frank, 2007, p. 76; Berberoglu, 1992, pp. 26–27) that dependency theory fails to reflect the past of the underdeveloped part of the world and that the historical experiences of colonial and undeveloped countries have been quite different. The ignorance of the underdeveloped countries’ history assumes that their past and present resembles earlier stages of the history of the developed nations (Dillon, 2010, p. 229; Frank, 2007, pp. 76–77; Frank, 2002, pp. 97–98).

Hall (1996, p. 82) believes that dependency theory can provide important insights into the process of tourism development in Pacific SIDS. In Pacific SIDS, tourism has maintained some of the economic and political effects of colonial rule such as dependency on foreign capital and investment (Sofield, 2003, p. 51; Hall, 1997, p.

230; Hall, 1996, p. 83). Britton (1983) argues that the flow of tourists from Western to Third World countries is achieved by gaining the cooperation of Western foreign interests, and that these interests have strong national bargaining power on factors that affect the profitability of their investments (Britton, 1983, pp. 6–7). Britton and Kissling (1984) suggest that the establishment of a tourism industry in a peripheral economy cannot occur from evolutionary processes within the economy but only from exogenous foreign interests. The peripheral economy provides the setting while the metropolitan companies determine the shape of the tourism industry (Sofield, 2003, p. 51; Britton & Kissling, 1984, pp. 12–13).

The dependency-based approach casts doubts on whether tourism can provide long-term economic solutions for Pacific SIDS: while some economic gains will flow to residents, the majority of benefits will accrue to national business elites and overseas interests (Britton, 1981). The model illustrates that tourism development can only be achieved at the expense of environmental degradation and some loss of cultural heritage (Britton, 1987, p. 130).

Britton's (1983; 1982) research and narrative are very much part of the analysis of the mainstream 'mass-tourism' industry. He argues that tourism in Pacific SIDS is best conceptualised as an enclavic industry, referred to as the 'golden ghettos', where tourists only occasionally venture beyond the bounds of their hotel compounds. Britton (1982; 1981, p. 19) used dependency theory to reinforce that Pacific SIDS are vulnerable in a global economy dominated by multinational corporations which controlled a range of products and services, from transport to accommodation. Britton (1983, p. 5; 1981, p. 19) further argues that the majority of locals in Pacific SIDS can only participate in tourism through waged labour employment or small enterprises. Mass tourism results in the leakage of foreign exchange earnings when tourists prefer to use the services of Western travel agencies, airlines and hotels that are part of multinational chains (Turegano, 2006; Scheyvens, 2002, p. 29; Britton, 1983, p. 5).

Britton (1981) focuses on the influences that metropolitan-based corporations exert upon the tourist industries of Pacific SIDS as these nations are seen to be enmeshed in a global tourism system over which they have little or no influence. The development of a colonial agricultural export economy restricts the development of a self-sufficient economy and provides the basis for modern-day tourism industries that

are dominated by local elites and overseas capital (Sofield, 2003, p. 51; Milne, 1997, p. 286; Britton, 1981).

Britton (1981) argues that the advertising strategies of metropolitan companies play an important role in shaping tourist expectations, which leads visitors to seek the types of experiences and international standard facilities associated with mass packaged tourism. Governments of Pacific SIDS are forced to turn to multinational companies to provide the necessary capital to finance large international-style hotels and provide trained personnel. The large multinational companies offer higher commissions to overseas tour operators, while also providing the level of service required by expectant tourists, enabling them to gain increasing control over the tourism sector in island nations (see also Turegano, 2006; Sofield, 2003, p. 51; Scheyvens, 2002, p. 29; Milne, 1997, p. 286; Hall, 1996, p. 83).

Britton and Kissling (1984) point out that Pacific SIDS rely on large overseas airlines to bring visitors to their shores and have little influence over the routing and scheduling decisions of these companies – something that remains very much the case in many island nations. Although some island nations in the region such as Fiji and Samoa have seen an increase in competition in their air services, many others, including Kiribati, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, have struggled to keep air links in place (see also Milne, 2010b; 2010c; 2009a; 2009b and 2008b; Taumoepeau, 2009).

Britton (1987, p.132) argues that that the development of tourism in Pacific SIDS satisfies the commercial imperatives of overseas interests and only partially, and too often inappropriately, meets local development needs (Britton, 1987, p. 132). A lack of local participation in the planning process for tourism development in Pacific SIDS and the continued construction of large-scale tourist facilities will lead to undesirable cultural and environmental costs. High levels of expatriate ownership and management alienate locals who are, in reality, only receiving 'the crumbs from the tourists' table' (Milne, 1997, p. 288; Britton, 1987, p. 132; Britton, 1981).

Milne (1997, p. 282) states that an analysis of a number of important tourism performance indices, including revenue and employment generation and levels of local ownership and economic-linkage creation, reveals a number of limitations in the ability of the dependency theory to explain the processes of tourism development in Pacific

SIDS. While tourism in Pacific SIDS is undoubtedly influenced by broader global processes, these nations, with careful management and improved levels of local participation, have the potential to develop tourism in a way that offers long-term economic growth without sacrificing the cultural and environmental inheritance of future generations (Panakera et al., 2011; Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008a; 2008b; Cave et al., 2007; Milne, 1997, p. 283).

Although Britton (1982) is correct in asserting that metropolitan-based enterprises influence the development of peripheral tourist destinations, it is generally hard to argue that local governments place foreign corporate interests ahead of those of the local population (AUSAID, 2006; FAO, 2005; Milne, 1997, p. 289). This is due, in large part, to the fact that Pacific SIDS' governments' spending priorities and the relationships that are formed with outside partners are to some extent influenced by donor aid programmes. In other words, the governments of New Zealand and Australia are the major donors in the Pacific and have some influence in how the governments of island nations in the region behave and use donor funding (Government of New Zealand, 2011; 2004; AUSAID, 2006).

Broader critiques of the dependency theory reflect on the framework's obsession with the global system and its unwillingness to grapple with the local factors that influence development outcomes (Mowforth and Munt, 2009, p. 50; Harrison, 2004; Corbridge, 1986, p. 43). Dependency theory implies that locals must passively stand by and watch the negative impacts develop rather than acknowledging their ability to influence the course of development through input into the planning process. An increasing number of development plans in Pacific SIDS such as Niue and Fiji are stressing the need for greater community participation to ensure the success of tourism development (Government of Niue, 2007b; Doorne, 2004). The dependency approach tends to focus solely on the negative impacts of tourism, paying little attention to the role that the industry can play in stimulating local culture and environmental conservation (Panakera et al., 2011; Milne, 2006, 1997, p. 293).

While the dependency approach provides valuable insights into the unequal structure of Third World tourism, it is critical to consider new forms of tourism that seek to offer an escape from 'the ghettos' (Mowforth and Munt, 2009, p. 50). Dependency perspectives suggest that the tourism industry follows a single

development path towards mass tourism rather than acknowledging that alternative forms of tourism may have a long-term role to play. If consumers demand alternative tourism products or if companies begin to compete on factors other than price (such as quality, and flexibility of packages), the broader applicability of many features of the dependency model could be placed in doubt (Milne, 2006; Harrison, 2004).

A further critical shortcoming of the dependency approach is its failure to formulate workable strategies that might allow Pacific SIDS to escape the vicious cycle of dependent tourism development (Mowforth and Munt, 2009, p. 50; Milne, 2006; 1997, p. 293; Corbridge, 1986, p. 43). In particular, it is interesting to note that little or no attention has been paid to the ability of island nations to make small-scale advances in their industries. Even though these nations face global challenges and despite the aid of new technologies and the rise of MIRAB approaches in recent years, hardly any attempt has been made in Pacific SIDS to nurture the linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors. Yet there can be no doubt that the nature of MIRAB-type economic structures make aspects of the dependency approach applicable.

### **2.3.2 The MIRAB Model**

The MIRAB model, introduced by Bertram and Watters (1985) and extended by Bertram (1999, 1986), attributes the continued survival of Pacific SIDS to the persistence of migration, remittances, aid and bureaucracy, since their economies do not conform to typical models of export-led tradeable production and private-sector investment (Van Meijl, 2007; Apostolopoulos and Gayle, 2002, p. 6; Bertram, 1999). The MIRAB model of economic survival is considered to be sustainable even in the absence of a self-reliant economic system (Barker, 2000) and was derived from observation of the characteristics of Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau (Heyn, 2003; Barker, 2000; Bertram and Watters, 1985).

The model implies that reduced aid flows might prompt outward migration and associated remittances while increased aid might reverse migration and thus diminish remittance flows. Pacific SIDS that retain strong links with metropolitan nations are expected to be generally richer than those that have acquired independent status (Fraenkel, 2006; McElroy, 2006; Bertram, 1999). It is argued that migration and the size and persistence of financial flows into Pacific SIDS' economies have the effect of

making capitalist private-sector activity unprofitable due to the resulting strong exchange rates and relatively high wages (Bertram, 1993; Bertram and Watters, 1985).

At a time when other financial flows from developed to developing countries are in stagnation or decline, migrant workers face an increasing pressure for remittances from their relatives in Pacific SIDS. Especially during much of the past decade, remittance has become a key macro-economic resource in many developing countries – although in recent years the flow of remittances has declined due to the onset of the global recession (Shaw and Eversole, 2006, p. 1; Brown and Connell, 2006, p. 17). For example, the World Bank’s report on the ‘Outlook for Remittance Flows 2008–2010’ by Ratha et al. (2008, p. 1) states:

*After several years of strong growth, remittance flows to developing countries began to slow down in the third quarter of 2008. This slowdown is expected to deepen further in 2009 in response to the global financial crisis, although the exact magnitude of the growth moderation (or outright decline in some cases) is hard to predict given the uncertainties about global growth, commodity prices, and exchange rates.*

Remittances maintain social ties between families, and have produced higher material standards of living in Pacific SIDS, creating employment especially in the service and construction sectors, and easing balance of payment problems (Connell and Brown, 2005; Brown and Ahlburg, 1999). Remittances generate positive multiplier effects and have a generally positive effect on savings and investment, increasing the propensity to save among recipient households; remittances can also reach at least some poor families with a source of direct development finance that they control for themselves (Eversole, 2006, p. 10; Shaw and Eversole, 2006, p. 1). They serve as insurance against risk associated with new income-generating activities and account for a substantial and growing proportion of investment in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in recipient countries; they also make up a growing share of investment in human capital-building community infrastructure such as schools and health clinics (Timur and Getz, 2009; Shaw and Eversole, 2006, p. 1).

Churches and community and village groups are also major recipients of remittances, but as the migrant workers often engage in fund-raising activities in the migrants’ destination countries, not all the money raised will necessarily be transferred back to the country of origin. Remittances in kind, in the form of new and second-hand

goods, have become significant in Pacific SIDS and have resulted in the boom of local markets trading in imported second-hand goods (Brown and Connell, 2006, p. 19; Grijp, 2004, p. 64).

Some argue that remittances result in the growth of the conspicuous consumption of imported goods, cause a 'hand-out' mentality, and fail to rejuvenate rural economies because they limit local efforts, savings and capital investments (Muliaina, 2006, p. 32; Prasad, 2003). Muliaina (2006, p. 30) argues that root-crop cultivation in Pacific SIDS in recent years has declined due to the increasing use of remittances to purchase root-crop substitutes, although the absence of able-bodied men because of migration is possibly the main reason for this decline. Although remittances can stimulate development, they can also create an unbalanced economic environment which can stunt local private-sector development (Milne, 2005). Future overseas migration rates from Pacific SIDS are projected to decline due to economic recessions and restructuring of migration regulations (Muliaina, 2006, p. 32; Appleyard and Stahl, 1995). It is argued that aid and remittance flows alter the general equilibrium of the economy, which leads to structural transformations similar to 'Dutch Disease' or 'booming sector effect' (Treadgold, 1999). As families reunite overseas and as migrants integrate into host communities, their ability and willingness to remit are expected to decline over time (Lee, 2006).

The impacts of labour migration on development are not wholly positive because overseas migration may reduce output and hence tax revenue in the migrant-sending country. Although these losses are usually more than offset by remittance inflows, remittances, in turn, may generate inflationary pressures and, because of the propensity of some recipients to substitute remittances for their own contributions to the household pool, further reduce output (Shaw and Eversole, 2006, p. 1). Labour migration may encourage a reversal of development gains as governments neglect infrastructure programmes in migrant-source areas on the grounds that they are 'not poor' and remittance deposits in 'capital-rich' but underdeveloped migrant-sending rural areas are mobilised to finance loans to urban elites.

Short-term labour migration has been formalised; for instance, New Zealand's 'seasonal work policy for Pacific workers' that was implemented in 2007 is an example of the need for Pacific islanders to fill gaps in the New Zealand labour market. The

scheme provides work for young adults from Pacific SIDS who cannot be absorbed into the small labour markets in their island nation. Remittance in the form of cash and goods is important for family well-being and to fund community infrastructure projects in island nations (New Zealand Department of Labour, 2010).

When considering the impacts remittances have on development, it is also important to take into account the personal and social costs of extended periods of separation in the form of family breakdown, adverse impacts on children's development, and the disruption of local social structures — areas which are relatively under-researched (Shaw and Eversole, 2006, p. 1). Eversole (2006, p. 13) argues that migrants' decision to save or invest their earnings back home is not only dependent on objective criteria such as economic growth but also on subjective factors which include prestige and the wish to contribute to the development of their home country. Thus encouraging and facilitating migrants' investments in development 'back home' has both financial-technical and social impacts (Grijp, 2004, p. 63).

In some Pacific SIDS such as Niue and the Cook Islands, the population is steadily falling and governments have become concerned about the future viability of these states, especially as migration tends to be selective of age and skill (Brown and Connell, 2006, p. 17). Over time, as barriers to international migration have tended to increase, migration has become more selective in terms of skills, leading to more obvious evidence of a 'brain and brawn' drain from Pacific SIDS, as groups such as nurses, doctors and teachers become more significant components of migration streams. Skilled migrants are even more likely to migrate when they have trained overseas and have previously experienced working conditions there. In such circumstances it may even be strange that so many choose to remain in their home islands. This is 'home', a familiar space of kin and land, and preferences for the climate, culture and some degree of status, alongside fears of discrimination and some degree of inertia, may influence their decision to stay (Brown and Connell, 2006, p. 17).

The shifting global power balances have led to less reliable aid flows and international lending agencies have placed growing pressure on island governments to cut bloated payrolls and open themselves to global and regional free trade (Milne, 2005). Despite the strong focus by Pacific SIDS governments and international donor policy initiatives on tourism's role in development (WTO, 2006; Milne, 2005; Rao,

2002; Apostolopoulos and Gayle, 2002, p. 7; UNEP, 1996), the sector rarely features in the MIRAB model.

The MIRAB model fails to acknowledge the degree to which Pacific Islanders returning home for a holiday and from migration actually support, enable and sustain links between tourism and agriculture development in SIDS. Bertram (2006) states that although tourism is not part of the MIRAB structure, it promises to be a commercially successful economic future for at least some Pacific SIDS. Although Pacific SIDS economies may be able to sustain themselves on MIRAB structures, they 'treat tourism as an economic bonus' (Rao, 2002; Milne, 1992).

### **2.3.3 Regulation Theory and the Emergence of New Tourism**

This section connects regulation theory and the broader post-Fordist debate to the emergence of tourism in Pacific SIDS. Regulation theory, broadly conceived, assumes two partially autonomous systems: the macro-economy, or regime of accumulation; and a comprehensive mode of 'regulation', an institutional system that stabilises a given regime of accumulation (Hoffman, 2003). The theory has been applied to understand the shift from mass to alternative tourism in SIDS (Murphy and Murphy, 2004, p. 35; Poon, 1993, p. 120; 1989, p. 74). The theory also provides a framework for a more holistic understanding of the industry by setting tourism production and consumption in a broader societal context (Williams, 2004, p. 69). Despite numerous issues, a consensus has developed as to the elements of the emerging macro-economy: changing market trends, flexible specialisation for niche markets, globalised industries and processes, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)/ (Clark, 2005, p. 96).

According to Hoffman (2003), regulation theory allows researchers to address the relation between large-scale external forces and local conditions – the issue of scale. Milne and Ateljevic (2001) highlight that it is essential to look carefully at how interactions between the global and the local shape development outcomes for individuals, households, communities and regions. Researchers suggest that tourism must be viewed as a transaction process which is at once driven by the global priorities of multinational corporations, geo-political forces and broader forces of economic change, and the complexities of the local, where residents, visitors, workers,

governments and entrepreneurs interact at the industry 'coal-face' (Aref et al., 2010; Hoffman, 2003; Milne and Ateljevic, 2001). Pacific SIDS are part of the global economic system and local communities in these island nations, with assistance from donors, mainly the governments of New Zealand and Australia, can make an impact on the development of their tourism industry. Major shifts in consumer demand and marketing and ICT provide locals with increased opportunities to set up small entrepreneurial activities for the alternative tourists. Numerous governments are implementing policy frameworks to foster ICT adoption by the industry, and tourists everywhere are beginning to see the potential for new technologies to improve their ability to make travel plans (Brown and Cave, 2010; Clark, 2005, p. 96; Milne and Ateljevic, 2001).

Proponents of the regulation approach argue that capitalism is an unstable, contradictory system that must restructure itself in order to resolve, albeit temporarily, its periodic crises. Each period of restructuring brings different regional and local economic impacts. Advocates of this approach maintain that a 'regime' of mass production and consumption, known as 'Fordism', dominated much of the past century (Brown and Cave, 2010; Milne and Ateljevic, 2001). The Fordist economic regime in the twentieth century was characterised by mass-tourism strategies, especially profit-making through economies of scale and the consequent standardisation of rigid tourist packages (Fayos-Sola and Bueno, 2001, p. 48). Fordism features a capitalist system of mass production and consumption which is supported by an international system of free trade regulation with fixed exchange rates (Gladstone, 2005, pp. 55–56; Corbridge, 1993, p. 178).

During the last quarter of the century, it is argued that Fordism has been yielding to a more dynamic pattern of production and consumption, variously categorised as post-Fordism (Hoffman, 2003; Milne and Ateljevic, 2001). Under conditions of post-Fordism, which represents the current economic regime, there is a qualitative shift from mass production and consumption to more flexible systems of production and organisation (Mowforth and Munt, 2009, p. 21; Williams and Shaw, 1992). Post-Fordism is driven by a competitive environment which emphasises quality and innovation, and requires SMTEs to respond to changing consumer demand (Brown and Cave, 2010; Milne, 1997, pp. 294–295). This era of post-Fordism involves the

construction of privatised economies based around flexible production technologies, liberalisation in international economic affairs, and a new ethic of individualism based in consumerism (Gursoy et al., 2010; Brown, 2009; Corbridge, 1993, p. 178).

The post-Fordist era has resulted in the emergence of niche and segmented markets in tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 2009, p. 22). Flexible consumer demand and shifts in regulation under the post-Fordist regime are reflected in the behaviour of 'new' tourists and the development of an 'alternative tourism' industry that responds to and also shapes customer demands (Mowforth and Munt, 2009, p. 21; Williams and Shaw, 1992). The 'present age of tourism' is giving way to a new paradigm shaped by emerging and established technologies, evolving consumer demand, regulations, the negative impacts of mass tourism, and the emergence of more flexible work and leisure patterns that may increasingly lack security (The *Economist*, 10 September, 2011; Mowforth and Munt, 2009, p. 26; Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008a; Cave et al., 2007; Fayos-Sola and Bueno, 2001, p. 48; Milne, 1997, pp. 294–295). A production system has evolved to include travel services and tourism products and experiences that cater for, and determine, tourist demand (Aref et al., 2010; Brown, 2009).

A number of projects and policies promoting 'new' forms of tourism have appeared in developing countries since the 1980s; these are usually focused on tourism that is small scale and low key in nature and involve a high degree of participation by the local population (Gursoy et al., 2010; Pearce, 1995, p. 16). Urry (1995, p. 142) and Poon (1993, p. 120) argue that modern tourists are experienced travellers, well educated, world wise and informed, and ready for a change from the standardised and 'rigidly packaged' traditional 'sun, sand and sea' holiday. It has been argued by some that the age of mass tourism is coming to an end and there is a need for 'alternative tourism' to meet tourists' desire for more natural, authentic and 'down-to-earth' vacations based on 'commonsense' and 'best practice' (Brown and Cave, 2010; Moscardo, 2008, p. 10; Ayres, 2002, p. 147; Cleverdon and Kalisch, 2000; Brohman, 1996; Poon, 1993, p. 121).

Gursoy et al. (2010), Brown (2009), Mowforth and Munt (2009, p. 26), Cleverdon and Kalisch (2000) and Urry (1995, p. 142) point out that there seems to be a move away from the organised tourism characteristics of the modern period to a much more differentiated and fragmented pattern of mobility. The demand for

'alternative' forms of tourism experiences provides developing countries and local communities an opportunity to generate additional income and sustain their economies while also preserving their cultural lifestyles and traditional agriculture. Meeting the demand for local cultural experiences requires the development of linkages between traditional agriculture and the tourism industry (Gursoy et al., 2010; Brown and Cave, 2010; Daskon, 2010; Brown 2009; Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008b; Ayres, 2002, p. 147; Cleverdon and Kalisch, 2000; Brohman, 1996; Poon, 1993, p. 121).

'Alternative tourism' has also received its share of critique and scepticism and has emerged as one of the most widely used (and abused) phrases by researchers interested in the sustainability of the industry (Lansing and De Vries, 2007). The most significant criticism is that alternative tourism may spread the influence of mass tourism by seeking out new, more exotic and pristine environments, and hence establishing a base for others to follow in much greater numbers (Daskon, 2010; Pearce, 2008, p. 32; Brohman, 1996; Butler, 1995, p. 31). The objectives of the tourism destination to remain low key and small scale may be difficult to maintain in the longterm, especially after the industry perceives a new development opportunity and starts to market that product. Critics suggest that even if alternative tourism succeeds in restraining numbers, the industry may exacerbate negative social and cultural impacts by intensifying the degree of contact between hosts and tourists (Fletcher, 2005, p. 282; Griffin and Boele, 1998, p. 328). Researchers argue that even the *sine qua non* of alternative tourism, protection of the local culture and environment, is often eroded as the industry takes on more qualities of its 'mass tourism' progenitor and hence becomes a marketing gimmick aimed at well-meaning consumers from the world's wealthiest countries (Lansing and De Vries, 2007; Gladstone, 2005, p. 200).

Fletcher (2005, p. 282) and Butler (1995, p. 40) argue that the way to circumvent the problems associated with alternative tourism is to ensure that the control of tourism remains in local hands – that way tourism will develop on a scale and in a manner appropriate to local needs. Critics respond that it is virtually impossible to define what is 'appropriate' and to whom and cast doubts on whether local control can be realistically achieved. In many instances achieving consensus in a community is difficult if not impossible, particularly where questions of development and change are involved.

Effective local control can be unrealistic because the local community may be in a relatively weak bargaining position and the prevailing political structures may not have developed decision-making power to the local level (Gelbman and Timothy, 2011; Butler, 1995, p. 40). Local control can remain limited because environmental issues may not be high on the agenda in poorer destinations where short-term economic imperatives may seem more compelling or because the local community does not possess the appropriate capital or technology to ensure environmentally sensitive tourism (Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008b; Lansing and De Vries, 2007; Griffin and Boele, 1998, p. 328).

Butler (2004, p. 161) speculates that preservation of resources and culture for alternative tourism may run counter to residents' desires and planning may, as a result, be resented at the local level. Rural peoples' environmental ethics may differ from those of their urban counterparts, and therefore the imposition of environmental controls may contradict their view of sustainable development (Fletcher, 2005, p. 282). Also the growth of alternative tourism may underscore the differences between developed and developing countries' concepts of the environment and between corresponding notions of environmental protection (Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009). Tourists may view the environment as something to gaze upon and recreate in but many indigenous groups that inhabit the eco-spaces that visitors are interested in gazing upon are less likely to draw a distinction between themselves and the surrounding natural space (Gladstone, 2005, p. 200).

The emphasis on alternative tourism has also been criticised for ignoring the preferences of the vast majority of tourists; this in turn may have notable implications for the economic viability of the tourism industry (Gursoy et al., 2010; Griffin and Boele, 1998, p. 328-329; Gee and Fayos-Sola, 1997, p. 275; Butler, 1995, p. 39;). If a destination aims itself at a specific market, such as tourists that are interested in culture or nature, it is at the expense of other forms of mass tourism. Butler (2004, p. 166) argues that while mass tourists are for the most part sedentary and spend their money in a limited number of locations, much of the expenditure of the alternative tourist may be pre-spent on packages or spent in small amounts in a wide variety of locations.

Alternative tourists are often interested in a quite specific attraction, such as a particular animal, mountain, cultural site or people (Gelbman and Timothy, 2011; Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009; Lansing and De Vries, 2007; Gladstone, 2005, p. 200). The sustainability of tourism is hence directly tied to maintaining the integrity of the attraction and mediating the interaction between the tourists and the attraction over time, such that interest is maintained. A major part of the sustainability question relates to the nature of the tourism resource, its vulnerability to change, and susceptibility to management inputs. One of the most difficult tourism attributes to maintain is authenticity, especially if the source of authentic experience is people (Fletcher, 2005, p. 282; Dearden and Harron, 1994).

Butler (2004, p. 159) argues that alternative tourism can complement mass tourism by increasing attractions and authenticity and allowing tourists the opportunity to enjoy the natural areas and rich cultural history of the destination. Another role of alternative tourism can be to function as a supplementary sector within a diversified and interlinked local economy; for example, to supplement incomes of primary rural dwellers in marginal areas through farm tourism, crafts and bed-and-breakfast enterprises (Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009). Alternative tourism can also allow some tourism development in areas that cannot sustain major change because of environmental and/or social capacity limitations (Lee, 2008; Weaver, 2006; Gee and Fayos-Sola, 1997, p. 275; Brohman, 1996).

Weaver (2006) and Pigram (1995, pp. 82–83) highlight that the task confronting tourism stakeholders is to avoid forms of development that entail the risk of irreversible outcomes and a very high, although uncertain, potential to impose unacceptable costs on future generations. Stakeholders need to consider the ecological, economic and social costs and benefits of the scale of tourism development for future generations, including quality of lifestyle and the socio-cultural setting for local communities (Weaver, 2006; Pigram, 1995, p. 84).

Alternative tourism should be supported where it is clearly the most appropriate form of development after carefully determining the priorities and needs of an area and its residents, and the capacity limitations of the destination environment and the reaction of the potential market (Gursoy et al., 2010; Walker, 2008, p. 43). It is necessary for even alternative tourism destinations to attract a

market, i.e. identifying, reaching and maintaining the market at an acceptable size for a long time (Butler, 1995, p. 39; Dearden and Harron, 1994).

Researchers feel that a more appropriate tourism development strategy for the Third World needs to include the core elements of alternative tourism, i.e. a stress on small-scale, locally owned developments that increase local multiplier and spread effects, greater community participation in tourism planning, and more attention for the cultural and environmental sustainability of tourism projects (Daskon, 2010; Brown, 2009; Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008a; 2008b; Walker, 2008, p. 44; Cave et al., 2007; Lansing and De Vries, 2007; Gladstone, 2005, p. 20). Beyond the general elements of alternative tourism, however, the appropriateness of particular strategies should focus on the uniqueness and strengths of the individual communities and countries (Timur and Getz, 2009; Lansing and De Vries, 2007; Gladstone, 2005, p. 20).

Shaw and Williams (2004, p. 36) argue that while there has been little detailed research on the changing regime of accumulation in tourism, there has been a “deafening silence” about the mode of regulation. Yet the general mode of regulation, including the elements specific to tourism, has considerable significance (Shaw and Williams, 2004, p. 36; Hoffman, 2003). The role of the state is critical, although the degree and extent of engagement with tourism varies between countries and regions and also through time in response to national and international economic developments, changes in the tourism industry itself and the focus of the elected government (see Table 2.3).

Hall (2005a, p. 219) and Dogan (1989) highlight that tourism cannot develop without the active encouragement of the state, and at the minimum, government must cooperate with touristic development, for example, in visa policy, foreign exchange requirements and import regulations. Since tourism development depends very much on the interests and attitudes of the national government, public policies to a large extent determine the dominant response to tourism in a country. For example, nationalistic governments may adopt a policy of resistance to large-scale tourism development in order to preserve traditional or national culture (Aref et al., 2010; Telfer, 2005, p. 219; Dogan, 1989; Gee and Fayos-Sola, 1997, p. 290).

**Table 2. 3 Government's Role in Tourism Development**

Reasons for intervention	Forms of involvement	Involvement in critical policy areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>National economic goals:</i> e.g. balancing current account</li> <li>• <i>Political legitimisation, i.e.</i> state 'justifies' its existence via intervention</li> <li>• <i>Equity and social needs</i> e.g. ensuring minimum provision of leisure and tourism access to citizens</li> <li>• <i>Where externalities and social investment</i> mean that the state has to intervene because there are insufficient returns to individual owners of capital</li> <li>• <i>Regulation and negative controls</i>, e.g. protection of the landscape and environment</li> <li>• <i>Use of tourism</i> as an instrument of development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Coordination:</i> avoiding duplication of effort and ensuring effective strategies</li> <li>• <i>Planning:</i> identifying goals for tourism and the means for achieving these</li> <li>• <i>Legislation and regulation:</i> regulation affecting tourism practices</li> <li>• <i>Government as entrepreneur:</i> owning and operating tourist ventures</li> <li>• <i>Stimulation:</i> supporting and encouraging tourism development</li> <li>• <i>Social tourism:</i> the extension of holidays to economically marginal groups</li> <li>• <i>Public interest protection:</i> arbitrating between competing interests and acting as interest protector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Foreign exchange earnings:</i> maximise foreign exchange by reducing leakages from tourist expenditures and increasing multiplier effect of earnings</li> <li>• <i>Attract foreign investment:</i> providing incentives that are carefully monitored to meet specific development objectives</li> <li>• <i>Employment in tourism:</i> controlling employment of foreign nationals and encouraging development of indigenous skills</li> <li>• <i>Land use policies:</i> balancing tourism's needs with the often-conflicting needs of other sectors</li> <li>• <i>Air transport and tourism:</i> establishing its own airline or designating a 'national' carrier that can help to foster tourist traffic</li> </ul>

Adapted from: Aref et al., 2010; Timur and Getz, 2009; Pearce, 2008, p. 31; Hall, 2008, p. 164-170; Hall, 2005a, p. 219-230; Hall, 2005b, p. 139-153; Shaw and Williams, 2002, p. 133-137; Gee and Fayos-Sola, 1997, p. 286-291; Jenkins and Henry, 1982

The state plays a critical role in the coordination and provision of tourism services, destination marketing, investment incentives and promotion of sustainable practices (Nielsen and Spenceley, 2010; Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009; Hall, 2008, p. 164; Britton, 2004, p. 142; Shaw and Williams, 2002, p. 318). Proper coordination of the tourism industry by the state is important to minimise the risk of sending contradictory images of the destination to potential tourists (Daskon, 2010; Williams, 2004, p. 69; Britton, 2004, p. 146). The state's attempt to provide investment incentives is also critical for the development of the tourism industry (Williams, 2004, pp. 67-70; Britton, 2004, p. 146; Shaw and Williams, 2002, pp. 72-73). Governments can assist in shaping the economic framework and providing the infrastructure and educational requirements for the industry and in establishing the regulatory environment for the private sector (Hall, 2008, p. 164; 2005b, p. 139).

Without state intervention, tourism development will likely lack the cohesion and direction necessary to sustain itself over the long term (Nielsen and Spenceley, 2010; Hall, 2008; UNESCAP, 2007). In developing countries, more active involvement

by higher levels of state is needed to coordinate tourism with other economic sectors and national planning objectives. Coordination is necessary to ensure that valuable tourism assets are not irreparably damaged by other economic activities, such as forestry and mining. Development of major infrastructure to serve resorts (for example, roads, airports, electrical grids and water supply) should also be coordinated so that they meet not only the demands of the tourism industry, but also broader economic and social needs. Tourism planning should also be integrated with national cultural projects such as promotion of traditional arts and culture or the preservation of cultural heritage sites (Aref et al., 2010; Telfer, 2005, p. 196; Brohman, 1996).

Treuren and Lane (2003) highlight that the state can play a regulatory role through legislation such as environment protection law or planning protocols in order to develop a sustainable tourism industry. The state may also play a facilitative role in assisting the creation and expansion of the tourism industry. The state may assist, guide or prompt tourism development through 'strategic plans', research, provision of relevant industry training or by providing tourist infrastructure such as improved transportation networks and promotional information (Daskon, 2010; Timur and Getz, 2009; Telfer, 2005, p. 197; Treuren and Lane, 2003; Gee and Fayos-Sola, 1997, p. 287-288).

While there is considerable debate surrounding the nature and extent of government's role in the process of developing a tourism industry, most researchers accept that some degree of government intervention is essential. It is argued that a greater degree of intervention by government is required to achieve material objectives in the absence of a developed and innovative private sector (Nielsen and Spenceley, 2010; UNESCAP, 2007; 1999; NZTRI, 2005). In many developing countries, government has to undertake an entrepreneurial role to ensure that 'pioneer' activities are initiated (Timur and Getz, 2009; Hall, 2008, p. 164-170; Shaw and Williams, 2002, p. 133-137; Jenkins and Henry, 1982).

There are many conflicts and problems relating to the development of tourism that can only be resolved by government, particularly when private sector interests have to be evaluated against the interests of the community and country as a whole (Daskon, 2010; Pearce, 2008, p. 30; Jenkins and Henry, 1982). A growing awareness of the long-term problems associated with often uncontrolled tourism development has

made governments more conscious of the need for careful monitoring and selective action to curb potential problems. Although the detailed management of, and response to, changing tourism demand factors is argued by many to be best met by the flexibility and entrepreneurial flair of the private sector, the government must be involved to achieve macro-objectives (Nielsen and Spenceley, 2010; UNESCAP, 2007; NZTRI, 2005; Treuren and Lane, 2003; Jenkins and Henry, 1982). In developing countries, limitations inherent in the private sector require government to also take an operational role in the tourism industry. As private sector experience and confidence develop, it may be possible for government to move away from this operational role and merely create an ambiance conducive to the growth of a successful tourism industry.

Active involvement by government should not be a manifestation of political rhetoric but rather an organised, sustained and flexible approach to planning with the aim of optimising the social and economic returns from tourism (Aref et al., 2010; Monypenny, 2008, p. 155; Hall and Page, 2002, p. 117; Jenkins and Henry, 1982). For sustainable tourism development in Pacific SIDS, it is necessary to address the various development issues by means of a comprehensive, systematic plan of action. Sustainable development of the tourism industry and building its backward linkages with the local economy must be viewed as an 'integrated whole', i.e. its impact on the economy, society, culture, environment and quality of life and how it affects the needs of local people must all be considered (Daskon, 2010; Walker, 2008, p. 50; Hall, 2005b, p. 139-153; UNESCAP, 1999).

In developing countries, the government may focus on how tourism can meet the needs and interests of the local population and how it fits together with broader social goals of development. If tendencies towards polarisation are to be avoided, mechanisms will need to be created to ensure a more equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of tourism (Nielsen and Spenceley, 2010; UNESCAP, 2007). In many countries, this may require targeting state intervention; for example, through credit provisions and technical and marketing assistance to allow local residents to take better advantage of tourism opportunities (Moscardo, 2008, pp. 1-2; Treuren and Lane, 2003; Hall and Page, 2002, p. 117). It will also require the integration of tourism with other elements of development planning, especially through the creation of

participatory institutions at the local level. Local development may be effectively controlled by democratic institutions and planning mechanisms to influence the nature and degree of local participation in the tourism sector, including the scale of tourist development in a locale (Aref et al., 2010; Pearce, 2008, pp. 37-38; Hall and Page, 2002, p. 117; Brohman, 1996).

Government needs to involve the local community to also play an important role in establishing and monitoring 'alternative' tourism regulations, which are intended to maintain the long-term interests of the community. For long-term sustainable tourism, local communities may demand or enforce regulatory measures that limit tourist numbers, provide for greater local entrepreneurship, and create links to their traditional agricultural economy (Daskon, 2010; Timur and Getz, 2009; Pearce, 2008, p. 38; Walker, 2008, p. 52; Weaver, 2006, p. 43).

It is argued (Weaver, 2006, p. 43) that mass tourism is generally associated with enough regulation to ensure stability and facilitate short-term profitability for shareholders, and external corporate interests overtly play a dominant role in establishing these regulations. In contrast, alternative tourism regulations are ideally established and monitored by the local community and are intended to maintain the long-term interests of that community (Moscardo, 2008, pp. 7-8; Monypenny, 2008, p. 158; Weaver, 2001, pp. 21-22). Locals may, therefore, involve 'anti-market' measures such as restricting visitor numbers and infrastructural capacity, requiring accommodations to have majority local ownership, designating architectural standards and height limits, and requiring that most goods and services be obtained from local sources (Weaver, 2006, p. 43; Gladstone, 2005, p. 106).

The potential shift from conventional mass tourism to alternative tourism offers Third World countries the ability to escape the 'vicious cycle' of dependent tourism development. In other words, developing countries can respond to the problems of limited local ownership of resources, create local employment, and generate foreign exchange (Moscardo, 2008, p. 10; Britton and Kissling, 1984, p. 84). Poon (1989, p. 74) points out that the key for future survival of the tourism industry in Third World countries is innovation and fostering of indigenous skills and creativity rather than perpetual reliance on multinational corporations.

The impact of increasingly accessible and efficient ICT is also significant in the shift from 'mass' to 'alternative' tourism (Brown and Cave, 2010; Ho et al., 2006; Tribe, 2005, pp. 333–334; Fayos-Sola and Bueno, 2001, p. 47). The tourism industry is a major consumer of ICT and technology has dramatically changed the way in which tourists plan their holidays and how tourism providers promote and sell their products and services (Gursoy et al., 2010; Milne and Ewing, 2004; Sofield, 2003, p. 66; UNCTAD, 2002). ICT has been instrumental in leading the shift from product-oriented tourism organisations to more flexible and responsive market-oriented tourism operations, where success depends on sensing and responding to rapidly changing customer needs (Brown, 2009; Huang and Lee, 2009, p. 356; Ho et al., 2006; Cooper et al., 1998, p. 424).

ICT, especially the internet, can improve the linkages between tourism and the local economy in SIDS through the use of websites that offer comprehensive information on surrounding activities (Milne 2009a; Levinson and Milne, 2004; Soteriades et al., 2004; Poon, 1993, p. 121). For example, a local hotel's website may act as a portal to nearby suppliers and surrounding community interests, or it may include a menu that is linked to the local farmers that supply food, and information on local handicraft or community events. Information sharing through ICT increases tourist 'spending opportunities' and builds good will between a core tourism operation and its surrounding community (Mason and Milne, 2006; Levinson and Milne, 2004).

Poon (1993, p. 23) suggests that mass tourism will fade into relative unimportance though not disappear altogether. In reality, both mass and alternative tourism coexist (Gursoy et al., 2010; Shaw and Williams, 2002, p. 56; Poon, 1993, p. 121). Milne (1997, p. 297) suggests that Pacific SIDS do not have the option of completely turning their back on mass tourism, and so a major policy issue is how one can 'add value' to more traditional forms of travel in order to maximise economic benefits while reducing negative impacts. The continued encouragement of mixed accommodation types and the development of local activities that can be integrated into mass tourism packages are essential (Milne, 1997, p. 298).

Small-scale tourism in Pacific SIDS is considered by many commentators and planners to be best for sustainably developing the industry in the long term because it has the potential to provide more benefits and fewer costs to the locals than mass

tourism (Milne, 2009a; 2006; de Haas, 2002). With an emphasis on small-scale establishments and the use of local materials, such approaches feature responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people (Gladstone, 2005, p. 196). Although Pacific SIDS cannot completely ignore mass tourism, a policy focus on 'value-adding' through continued encouragement of local activities and creating links with the traditional economy is essential to maximise economic benefits and minimise negative impacts (Gursoy et al., 2010; Milne, 2006; 1997, p. 297; Milne and Nowosielski, 1997).

## **2.4 Summary**

Governments of Pacific SIDS and aid donors are pushing for forms of tourism that can sustain future development and income for local communities (Harrison, 2004; Black and King, 2002). Research shows that a key way to enhance the benefits of tourism is to expand backward economic linkages to the local economy, including agriculture and food (Berno and Oliver, 2010, p. 14; Sims, 2009). The concept of linking the tourism industry to the local agriculture sector is not being exploited to the full in Pacific SIDS, and in particular in MIRAB economies. Research suggests that the predicted links between tourism and agriculture often fail to develop or remain limited due to a number of factors that influence both the characteristics and strength of linkages between the two sectors; these may be categorised as demand-, supply- or production-related and marketing and intermediary factors (Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; Hoermann et al., 2010; Buijtendijk, 2009; Henderson, 2009; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Torres, 2002).

The need for a clearer theoretical underpinning of the linkages between tourism and agriculture is important for understanding the complex interconnectedness between the two sectors and the potential to nurture the links between them. Dependency theory highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between the global tourism industry and the local people who act as hosts; it also highlights issues of uneven development and underdevelopment (Watts, 2006, p. 93; Hall, 1996, p. 82; Craig-Smith, 1996, p. 39; Britton, 1983, pp. 1–2). Regulation theory and its related work in tourism highlights the potential for small-scale, locally controlled, alternative tourism to survive and thrive as consumer demand

becomes more fragmented and information technologies enable niche business-to-consumer marketing (Agarwal, 2006, p. 216; Poon, 1993, p. 120; 1989, p. 74). At the same time Bertram and Watters (1985) work on MIRAB structures in Pacific SIDS reveals the importance of local context in understanding Pacific SIDS development. Although tourism is not discussed in the initial literature, it is considered as an 'economic supplement' (Sofield, 2003, p. 131; Britton, 1987, p. 113) that cannot be ignored.

The dependency and regulation theories and MIRAB structures provide an understanding of economic development in Pacific SIDS and the role of tourism in that process, especially the industry's link to the agriculture sector. The dependency theory provides an understanding of how the tourism industry in Pacific SIDS is affected by the global system of the world economy. The MIRAB model provides an insight into the specific context of island nations and their survival — the model suggests that MIRAB structures play an important role in contributing to economic development and sustaining livelihoods in Pacific SIDS. The regulation theory is important in understanding the role of local communities in tourism development, especially in linking the industry to the traditional agriculture sector.

The theories outlined in this chapter provide some important tools through which to understand the research questions, but at the same time they have their own limitations in understanding tourism development in Pacific SIDS. Therefore, by combining elements of the dependency, MIRAB and regulation approaches, it is possible to get a deeper understanding of tourism in SIDS and the potential to nurture the economic linkages that lie at the centre of this study.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Case Study**

This chapter discusses the research paradigm adopted for the study and then reviews the case-study approach used to conduct this research. The chapter then outlines the methods used to gather data from the stakeholders.

### **3.1 Research Paradigm**

A paradigm is a basic set of beliefs that informs the researcher's philosophical stance or world view (Crook and Garratt, 2005, p. 207; Jennings, 2001, p. 34). It is a general organising framework for theory and research that includes basic assumptions, key issues, models of quality research, and methods for seeking answers (Neuman, 2006, p. 81; Crook and Garratt, 2005, p. 207).

This thesis adopts a post-positivist paradigm in order to gain a deeper understanding of the current linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue and the potential to nurture these between the two sectors. The aim of post-positivist research is explanation, ultimately enabling the prediction and control of phenomena, whether physical or human (Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 211). Post-positivism relies on multiple methods as a way of capturing as much of reality as possible and emphasises the discovery and verification of theories (Teddlie and Johnson, 2009, p. 69; Bryman, 2008, p. 18; Denzin and Ryan, 2007, p. 583; Crotty, 1998, p. 33; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 9). Post-positivists believe that the world may not be 'knowable' because of its infinite complexity and openness to interpretation. The world is seen as ambiguous with multiple realities, and although science may assist to explain the unknown, many things will never be able to be fully understood in all their complexity (Denzin and Ryan, 2007, p. 588; Miller, 2005, p. 39; O'Leary, 2004, p. 6; Crotty, 1998, p. 33). The post-positivist paradigm illustrates that the world is not fixed because 'the truth' depends on the limits of a researcher's ability to define shifting phenomena and what might be 'the truth' for one person or cultural group may not be for another (Bryman, 2008, p. 18; Pernecky, 2007, p. 216; O'Leary, 2004, p. 6).

For post-positivists, reflexive research demands that understandings of scientific endeavour begin to shift because a study can be based on the senses while also being intuitive – hunches, metaphorical understandings and creativity are all legitimate ways of knowing and exploring the world. Research is regarded as 'holistic'

due to its ability to explore systems, and the whole is often seen as more than merely the sum of its parts (Teddlie and Johnson, 2009, p. 69; O’Leary, 2004, p. 6; Crotty, 1998, p. 33; Guba and Lincoln, 1998, pp. 212–213). The traditional gap between the researcher and the researched is one that can be diminished as researchers can be both participatory and collaborative. The paradigm allows the researcher to work for and with the participants and to be subjective, and the researcher’s knowledge is acknowledged as being value-bound (Pernecky, 2007, p. 216; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2006, p. 80; O’Leary, 2004, pp. 6–7).

In the post-positivist approach, the methods are often inductive as the process moves from specific observations to broader generalisations and theories. Post-positivists attempt to use systematic and rigorous research approaches to achieve reliable findings. The paradigm demonstrates that the context-specific nature of research may not lend itself to reproducibility, but research can be verifiable through full and transparent explication of method (O’Leary, 2004, p. 7; Crotty, 1998, p. 41; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 9). Post-positivists recognise the uniqueness of situations and/or cultural groups but can still seek broader value in their findings. Although the findings may not be able to be generalised, they have their own intrinsic worth or are transferable, i.e. the lessons learned from one context are applicable to other contexts (Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 212; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 9). Researchers in the post-positivist paradigm are often interested in both the production of social knowledge and contributions to change, and their qualitative findings can be presented through imagery and words (O’Leary, 2004, pp. 7–8; Crotty, 1998, p. 41; Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 212).

Guba and Lincoln (1998, p. 201) state that paradigms can be differentiated by answering three interconnected questions: What is the ontological basis for the research? What is the epistemological basis for the research? And what methodology will be applied for data collection? The core assumptions of the post-positivist paradigm that can be summarised as: (1) ontology — critical realism, (2) epistemology — modified dualism/objectivist, and (3) methodology — modified experimental/manipulative (see Table 3.1).

Ontologically, the essence of post-positivism is that although a real world driven by real natural causes exists, it is impossible for humans to truly perceive it with

their imperfect sensory and intellectual mechanisms (Ayikoru, 2009, p. 70; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 88; Jamal and Everett, 2007, p. 62; Guba, 1990, p. 20). Although one can never be sure that ultimate truth has been uncovered, there can be no doubt that reality is ‘out there’, i.e. realism remains the central concept (Ayikoru, 2009, p. 70; Miller, 2005, pp. 39–40; Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 205; Guba, 1990, p. 20).

**Table 3. 1 Basic Beliefs of the Post-positivist Paradigm**

<b>World-view Element</b>	<b>Post-positivism</b>
Ontology (What is the nature of reality?)	Critical realism – ‘real’ reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically understood
Epistemology (What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?)	Modified dualist; critical tradition/community; findings probably true
Methodology (What is the process of research?)	Modified experimental/manipulative; critical multiplism; may include qualitative methods

*Source:* Jamal and Everett, (2007, p. 62); Guba and Lincoln, (1998, p. 203).

Epistemologically, post-positivism recognises the difficulty of assuming that it is possible for a researcher to step outside their own humanity while conducting research (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 88; Ryan, 2006, p. 18; Guba, 1990, p. 21). Dualism is largely abandoned as not possible to maintain, although objectivity remains a ‘regulatory ideal’. Special emphasis is placed on external ‘guardians’ of objectivity such as critical traditions (i.e. do the findings ‘fit’ with pre-existing knowledge and critical community?), editors, referees and professional peers. Replicated findings are probably true but always subject to falsification (Jamal and Everett, 2007, p. 62; Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 205). The post-positivist stance asserts the importance of values, passion and politics in research because the researcher is required to see the whole picture, to take a distanced view or an overview. A researcher views oneself as someone who conducts research among other people and learns with them, rather than conducting research on them (Ryan, 2006, p. 18; Miller, 2005, p. 40; Crotty, 1998, p. 41).

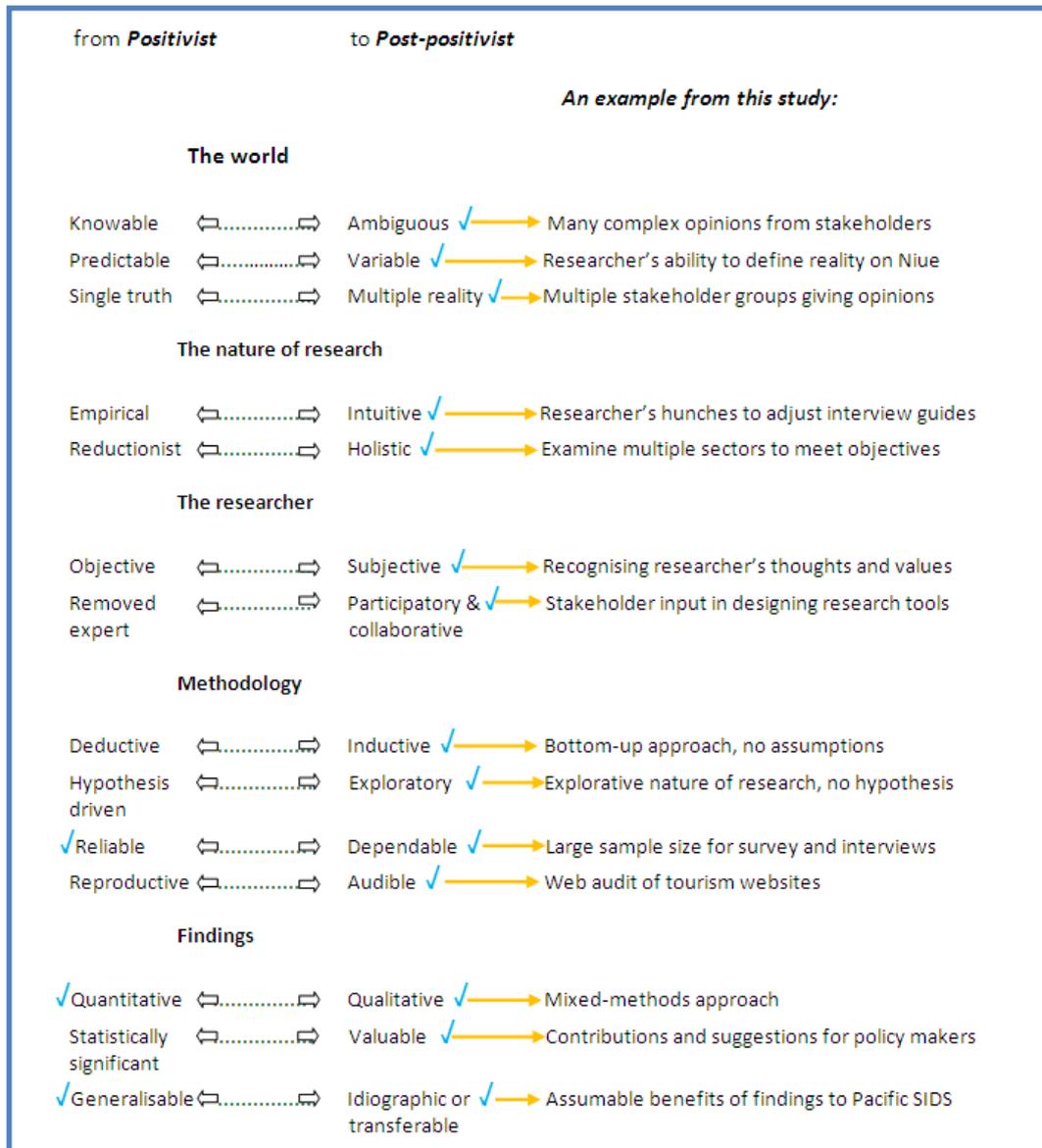
Methodologically, post-positivism provides two responses to emergent challenges. First, in the interest of conforming to the commitment to critical realism and modified subjectivity, emphasis is placed on critical multiplism, which might most usefully be thought of as a form of elaborated triangulation (Guba, 1990, p. 21). If human sensory and intellectual mechanisms cannot be relied upon, then the ‘research

findings' need to be based on as many sources of data, investigators, theories and methods as possible. Relying on many different sources makes it less likely that distorted interpretations will be made (Jamal and Everett, 2007, p. 62; Pansiri, 2005; Guba, Crotty, 1998, p. 41; 1990, p. 21). Second, and perhaps most important, post-positivism recognises that many imbalances have been allowed to emerge in the zeal for achieving a 'realistic' research outcome. A major part of the post-positivist agenda has been devoted to identifying these imbalances and proposing ways of addressing them, largely through the increased use of qualitative techniques (Tahakkori and Teddlie, 2006, p. 80; Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 205; Guba, 1990, pp. 21–23).

Tourism research usually lies on a continuum between quantitative and qualitative methods (Teddlie and Johnson, 2009, p. 69; Denzin and Ryan, 2007, p. 583). Pansiri (2005) argues that researchers need to embrace a general recognition of the legitimacy of a variety of research strategies in order to enhance the quest for human understanding. This thesis illustrates the assumptions and elements of the post-positivist paradigm through the steps taken in organising, collecting and applying the research data. The assumptions of this study coincide with many of the key assumptions and elements of post-positivism, such as the participation of key stakeholders in designing research tools and the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data (see Figure 3.1).

The world view of this study also coincides with the assumptions of the post-positivist paradigm such as the use of multiple stakeholder groups in order to explore the potential of tourism and agriculture linkages in Niue. Overall, the adoption of a post-positivist paradigm for this study means that the findings are assumed to be of value to the stakeholders of tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue, including government and donor agencies, as well as of relevance to other MIRAB nations in the region.

**Figure 3. 1 The Assumptions of the Post-positivist Paradigm**



Key: ✓ Study assumptions that coincide with those of post-positivism  
 Adapted from: O'Leary, 2004, p. 7.

### 3.2 The Case-Study Approach

This research adopts a case-study approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research. The approach is consistent with the post-positivist paradigm and is used to effectively examine the potential and role of all of the major stakeholders in linking tourism to the local agriculture sector in Pacific SIDS. Niue provides the research case-study setting.

Case studies are thorough examinations of specific or particular aspects of the phenomena; they constitute an in-depth investigation which results in a well-organised understanding of the research question (Hood, 2009, p. 68; Wilkinson, 1997, p. 21). A case study uses multiple sources of evidence, which can be qualitative, quantitative or both; therefore, the case study is an intensive examination of an entity. This entity is bounded by time and place and, usually, associated with a location. For example, the 'case' may be an organisation, a set of people such as a social or work group, a community, an event, a process, an issue or a campaign (Raftery, 2005, p. 20; Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p. 105). A contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context can be investigated using a case-study approach, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Hood, 2009, p. 68; Yin, 1994, p. 13).

The case-study approach provides flexibility in the use of various data-collection methods and it can be used in practically any kind of social setting. Conducting a case study is cost effective as the researcher is able to thoroughly investigate a particular phenomenon in the community (Wilkinson, 1997, p. 21). Using a case-study approach can be deemed ideal when a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the researcher has no control (Choemprayong and Wildemuth, 2009, p. 53; Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p. 105; Gillham, 2000, pp. 1–2). The distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena while allowing an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 1994, p. 3).

Case studies aim to bring to life the nuances of managed communication by describing a 'chunk of reality' (Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p. 106). The approach enables the researcher to collect 'rich', detailed information about one particular case or a small number of cases across a wide range of dimensions. A major advantage of the case-study approach is that it can highlight the numerous factors governing managed communication in a particular setting, portraying something of its uniqueness while also often attempting to offer insights that have wider relevance (Raftery, 2005, p. 20; Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p. 106).

Case studies seek to engage with and report the complexity of the research phenomena in order to represent the meanings that individual social actors bring to

those settings and manufacture in them. The common assumption of a case study is that 'social reality' is created through social interaction, albeit situated in particular contexts and histories. Veal (2006, p. 111) argues that a case study seeks to identify and describe before trying to analyse and theorise. The approach assumes that things may not be as they seem and values in-depth inquiry over coverage, and understanding 'the case' over generalising to a population at large (Stark and Torrance, 2005, p. 33). Case studies are particularly useful for understanding people, events, experiences and organisations in their social and historical context (Veal, 2006, p. 111).

Some critics of the case-study approach raise questions over its validity in 'serious' research, arguing, for example, that "theoretical knowledge is more valuable than practical knowledge" and "you cannot generalise from a single case", (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 219). Choemprayong and Wildemuth (2009, p. 55) believe that "the case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building". Others argue that conducting a case study may be time consuming or result in a massive amount of information gathered about the phenomena that is being studied without having enough time left to properly analyse all the data (Raftery, 2005, p. 25; Denscombe, 1998, p. 41; Yin, 1994, pp. 9–10).

Triangulation of research methods can be used in case studies and is seen as a strength of the approach, providing sound data for theory building. Yin (2003, p. 3) argues that "case studies are far from being only an exploratory strategy" as they can provide both exploratory, evaluative research in their own right. Stark and Torrance (2005, p. 33) believe the case-study approach achieves a "rich description" of a phenomenon in order to represent it from the participants' perspective.

Case studies have the advantage of being suitable for both the quantitative and qualitative paradigms of tourism research, demonstrating a flexibility not evident in many alternative research modes (Beeton, 2005, p. 37; Stark and Torrance, 2005, p. 33; Gillham, 2000, pp. 9–10). The case study certainly has a significant place in the exploratory stage of an investigation but it can also be extrapolated beyond that stage. The application of rigorous interpretation combined with reason and logic enables the researcher to obtain place-specific conceptual insights that may then be tested for

wider applicability through further case studies or the use of additional methodologies, creating a multi-method case study.

Beeton (2005, p. 39) argues that case studies tend to reflect the bias of the researcher who is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. The values system of the researcher tends to influence the presentation of the facts and the analysis. The usefulness of this research approach can be limited by the values system of the researcher, who tends to remember results that support their own values, rejecting the others that do not fit as neatly. However, biases can also enter into the conduct of other research methods, such as the design of questionnaires and experiments, so while the possibility of bias must be recognised and dealt with, this issue is not restricted to only this research method. One method proposed in the social science literature that may overcome some of the criticisms of researcher bias is 'triangulation'. By combining a range of methodologies, it is postulated that inherent bias would be neutralised and a convergence of results achieved (Beeton, 2005, pp. 39–40; Denscombe, 1998, p. 39).

### **3.2.1 Niue**

The Pacific Ocean, which covers more than a third (165,384,000 sq. km) of the planet's surface, is divided between Melanesia, several chains of relatively large mountainous land masses, and Polynesia, scattered groups of volcanic and coral islands (Stanley, 2004, pp. 1–3). North of the equator are the coral and volcanic islands of Micronesia. It is believed that, in all, some 30,000 islands dot the Pacific basin but only 500 are inhabited. Each of the islands in the Pacific basin is a cosmos with a character of its own (Panakera et al., 2011; Stanley, 2004, pp. 1–3). The SIDS in the region vary in their cultural, economic, political and social characteristics. This is due, in part, to their diverse physical geography, ranging from volcanic islands to coral atolls. For example, the agricultural farming systems vary from those typical of atolls to those that are multi-layered agro-forestry plantations (SIDSNET, 2007; FAO, 1998; Berno and Douglas, 1998). Due to the variation and complexity of South Pacific SIDS in terms of their population size, land area, geography, culture and resources, the research focuses on the smaller Pacific SIDS that Bertram and Watters (1985) and Bertram (1999; 1986)

referred to as MIRAB economies: Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau (see Table 3.2).

The smaller Pacific SIDS that exhibit MIRAB economic structures vary in their geographical characteristics such as land area and population size. However, all the smaller SIDS are characterised by a small tourism industry with limited visitor numbers and few airlines services, with the exception of the Cook Islands that has shifted towards mass tourism (Taumoepeau, 2009; Stanley, 2004, pp. 1–3). Because the researcher wanted to study a smaller Pacific SIDS exhibiting MIRAB economic structures and where the tourism industry is a small-scale community activity, she had the option to choose an island nation from Kiribati, Tuvalu, Niue or Tokelau. These nations share some common characteristics: each island group has a tourism industry of similar scale and size, is dependent on MIRAB economies, and has a subsistence-style of traditional agriculture. It is important to note that Tokelau is an exception in terms of tourism development due to the lack of an airline service to the island: visitors have to rely on the ship from Samoa which operates on an irregular basis.

**Table 3. 2 Smaller Pacific SIDS with MIRAB Economies**

Pacific SIDS	Land area (sq. Km)	Population	Total visitor arrivals	Main Airlines	Aid per person US\$ 2003	Aid as a % of GDP 2003	Remittance per person US\$ 2003	Remittance as a % of GDP 2003
Kiribati	726.34 <sup>1</sup>	92,533 (2005) <sup>1</sup>	3,380 (2008) <sup>2</sup>	Air Pacific <sup>7</sup>	191 <sup>8</sup>	31.5 <sup>8</sup>	73 <sup>8</sup>	12 <sup>8</sup>
Tuvalu	26 <sup>1</sup>	10,000 (2003) <sup>1</sup>	1,108 (2007) <sup>3</sup>	Air Pacific <sup>7</sup>	520 <sup>8</sup>	38.6 <sup>8</sup>	460 <sup>8</sup>	35.9 <sup>8</sup>
Cook Islands	236.7 <sup>1</sup>	15,324 (2006) <sup>1</sup>	101,060 (2009) <sup>4</sup>	Air NZ, Virgin Blue <sup>7</sup>	263 <sup>8</sup>	3.5 <sup>8</sup>	NA <sup>8</sup>	NA <sup>8</sup>
Niue	259 <sup>1</sup>	1,492 (2007) <sup>1</sup>	4,662 (2009) <sup>5</sup>	Air NZ <sup>7</sup>	NA <sup>8</sup>	NA <sup>8</sup>	NA <sup>8</sup>	NA <sup>8</sup>
Tokelau	10.8 <sup>6</sup>	1,450 (2006) <sup>6</sup>	NA (few tourists) <sup>6</sup>	None (ship from Samoa) <sup>6</sup>	NA <sup>8</sup>	NA <sup>8</sup>	NA <sup>8</sup>	NA <sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PIFS, 2011; <sup>2</sup>Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2011; <sup>3</sup>Tuvalu Central Statistics Division, 2011; <sup>4</sup>Cook Islands Statistics Office, 2011; <sup>5</sup>Statistics Niue, 2011; <sup>6</sup>Tokelau.com, 2011; <sup>7</sup>Skyscanner Ltd., 2011; <sup>8</sup>AUSAID, 2006

In order to thoroughly explore the linkages between tourism and agriculture in the smaller Pacific SIDS, this research uses a case study: Niue.

An important point that is worth noting is that although Niue may be smaller than the other bigger SIDS such as Samoa and Tonga, all these larger nations feature small islands themselves; for example, Eua in Tonga or Apolima in Samoa. Apart from Nauru, Niue is the only other nation in the South Pacific that comprises of 'only one island' – each of the remaining nations is constituted of a 'group of smaller islands' (Panakera et al., 2011; Stanley, 2004, pp. 1–3). Niue provides an example of an 'island' that is attempting to support and nurture the development of a small-scale sustainable tourism industry that is closely linked to the local economy, and especially to traditional agriculture and village lifestyle. The case of Niue highlights critical issues that are of relevance to 'an island' anywhere, especially to the nations in the South Pacific that are struggling to develop a sustainable, yield-focused tourism industry. In other words, the outcomes of this research have much broader resonance than just for Niue. The Niuean context provides the researcher with an understanding of the challenges and potential opportunities that 'an island' especially in the South Pacific faces in the struggle for sustaining livelihoods and culture and reducing sole reliance on the unstable MIRAB structures. To this end, the notion of MIRAB is applicable also to rather larger states such as Samoa and Tonga, where remittances constitute some of the highest proportions of GDP of any country in the world (Brown & Ahlburg, 1999). The persistence of MIRAB in Pacific SIDS suggests a centrality of migration and remittances in the island states that has been largely unchallenged for decades (Bertram 1999; Panakera et al., 2011).

Niue was also chosen to be the focus of this study because of the support offered by the Niuean Government as part of the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). The MOU requests assistance in developing research that can enhance the sustainable economic performance of the industry, and that can enable communities to gain greater benefits from tourism while also keeping control over the pace and type of development. Part of the work plan included in this MOU is a study of tourism and agriculture linkages — the Niuean government views this as one of the few areas where economic linkages can be improved in the country (Government of Niue, 2008a; 2008b).

Niue is the world's smallest self-governing state. Niue achieved this status in free association with New Zealand in 1974 under the Niue Constitution Act, which

outlined the nature of this relationship, including the responsibility of New Zealand to provide “necessary economic and administrative assistance and granting New Zealand citizenship” to the people of Niue (NZAID, 2007). New Zealand is committed to support Niue develop a more resilient economic, social and cultural future despite the island’s vulnerability because of its remoteness and isolation, lack of natural resources, shortage of skilled professionals, and lack of economic opportunities. The mandate of New Zealand’s aid programme to Niue seeks to build the capacity of the public sector to practise good governance, strengthen economic development, particularly in tourism, and maintain the island’s core infrastructure (NZAID, 2011).

Niue’s population continues to gradually decline, from a peak of 5200 in 1966 to an estimated 1496 in 2010 (Statistics Niue, 2010; World Fact Book, 2007). A population decline of 2% per annum is a matter of concern for the Government of Niue because of its impact on economic and social policies and the ability to maintain and sustain a living community (NZAID, 2009a; de Haas, 2002). Niue has a higher living standard than most of the other Pacific SIDS; the island has a life expectancy of 69.5 years, an infant mortality rate of 17.5/1000 live births, and literacy rate of 98% (Government of Niue, 2007a). The GDP per capita for Niue in 2003 was approximately US\$5800 (World Fact Book, 2007). Niueans are the fourth largest Pacific ethnic group in New Zealand, numbering 22,476 or 8% of New Zealand’s Pacific population of 265,974 (Statistics NZ, 2006).

The Niuean economy is highly dependent on New Zealand aid and overseas remittances, with the former constituting 40% of Niue’s GDP (UNFPA, 2007; de Haas, 2002; *New Internationalist*, 1994). The government is the main employer on the island with more than 400 employees (NZAID, 2010; Government of New Zealand, 2004). According to Morris-Tafatu et al., (2002, p.53) Niue has the highest concentration of politicians per population in the world and a total of 13 government departments to manage an island nation of less than 1500 people.

Most Niueans rely on subsistence agricultural activity, i.e. food is produced and consumed by the family, to supplement imported produce. A significant percentage (85%) of the population practise subsistence farming (Statistics Niue, 2011). This means that few locals are available to develop private sector activities – especially

when 80% of Niueans in the formal workforce are employed by the government (NZAID, 2009a; de Haas, 2002; *New Internationalist*, 1994).

The agriculture sector accounts for approximately 34% of Niue's GDP (FAO, 2005). However, the national income obtained from taro, which makes up 85% of all exports, is insufficient to meet Niue's needs (de Haas, 2002), and Niue's limited resources restrict options for expanding the island's economic base. Niue's agriculture sector faces challenges of limited international market opportunities and waning interest from the private sector due to low returns. Copra, banana, *kumala* (sweet potato), passionfruit, lime and honey have all been tried as export crops, but none has proven profitable in the long term (Government of Niue, 2007a; 1989).

Returns from agricultural exports fluctuate and are unreliable due to changes in the national and local economies, natural disasters and unreliable transportation (Heyn, 2003). In recent years, a number of cyclones have battered Niue, the most recent, Cyclone Heta (5 January 2004), caused significant damage to the agriculture sector (Heyn, 2003). Even so, the Niuean Government has emphasised agriculture as one of the key development sectors because of its importance in food production and subsistence (Government of Niue, 2007a; UN, 2006). Agricultural commodities that might have some potential in Niue include vanilla and noni (UNFPA, 2007).

The Government of Niue signed a joint venture with New Zealand's Reef Group in 2004 to officially open Vaiea Farm for the production of noni juice for export ([www.purepacifika.com](http://www.purepacifika.com)). Reef Shipping Ltd is a major presence in the economy through its involvement in fish processing and in vanilla and noni farming. New Zealand's Reef group has launched 'Pure Pacifika', a NZ-owned and operated company formed to market a range of healthy lifestyle products developed in the South Pacific, and in particular, Niue ([www.purepacifika.com](http://www.purepacifika.com))/ (Purepacifika, 2007).

The tourism sector accounted for approximately 13% of GDP in 2002 (South Pacific Travel, 2003). Tourism on the island revolves around small-scale ecotourism (PROFITpacific, 2005). Currently Air New Zealand provides a weekly A320 flight to Niue. The A320 aircraft has 171 seats.

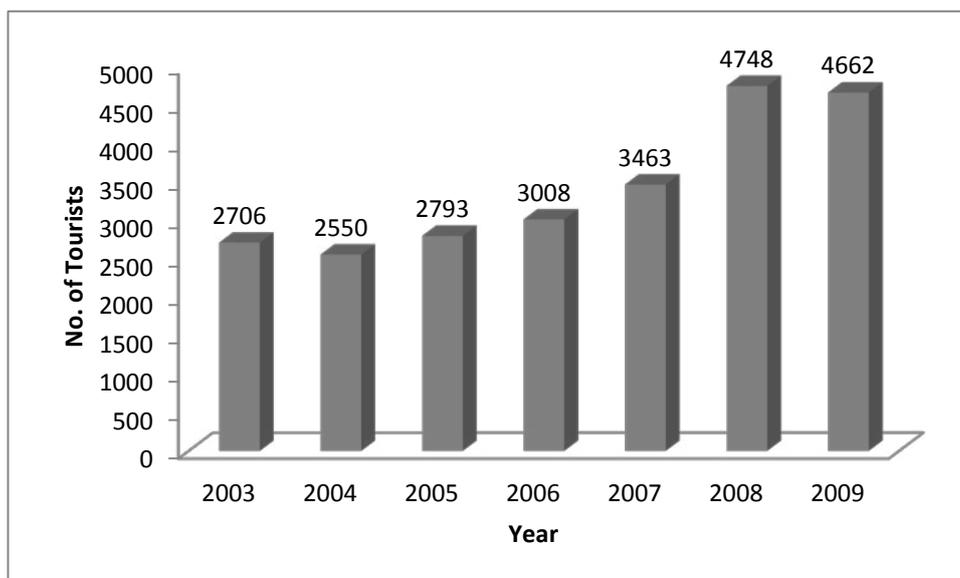
A senior tourism official who has been appointed by the New Zealand Government to assist with the management of the Niue Tourism Office in an interview with the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA, 17 June 2010) said:

*The island is serviced by a once weekly direct Air New Zealand flight which is perfectly suited to a one-week island escape that offers the ultimate winter tonic to Kiwis. Air New Zealand has confirmed their commitment to the country with an Airbus A320 beginning service there from December 2010.*

The peak tourism season is mainly from June to September – this coincides with New Zealand’s winter season since more than 70% of the tourists to Niue are New Zealanders who are eager to escape the cold weather for a warmer holiday that is affordable and close to home. A second peak season is from December to January – this coincides with the end-of-the-year holiday season, especially for Niueans living overseas who prefer to return to Niue to spend the Christmas and New Year’s celebrations with their friends and family (Statistics Niue, 2010, 2007).

Tourist numbers to Niue are limited (see Figure 3.2) with fewer than 5000 visiting in 2008. The majority of the travellers are New Zealanders who are visiting for ‘marine-related’ and ‘nature-based’ activities, i.e. they are not the typical ‘sun, sand and sea’ tourists (Statistics Niue, 2010, 2007; UN, 2006; Milne, 2005).

**Figure 3. 2 Tourist Arrivals in Niue**



Source: Statistics Niue, (2010).

Marine-related and nature-based activities in Niue include sea diving, snorkelling, kayaking, sightseeing and hiking. Estimates of how many locals are employed in Niue's tourism sector range from 40 and 80, from a total labour force of approximately 750 (Milne, 2005). However, entrepreneurial opportunities in the tourism industry exist in Niue for local communities to diversify their economies and generate income (Pacific Online, 2006). In order to relieve Niue's dependence on foreign aid and to build an economic base, tourism has become the focal point for the government, which has recognised the importance of niche small-scale ecotourism (Niue Tourism Office, 2005).

### **3.3 A Mixed-Methods Approach**

Researchers have accepted the underlying assumption that biases are inherent in any one particular method of data collection and analysis (Veal, 2006, p. 40; Rocco et al., 2003). Over the last two decades, the practice of collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data within one study has grown in popularity in the social sciences (Ivankova and Creswell, 2009, p. 137). The triangulation of research methods is crucial to thoroughly explore the links between tourism and agriculture in Pacific SIDS, because it includes the use of multiple data collections, analytical methods, data sources, and theories or perspectives (Rocco et al., 2003). The researcher adopted an empirical approach because this can develop a comprehensive knowledge of the research issues without ethnographically being an 'insider' and immersed in the life of the community (O' Connor, 2006; Palmer et al., 2005; Frechtling et al., 1997).

Triangulation of research methods can yield more valid and reliable findings than the use of either qualitative or quantitative methods alone (Veal, 2006, p. 40). Qualitative and quantitative research approaches can be used in combination in order to answer exploratory questions that could not be answered in any other way; the combined approach can also produce stronger inferences (Veal, 2006, p. 107). Researchers have questioned whether the contrast between qualitative and quantitative research is a particularly constructive one, arguing that the best research in social science contains elements of both. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative

methods has proven most durable and accurate in reflecting social science research findings (Allan, 2002, p. 177).

The early roots of mixed-method social inquiry are found partly in the triangulation approach, which involves the use of multiple methods where each represents a different perspective or lens in order to assess a given phenomenon and enhance confidence in the validity of findings (Greene et al., 2005, p. 274). The use of mixed methods provides opportunities for an exploratory inductive process that begins with empirical evidence and proceeds to a level of abstraction, theorising and generalising. A mixed-methods approach facilitates answering exploratory questions and verifying and generating theory in the study (Rocco et al., 2003, p.20). The mixed-methods approach capitalises on the advantages and addresses the weaknesses of each constituent method used; it also provides an opportunity for divergent views of the research problems (Ho et al., 2006). Researchers use aspects of both quantitative and qualitative methods in their studies as they “need to know and use a variety of methods to be responsive to the nuances of particular empirical questions and the idiosyncrasies of specific stakeholder needs” (Rocco et al., 2003, p. 21).

Greene et al. (2005, p. 275) state that mixed-methods approaches are used because they give an understanding of the social phenomena with stronger validity or creditability and less known bias, and they also enhance comprehension and develop more complete and full portraits of the social world through the use of multiple perspectives. For example, when findings diverge and reconciliation is required, through further analysis, reframing or some other shift in perspective, new ideas and fresh perspectives are generated (Creswell and Clark, 2007, p. 9). According to Greene et al. (2005, p. 275) a mixed-method approach also enables researchers to understand the social world with a greater consciousness and diversity of values, stances and positions through the inclusion of different methods. Creswell and Clark (2007, p. 10) and Blaikie (2006, p. 257) argue that a mixed-methods approach is practical in the sense that researchers tend to solve problems using both numbers and words, they combine inductive and deductive thinking, and they employ skills in observing people as well as recording behaviour.

A mixed-methods approach enhances both the quantitative and qualitative research. For example, words, pictures and narrative can be used to add meaning to

numbers, and the numbers in turn can add precision to the words, pictures and narrative (Ivankova and Creswell, 2009, p. 137; Gorard and Taylor, 2004, p. 4). The researcher can answer a broader and more complete range of research questions because the researcher is not confined to a single method or approach (Creswell and Clark, 2007, p. 9; Blaikie, 2006, p. 257). A researcher can use the strengths of an additional method to overcome the weaknesses in another method by using both in a research study (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2006, p. 39).

The rationale for adopting a mixed-methods approach for this study is to explore and build a 'picture' of the situation rather than test a hypothesis, because an understanding of the issues involved in linking tourism to local agriculture in Niue needs to be defined inductively and not by the researcher in advance. The use of a mixed-methods approach will assist in obtaining a humanistic understanding of the situation rather than a purely objective scientific quantification. The method also enables information to be gathered from various data sources, such as semi-structured interviews, surveys and the secondary literature review, all of which have different weaknesses and strengths.

Conducting mixed-methods research can be time consuming and dependent on resources to collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data. A mixed-methods approach complicates the procedures of research and requires clear presentation for the reader to sort out the different procedures (Creswell and Clark, 2007, p. 10). Methodological purists contend that one should always work within either a qualitative or quantitative paradigm (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2006, p. 39). Researchers are often trained in only one form of inquiry but a mixed-methods approach requires that they know both quantitative and qualitative forms of data (Creswell and Clark, 2007, p. 10). Some of the details of mixed-methods research remain to be worked out fully by research methodologists — for example, problems of paradigm mixing, how to qualitatively analyse quantitative data and how to interpret conflicting results (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2006, p. 39). However, the issues involved with a mixed-methods approach are not insurmountable and strategies can be used to address them as the value of a research that entails a triangulation of methods outweighs the potential difficulty (Creswell and Clark, 2007, p. 10).

### **3.4 The Research Process and Participants**

The study had two phases: pre-field work (pre-FW ) and field work (FW). The pre-FW phase included a secondary literature review and discussion with key stakeholders in order to design the research tools; the FW phase consisted of working with the five stakeholder groups, namely growers, SMTEs, government officials, tourists and village councils. Each step fed into the next, with the secondary literature review and discussion with key stakeholders informing the tourist survey and the interviews of the SMTEs, growers, and tourism and agriculture industry officials.

#### **3.4.1 Phase 1: Design of Research Tools**

Prior to conducting field work, the researcher discussed the needs of the tourism industry in Niue with a group of key stakeholders. These people were identified because they had provided input into the MOU that was signed between the Government of Niue and AUT. The key stakeholders were Ida Talaki-Hekesi (Tourism Office, Niue), Frank Sioneholo (Acting Head of Economic Development, Niue), Premier Hon. Mititaigimene Young Vivian (Minister of Tourism, Niue) and Elviso Togiamua (AUT, Auckland Niuean community). This research was designed to fit where practical and possible with the tourism research needs that the Niuean Government had identified. The input of these key stakeholders was useful in designing and refining the research approach and tools so that they are both culturally sensitive and meet the pressing economic needs of Niue and its people. A detailed analysis of all secondary literature and government and donor agency statistics was also conducted.

The researcher prepared interview guides which included a list of questions and issues to be explored and probed for; these key ideas were then either qualitatively or quantitatively analysed (Finn et al., 2000, p. 73). An interview guide was prepared for each stakeholder group, i.e. the growers, SMTEs and government officials. The guide helped the researcher pace the meeting and made interviewing more systematic and comprehensive. Interviews encourage capturing respondents' perceptions in their own words, which is a very desirable strategy in qualitative data collection. Special attention was placed on the creation of a relaxing and non-threatening environment when carrying out interviews, as recommended by Jennings (2005, p. 107). An online tourist survey was prepared by the researcher in conjunction

with New Zealand Tourism Research Institute (NZTRI) at AUT in order to examine visitor characteristics and behaviour.

The research tools were submitted to the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC) (see Appendices 1–7) and approved (AUTEC Reference Number 07/224). The application also included the online tourist survey questionnaire and web-based information sheet for visitors (Appendix 8).

### **3.4.2 Phase 2: Field Work — Semi-structured Interviews**

To explore the potential for linking tourism to the local agriculture sector, the researcher collected data from the key stakeholders: growers, SMTEs, government officials and village councils. The interviewees showed their willingness to participate by signing the consent form. The researcher used pen and paper to note important points made during the interviews and afterwards typed up the notes. A tape recorder was not used as the objective was to make the interview as relaxed and informal as possible so that the interviewees can express their opinions freely without any stress or fear.

The researcher, with assistance from tourism and agriculture industry officials, identified growers and organised interviews with them. Twenty-nine growers were identified, and all were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis and each lasted approximately 30–60 minutes. An interview guide was used to ensure that all the main themes were covered in the semi-structured interview, i.e. general information about the bush garden, the type and quantity of produce grown as well as its seasonality, the growers' selling arrangements, marketing channels and distribution, and their post-harvest handling techniques.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with both the tourism and agriculture industry officials on a one-on-one basis; these usually lasted 60 minutes. Twelve government officials were interviewed — ten men and two women. Five of the government officials were aged between 31 and 40, and four between 51 and 60. More than half (seven) of the government officials stated that their highest qualification was a university degree; this included two government officials with a master's degree. Another two officials said that their highest qualification was a diploma.

An interview guide was used when conducting the semi-structured interviews with the tourism and agriculture industry officials. Key themes that were covered in the semi-structured interview with industry officials included existing and potential linkages between the two sectors, constraints in improving these linkages, importation and local food production levels, promotion and marketing issues, and favourable policies for linking tourism and agriculture.

The researcher, with assistance from the tourism industry officials, prepared an inventory of 34 SMTE owners, all of whom were interviewed. The 34 business owners operate 62 SMTEs. The researcher discussed the operations of all 62 SMTEs with their respective owners. The key themes that covered were general information on the SMTE; who supplied the food for their business; the type, volume and cost of local and imported produce; their preference for local versus imported food; monthly tourist numbers and their effect on food purchases; and issues in buying local produce.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with tourist accommodation managers, restaurateurs and tour operators. The researcher travelled to each SMTE site and organised an appropriate time with the operator or manager for the completion of the interview. From a Pasifika perspective, a request made in person is given more attention than one delivered by 'non-human' methods. The personal invitation also provided an opportunity to 'put a Pasifika face' on the research in the minds of the participants and gain their support and commitment to the study (Anae et al., 2002).

To ensure the participation of SMTEs, the researcher explained the study's objectives and goals. The interview process continued in Niue for three months in order to get thorough participation and feedback from the SMTEs in the research. Any additional comments or issues discussed between the SMTE operator or manager and the researcher during their interaction was noted with the consent from the interviewee.

Discussions were held with senior executive members of three village councils (Hakupu, Mutalau and Lakepa) that were planning to offer agriculture- and culture-based experiences for tourists in the near future. The researcher discussed the types of tourism experiences the respective villages were planning to offer tourists. The discussions lasted for approximately 60 minutes. Conversations were also held with

ten individual senior village members involved in planning and policy making in Niue in order to gather their general perspectives on the development of linkages between tourism and agriculture.

### **3.4.3 Characteristics of Semi-Structured Interviews**

The use of interviews as a data-collection method begins with the assumption that the respondents' perspectives are meaningful, knowledgeable and able to be made explicit, and that their opinions will affect the success of the project (Veal, 2006, p. 39). A semi-structured interview approach is the best method for in-depth probing, starting with general questions then proceeding to the specific ones. The open-ended questions used in this type of interview to collect personal opinions, beliefs, values and perspectives, give flexibility and can result in a rich depth of information (Beeton, 2005, p. 37). Such a technique allows the researcher to present the meaningfulness of the experience from the respondent's perspective (Veal, 2006, p. 39).

The typical qualitative research interview has been described as a 'professional conversation' and 'the gold standard of qualitative research'. An interview is not simply a matter of using questions and answers to elicit information that is analysed; rather, it is a data-collection method that offers different ways of exploring people's experience and views (Richards, 2009, p. 183; Jennings, 2005, p. 101; Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p. 166; Gillham, 2000, p. 62). Semi-structured interviews give the interviewer considerable freedom to adjust the questions as the interview goes on, to probe far beyond a particular respondent's answers to the predetermined questions. Researchers often choose to use semi-structured interviews because they are aware that individuals understand the world in varying perspectives (Luo and Wildemuth, 2009, p. 232). In a semi-structured interview the researcher knows what topics need to be covered and to a large extent what questions need to be asked, so a degree of comparison is possible. Sufficient flexibility needs to be allowed when conducting a semi-structured interview in order to probe some aspects in depth and, where necessary, to let the respondent lead the interview.

A semi-structured interview, then, is one where the interviewer has a clear picture of the topics that need to be covered but is prepared to allow the interview to develop in unexpected directions when these open up important new areas (Richards,

2009, pp. 185–186; Clark et al., 1999, pp. 132–133). The researcher has the freedom to prompt for more information if something interesting or novel emerges because they are not restricted to a pre-planned, rigid list of questions. As the ideas of the interviewees have priority, participants are able to explore their own thoughts more deeply or exert more control over the interview if they prefer; i.e. the participants may either react spontaneously and honestly to the questions, or spend time reflecting on their answers and articulating their ideas slowly.

Another benefit of interviews is that the data collected is situated within the participants' social context, i.e. the responses derived from interviews are the subjective views of interviewees (Luo and Wildemuth, 2009, p. 233; Daymon and Holloway, 2002, pp. 166–167). At the end of a really successful interview, the interviewer will at least have covered all the intended topics and the respondent will feel that they have participated in a 'conversation with a purpose'. Part of the skill in using a semi-structured interview lies in allowing the interview to develop naturally so that the respondent does not feel that they are simply replying to questions (Richards, 2009, pp. 185–186; Jennings, 2005, p. 101).

One of the main disadvantages of the semi-structured interview is the increased likelihood of bias as the researcher selects questions to probe and there is greater participant–researcher interaction (Finn et al., 2000, p. 75). In this study, the researcher chose key issues to probe and discuss in detail with the research participants (i.e. the growers, SMTEs, government officials and village councillors) in order to thoroughly understand the complexities involved in the linkages between tourism and agriculture. Another disadvantage of this approach is that analysing data obtained from interviews is time consuming and difficult — data preparation and analysis is 'end-loaded' compared with questionnaires that are pre-coded and where data is ready for analysis once it has been collected. The transcribing and coding of interview data is a major task for the researcher which occurs after the data have been collected (Richards, 2009, pp. 185–186; Gillham, 2000, p. 61; Denscombe, 1998, p. 136).

Some of the problems faced when conducting interviews in Niue are related to the researcher's age and gender and the background of respondents such as education level, work exposure and experience with foreigners. Because the researcher is a

young female with a foreign background, some locals, especially villagers who had limited overseas exposure, were initially hesitant in being interviewed and freely sharing personal information. Guidance from senior Niueans suggested that a young female with a foreign background may not be as readily accepted by all members of the communities, especially older male Niueans. Prejudice related to the researcher's age, gender and background did create initial obstacles in conducting interviews with some of the locals, although after careful explanation of the purpose of the research and with constant support from government officials and senior Niueans, this barrier was usually overcome. Even so, given the small population size and closely knit society of Niue, the researcher had to be very mindful of 'rumours' on the island, always maintain a neutral stance, and avoid getting involved in the everyday personal lives of locals.

Some locals, especially growers, were initially reluctant to participate in the interviews. They felt that researchers in the past had intruded into their personal lives and 'used' them for research purposes but that they (the growers) had not seen any benefit from these studies. A careful review of the current research and a clear indication of how the work would be used by government officials to enhance opportunities for income to be derived from tourism meant that these barriers were soon broken down. The researcher was also keenly aware that locals may resent sharing their knowledge via discussions and interviews because personal knowledge is their power and by sharing that information they may lose that power or control to another person; moreover, this feeling is likely to be exacerbated in the case of foreign researchers (Anae et al., 2002). These barriers were minimised because of the researcher's strong personal knowledge, experience and awareness of social and cultural intricacies in conducting research in the region, and because of the considerable guidance the researcher received from senior Niueans when designing the research.

The researcher experienced difficulties when some locals were reluctant to participate in the interview because of past experiences of corruption in government-initiated projects — these projects had failed to bring sustainable benefits to their community. Some locals, especially the older growers, seemed to be less interested in this research, especially during the initial stages, as they feared that it would have the

same fate as previous projects initiated by the government. Due to the conflict that exists between some of the locals and the government officials, many locals initially did not want to comment about Government policies and the industry. However, after the researcher talked with the locals, making them aware of the potential benefits of this research project and clarifying that this study was for a PhD thesis supported by the Government, many were happy to participate in the interview and share their knowledge.

The 'laid back' and relaxed attitude of the locals also caused setbacks during the research because stakeholders sometimes postponed their interview at the last minute. The researcher had to follow up and remind participants of their interview times in order to minimise delays. Also limited cooperation and communication among the government officials and between them and the local communities resulted in delays and setbacks in conducting interviews. The researcher often had to remind key government officials to update their colleagues and the community in order to maximise the support and participation of all stakeholders.

#### **3.4.4 Phase 2: Field Work – Tourist Survey**

A web-based approach to the survey was adopted for this study. It is important to develop a cost-effective tool that both gathers data and is an ongoing barometer of visitor satisfaction and spend and industry performance for Niue. Milne (2009b) pointed out that the ongoing visitor barometer should be web-based to reduce costs of data collection and entry and remain sustainable over time. A barometer is necessary if progress towards meeting yield targets is to be measured effectively. NZTRI (2009) state that the goal of the barometer needs to be able to better understand the characteristics and expectations of visitors and the economic benefits they bring to Niue. The barometer should also identify ways in which the tourism sector can improve its performance in enhancing the visitor experience, and in generating income, jobs and sustainable livelihoods for Niuean residents (NZTRI, 2009).

Questionnaires, either as part of a structured interview or through self-completion, provide a way of gathering structured and unstructured data from respondents in a standardised way (Lewin, 2005, p. 219). Often the data collected is numerical or can be represented numerically and thus can be analysed using statistical

techniques. Self-completion questionnaires are also a cost-effective way of collecting data from a large number of widely dispersed participants, particularly if postage costs can be avoided (Lewin, 2005, p. 219). What is distinctive about the survey approach is its combination of a commitment to a breadth of study, a focus on the snapshot at a given point in time, and a dependence on empirical data (Spitz et al., 2006).

In essence, surveys are an empirical research approach, pertaining to a given point in time, that aim to incorporate as wide a range of data as possible (Denscombe, 1998, p. 7). Web-based surveys offer several advantages over traditional paper-and-pencil surveys. Web-based surveys have high validity and contain fewer random and systematic errors because respondents lacking sufficient time to process all questions can place them in the long-term memory and access the last response at a later time (Roberts, 2007, p. 22). Also, the absence of researchers in the web-based approach minimises their influence on responses — the respondents do not feel under any social pressure to agree with the researcher — and the surveys are comprehended and controlled by respondents at their own pace (Gunn, 2002).

Questionnaire surveys have two major strengths: they are a more efficient tool for surveying large samples of respondents in short periods of time than conducting interviews and, because the data from questionnaires is more suitable to probability sampling, their findings can be generalised to a larger population (Nardi, 2003, p. 59). The main disadvantage of this method is the inflexibility in being able to further probe responses (Finn et al., 2000, p. 75).

Closed questions in a survey restrict answers to a small set of responses; this requires the researcher to have a fair knowledge of the range of possible responses they might expect so that they can generate precise answer categories. Open-ended questions have the merit of not imposing restrictions on the possible answers and so allow for richer and deeper responses, although these responses are harder to aggregate and analyse (Clark et al., 1999, p. 94).

Finn et al. (2000, p. 75) states that web-based surveys are efficient and inexpensive and also allow flexible design and visual images including the use of audio or video in some internet versions. Principles for paper questionnaires generally also apply to web-based surveys. Commenting on the efficiency of email or web-based survey technologies compared with past methods, Neuman (2006, p. 302) states that

the efficiencies include the nearly complete elimination of paper, postage, mail-out and data-entry costs; web-based surveys also potentially overcome international boundaries as significant barriers such as the time required for survey implementation can be reduced from weeks to days or even hours.

The problems associated with conducting a web-based survey include sampling and unequal access to and use of the internet. Older, less educated, lower-income and rural people are less likely to have access to the internet – although this issue is diminishing in significance as usability and uptake increases – and many people could have multiple email addresses, so sampling problems associated with web surveys are formidable (PACRICS, 2008; Roberts, 2007, p. 22; Glastonbury and MacKean, 2002, pp. 228–229).

Web-based approaches may face difficulties with outdated email addresses and complexity of design. Furthermore, the researcher cannot control the research setting in a web-based approach, i.e. instructions cannot be tailored at an appropriate level for individual clarity and the researcher cannot ensure that the survey is completed in an environment free from distractions (Roberts, 2007, p. 22). However, these difficulties were minimised for this study because the researcher worked with an experienced web team at NZTRI who had the expertise for conducting web-based surveys. The issue of protecting respondents' privacy was addressed technologically with a secure website and high confidentiality protection. Respondent verification to ensure that the sampled respondents alone participate and do so only once was resolved with a technical fix, i.e. each respondent was given a unique PIN number in order to limit who can complete the questionnaire.

The researcher checked and verified the compatibility of various web software and hardware combinations for respondents using different types of computers (Roberts, 2007, p. 22). In keeping with best practice the survey was designed to provide screen-by-screen questions, and each question was visible on the screen at one time in a consistent format with drop-down boxes for answer choices. The survey design included a progress indicator for motivation, and visual features including a range of colours and fonts limited for easy readability and consistency. The researcher provided clear instructions — for example, by including 'click here' icons — for any computer actions such as using drop-down boxes, and so that respondents were able

to easily move back and forth across questions (Neuman, 2006, p. 302; Glastonbury and MacKean, 2002, pp. 240–241).

Zimmerman and Clarke, (2003, pp. 301–302) state that respondents go through a complex cognitive process in answering survey questions. The researcher ensured that the questions were very clear and precise in order to increase the likelihood that respondents will participate in an optimal manner. Respondents were motivated to complete the survey by how the researcher used response-inducement techniques and by the degree to which the respondents perceived the salience and immediacy of the survey. An important response-inducement technique used by the researcher was following-up with the tourists while using the Wi-Fi HotSpots at the Alofi town centre or while tourists waited for a plane at the departure lounge in Niue or via email in order to encourage them to participate in the study. Conclusions from research on surveys parallel the conclusion drawn from research on technical communication, namely that respondents' perceptions about the text influence their performance. Respondents who are interested with a topic and believe it is important read a text more easily than those who are not interested (Zimmerman and Clarke, 2003, pp. 301–302).

The early-morning flight times from Niue was inconvenient for personal surveys — completing a paper-based questionnaire at 3 a.m. in the morning before boarding the aircraft from Niue was deemed ineffective. The approach also gave tourists the flexibility to participate in the survey at their convenience after their holiday in Niue and provide a thorough feedback about their experiences. Due to the small number of tourists and the fact there is only one flight a week, the researcher managed to inform virtually all the tourists at the airport about the online survey and the importance of their participation. The personal interaction of the researcher with the tourists before their departure from the island was the key to maximising the number of respondents to the online survey because they became aware of their contribution to the study and its usefulness to developing a sustainable tourism industry in Niue.

A flyer containing information about the online survey was delivered to SMTEs, including tourist accommodations, restaurants and tour operators, for distribution to tourists. The Niue Tourism Office was also contacted for their support and commitment in the distribution of the survey flyer to tourists at the tourism office and

airport. The manual distribution of the flyer continued in Niue for three months. Due to the scattered nature of the SMTEs and constraints involved in communication through email and phone, the researcher, with support from the industry officials, also distributed the flyer to SMTEs on a fortnightly basis in order to maximise the survey's success rate. Visitors departing Niue were invited to provide their email address; an email request and link to the online Visitor Departure Survey was then sent to them. Email addresses were collected at the International Airport, and those travelling by yacht were also included wherever possible. Visitors willingly provided their email addresses when approached.

When approached by the researcher either on the island or at the airport prior to departure, tourists showed an interest in participating in the research and sharing their experiences in Niue — they willingly gave their email addresses in support of the study and in anticipation that the study's results would be beneficial for Niue. The researcher did not encounter any tourists who showed resentment to the online survey. The researcher collected 681 email addresses during the data-collection period. From the 681 emails that were then sent out inviting the tourists to participate in the survey, 284 responses were (a 42% response rate). The survey was conducted from 20 June 2008 to 17 October 2008. The annual visitor arrivals for Niue have been fluctuating over the past years. Niue recorded 3463 visitors during 2007 (Statistics Niue, 2010). Using this figure, the sample from the 4-month study represents approximately 8% of all visitor arrivals, and accounts for approximately 20% of all arrivals during the period of the survey. The sample size is very robust.

The tourist survey addressed key themes such as general tourist information, reasons for travel, knowledge prior to travel, interest in local food experiences and cultural activities, and satisfaction levels. The web-based survey also captured tourists' agriculture-related experiences during their stay in Niue, such as sampling local food, village-based activities and feasts and Niuean culture.

The researcher's informal discussions with tourists on the island supplemented the data obtained from the online survey wherever possible. The researcher held informal conversations with about 60 tourists in Niue. The simple discussions were held mainly over dinner at the weekly island buffet night, while using the Wi-Fi HotSpots at the Alofi town centre or while tourists waited for a plane at the departure

lounge in Niue. Most conversations only covered one or two of the themes discussed in this thesis – but all added something to the researcher’s overall understanding of tourism in Niue. For example, tourists at a café commented on the quality of local food or those at a village activity expressed their desire to have more such experiences.

### **3.5 Summary**

This research adopts a post-positivist paradigm in order to answer the key research question of this thesis: What is the potential within Niue to create linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors? The study uses the case of Niue to examine the linkages between tourism and agriculture in a smaller Pacific SIDS that is an exemplar of a MIRAB economy. Understanding the current status of agriculture and tourism and the linkages between the two sectors is critical in comprehending the factors that influence the links between them. The methods and approach used in the case study will provide insights of real value to other Pacific SIDS, especially to the smaller island nations that feature MIRAB economies and a relatively underdeveloped tourism industry. A mixed-methods approach was used to gather the necessary data for this research. The triangulation of research methods is crucial because it enable a thorough exploration of the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Pacific SIDS, by using multiple data collection, analytical methods and perspectives. The pre-field-work phase consisted of a secondary literature review and discussion with key stakeholders in order to design the research tools. The field-work phase included an online visitor survey, semi-structured interviews with growers, SMTEs and government officials, and discussions with village councillors and elders.

## **Chapter 4: The Current Status of Agriculture and Tourism in Niue**

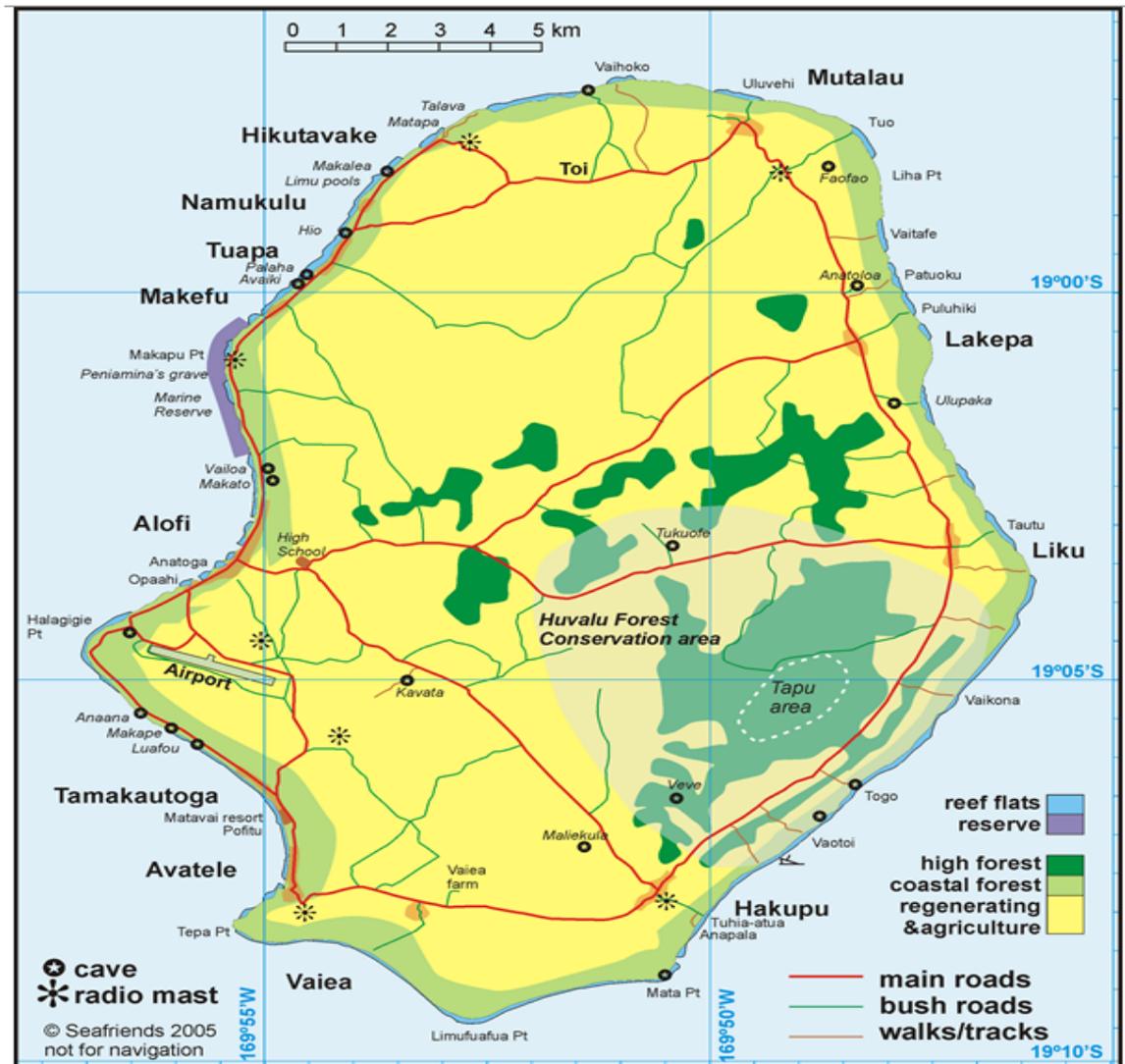
This chapter provides an overview of the existing status of the agriculture and tourism sectors on the island of Niue. Then the chapter discusses the basic profile of tourists that travel to Niue. The chapter sets the scene for discussions on the current linkages between agriculture and tourism and the constraints and facilitators of the linkages between the two sectors.

### **4.1 An Overview of the Agriculture Sector**

Niue has an elevated coastline and extensive forest cover, with the latter comprising 65–70% of total land area. The island nation is primarily an agriculturally based economy (UN, 2009) (see Figure 4.1). The agriculture sector in Niue is mainly subsistence-based. The most recent Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) estimated there were 504 households in Niue, of which the majority are engaged in subsistence agriculture (Government of Niue, 2002). An official from The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) interviewed during the research noted:

*Agriculture is the backbone of a Niuean's survival as a human being. If you want to stay in Niue you need the land, sea and forest. Niue people love to plant their own food and be self sufficient.*

Figure 4. 1 Map of Niue: Characteristics of Agriculture



Source: <http://mappery.com/map-of/Niue-Map> (2011)

The growers and government officials from the agriculture department in Niue feel that relative to its small population of less than 1500 people, the land available for small-scale agricultural farming is more than sufficient to meet the needs of the local community (see Table 4.1).

Table 4. 1 Geographical Information on Niue

Geographical facts	
Agricultural land (sq. km)	70
Arable land (% of agricultural land)	43
Permanent crops (% of agricultural land)	43
Permanent pasture and meadows (% of agricultural land)	14
Forest area (sq. km)	137

Source: UN, 2009

The DAFF officials pointed out that less than 10% of the population are semi-commercial growers, and most of them are older people who either grow taro and coconuts for export, or sell their produce at the only local marketplace in Niue which is located in the main shopping centre, Alofi. A very small percentage (1% or  $n = 15$ ) of the population are growers who regularly bring their produce to sell at the local market. A detailed map is provided of the main shopping centre, 'Alofi town', that shows important places such as the post office, bank, shops and the local marketplace (see Figure 4.2). Jasons Media Travel are the owners of the 'Alofi town map' and they have allowed the researcher to include the map in this thesis (see Appendix 9).

Agricultural exports are relatively limited. Surplus taro is exported either commercially or privately to families in New Zealand. The quantity of taro exported fluctuates each month due to climate, availability of the one bulldozer on the island for clearing land and planting, and competition from other Pacific SIDS. Drinking and dried coconuts are also exported to New Zealand on an ad hoc basis but strict quarantine regulations are making exports difficult.

Government officials note that as the tourism sector grows and the tourist accommodation owners and restaurants establish contracts with growers for local produce, locals will have an incentive to grow more. For example, catering for the 2008 forum meeting of South Pacific leaders hosted by Niue, the government established a contract in advance with a group of growers to supply a specific quantity of local produce; this gave the locals an incentive to meet the demand for locally grown produce as they were assured of a fixed market.

To encourage locals to grow fruit and vegetables for sale, the Government of Niue, with funding from New Zealand, opened an agriculture research farm in 1959. This was mainly for conducting trials for crops and other plants, and as a gene bank to supply planting material for different kinds of crops and exotic plants. The research farm has also been used for trials of pigs, ducks, goats and other livestock. The farm is used by local schools for class trips as part of their learning programmes.

Figure 4. 2 Alofi Town Map



The research farm includes a nursery to supply seedlings and planting materials to growers, to conduct trials for vanilla, forestry, noni, lime, oranges, citrus and taro, and for cross-breeding of pigs that have been brought from New Zealand. The research farm manager stated that the government hopes to establish an integrated farming system, which would involve the use of pig and chicken waste to fertilise vegetable gardens. The government would also like to generate income from the research farm; for example, from breeding pigs and livestock for local consumption. The lack of government support in previous years has resulted in the deterioration of the research farm but government officials are eager to revitalise it. However, its future relies heavily on funds and the focus of the government that will be in power. The research farm manager further noted that perhaps the tourist demand might also help to develop the farm and generate revenue in the future – for example, through farm tours and the supply of local produce to the tourism industry.

The government has encouraged organic growing through the formation of the Niue Island Organic Farmers Association (NIOFA). An official from DAFF said that currently NIOFA, in association with BioGrow NZ, has certified 12 growers as ‘organic vanilla and noni farmers’ on the island. Although the organic certification by BioGrow NZ is only for vanilla and noni growing, NIOFA is working towards encouraging growers to incorporate the principles of organic planting to other local produce such as vegetables and fruit. The NIOFA executives anticipate acquiring organic certification for bananas and pawpaw in the near future. The NIOFA executives said organic growing is feasible on the island as there are organic herbicides and fertilisers and biological control of pests available, although they are more expensive than inorganic chemicals. The NIOFA executives pointed out that although there are some growers that are ready to go the extra mile and practise organic growing, others have a mind-set of wanting to save work and use chemicals.

Three organically certified vanilla and noni growers claim to have taken NIOFA’s initial encouragement further by growing organic vegetables in tiny backyard plots. These three growers claim to be relying solely on traditional planting practices such as hand-weeding the gardens, hand-picking the bugs and caterpillars from the vegetables and watermelons, and spraying plants with crushed chillies mixed in water to control pests.

## 4.2 The Characteristics of the Plantations

Growers use the bulldozer to plough their land for planting; slashing and burning of the bush is rarely practised due to the risk of fire destroying the surroundings. The bulldozer has been in use for about ten years, and growers claim that ploughing the land with it loosens the soil for ease of planting while the legume cover crop provides mulch which enriches the soil quality. The area that is cleared and ploughed by the bulldozer for growers to establish their gardens is inland, away from their houses and coast, because the soil there is fertile; hence the name 'bush garden'. Each grower usually has a few (two to four) bush gardens, ranging in size from 0.125 to 0.25 acres. Planting is a way of life for locals and they enjoy being in their bush gardens. As one grower commented:

*We have to continue planting so that if we finish eating from one garden, we move on to the next. It's our hobby and lifestyle. We just plant taro and there will be lots and lots and if we leave them in the ground too long, they will rot. We plant in one garden and after we harvest from that garden, we move on to the next garden and plant on it.*

The bush gardens are left fallow for eight to ten years after harvest. The duration of time required for a bush garden to reach harvest stage varies from six to twelve months. A typical bush garden comprises mainly taro, plantain, kumara and yams planted in the middle, and cassava on the periphery. Fruit trees such as pawpaw, pineapples, bananas, mango and lime grow wild in the bushes and growers take little care of them apart from clearing the surrounding bushes for accessibility (see Figure 4.3). As one grower noted:

*The farming practice is mixed farming — the vegetable plot is all mixed with all types of vegetables. The papaya plot also has vegetables growing under the trees.*

Growers clear tracks to their gardens for the bulldozer and for walking. The bush gardens depend on rain to provide water for their root crops.

Water supply in Niue comes from groundwater sources and rainfall catchments. It is interesting to note that according to the Applied GeoScience and Technology Division of SOPAC (2010) and the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP, 2003) the groundwater is extracted through 20 secure boreholes across various locations on the island. The water that is extracted from the boreholes,

which have a depth of 35–45 metres, is then pumped into 14 reservoirs located around the island. This means that all 14 villages on the island have their own water reservoirs (Applied GeoScience and Technology Division of SOPAC, 2010; SPREP, 2003).

**Figure 4. 3 Bush Gardens**



According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and SPREP’s ongoing project on ‘improving the water security situation of every Niue household’, they have secured funding of US\$746,158 from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) – Special Climate Change Fund to increase the storage capacity of reservoirs and provide adequate supply of water to the villages in the long term (GEF, UNDP and SPREP, 2012). The aim of the project is to make the population of Niue secure in terms of water, and to prevent saltwater intrusion into the water-supply system. The project is currently being piloted in all the 14 villages so that any leaking water pumps at the reservoirs located around the island can be repaired, and so management of water resource in Niue will be efficient (GEF, UNDP and SPREP, 2012). Such an effort by regional and international organisations is a clear indication that they see a vital need to sustain the agriculture sector in the long-term.

According to the latest available data on how underground water is used in Niue, about 80% is used for domestic purchases, 15% for agricultural production and 5% for commercial and industrial use (Applied GeoScience and Technology Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2007). Niue is not entirely dependent on its underground water lens as rainwater provides a supplementary source of fresh water. To encourage all households in Niue to build water tanks as catchments to harvest

rainwater, all newly constructed houses are subject to Building Code standards, and water tanks have become a compulsory requirement for a household (Applied GeoScience and Technology Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2007). Each village also has a common water tank as rainwater catchments with a capacity of 50–120 kilolitres (GEF, UNDP and SPREP, 2006).

This initiative of building water tanks is helping growers to incrementally diversify their bush gardens and provide surplus produce for sale. One grower noted:

*Due to the water tank located in my backyard I can now grow vegetables during the vegetable season and because this also coincides with the peak tourism season in Niue I can sell my surplus vegetable to one of the café operators located in Alofi.*

Another interesting point to note is that one official from the agriculture department said that they are in the process of utilising the funding from the New Zealand Government to set up a few drip-irrigation projects around the island to assist growers to improve the supply of local produce. At least one grower has received the materials for drip irrigation from the agriculture department and is using the technique to grow vegetables. The grower mentioned:

*I am so glad that I managed to receive some support from the Government ... they know that I am a hard-working person and they have given me the necessary materials for drip irrigation ... they even help me set it up at my vegetable garden ... the vegetables look green and healthy and I am waiting for harvest soon ...*

The growers highlighted that reliable annual rainfall (see Table 4.2) is a vital factor in ensuring successful bush gardens. A village elder commented that sufficient rainfall means that the yields from the bush gardens are plentiful for household consumption and often the growers sell their surplus produce at the local market facility, especially to the café and restaurant operators. The growers pointed out that even in years where rainfall diminishes (e.g. 2002, 2003) it is not necessary to transfer water to the bush garden because the root crops that are grown there do not need much water to survive, although the yield might not be as plentiful compared to the years that have a greater annual rainfall.

As for vegetables that need watering, growers usually drive their vans to their vegetable plot and carry water in plastic containers. The common vegetables grown

are carrots, radishes, cabbages, cucumber, tomatoes, spinach, herbs and local greens called *polo* (*liku* or local fern, local cabbages, *polofua*, *sinapi* or local pak choy, and taro leaves). Sometimes growers plant watermelons in a small plot in the bush far from their house where the soil is fertile, and they need to be watered regularly and seedlings protected from pests. On occasions a grower is lucky to have a water bore located near their vegetable plot which eases the task of watering. Growers mainly use mulch, such as cover crops, chicken waste and compost or sometimes chemical fertilisers to increase the soil fertility for vegetable gardens and to retain moisture. Drip irrigation is very rarely practised.

**Table 4. 2 Total Annual Rainfall (mm) in Niue**

Year	Yearly total (mm)
2000	2,466.7
2001	2,099.3
2002	1,857.1
2003	1,848.6
2004	2,208.8
2005	2,454.5
2006	2,382.5

Source: Statistics Niue (2011)

A grower's annual expense for semi-commercial farming (two bush gardens and one vegetable plot) are the costs for hiring the bulldozer, planting materials, pesticide, herbicide, fertiliser and the petrol used in driving to and from the bush gardens. This approximates to NZ\$400. All the growers interviewed said that 80–90% of the produce from their gardens is for family consumption, with the remainder sold either at the local market, from home, or to restaurants, cafés and shops. The growers earn between NZ\$40 and NZ\$100 per week depending on the type and quantity of surplus produce available for sale.

Growers mainly keep a few (fewer than ten) pigs for traditional feasts such as ear-piercing and hair-cutting ceremonies, and for family consumption; pigs are rarely sold to the tourism sector. Ear-piercing and hair-cutting ceremonies include the sharing of food and produce among families (see Figure 4.4). Only two or three growers breed pigs for the purpose of selling the weaners to others who want to raise them. Growers have minimal expenses, less than NZ\$200 a year, for raising their pigs.

**Figure 4. 4 Locals Sharing Food and Produce at Ear-Piercing and Hair-Cutting Ceremony**



For example, one grower noted:

*I feed pigs with coconuts, imported feed and food scraps. I go to the bush garden during the weekends and so I get local fruits and coconuts and cassava for them. Other days their feed is a combination of local and imported feed. My reason for imported feed is due to convenience as I can't go to the bush garden every day to get local feed.*

Although most families can take one of the wild chickens for consumption, the few growers that raise chickens feed them mainly on food scraps and coconuts. Local eggs and chickens are seldom sold. One grower on the island has managed to expand his chicken population (approximately 120) for meat and egg production.

Growing produce is a family affair and the workers are mainly the members of the household, with extended family members sometimes assisting with tasks that require more labour, such as planting and harvesting. A grower commented that:

*Mainly my wife, son and daughter help me in the bush garden. Son helps with planting. Wife and daughter help with harvesting and market sales.*

#### **4.2.1 Growers' Sources of Income**

The majority of growers (23 out of 29 interviewed) earn less than 40% of their total weekly income from selling local produce, either at the market or directly from home. Of this group, seven growers earn between 1% and 10% of their total weekly income from selling local produce (see Table 4.3). Half of the growers earn between 41% and 80% of their weekly income from a pension or salary. Nearly a third ( $n = 9$ ) of the growers indicated that they also received additional income from their children and families overseas and on the island (see Table 4.3).

**Table 4. 3 Sources of Income for Growers**

Source of income (Number of Growers, <i>n</i> = 29)	Total income/week:			
	0 (%)	1–40 (%)	41–80 (%)	81–100 (%)
Produce sales – market and home	0	23	6	0
Pension or salary	0	7	15	7
Support from children and family	20	9		

Percentage of income/week	Number of Growers ( <i>n</i> )
1–10	7
11–20	4
21–30	6
31–40	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

Percentage of income/week	Number of Growers ( <i>n</i> )
41–50	2
51–60	2
61–70	1
71–80	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>

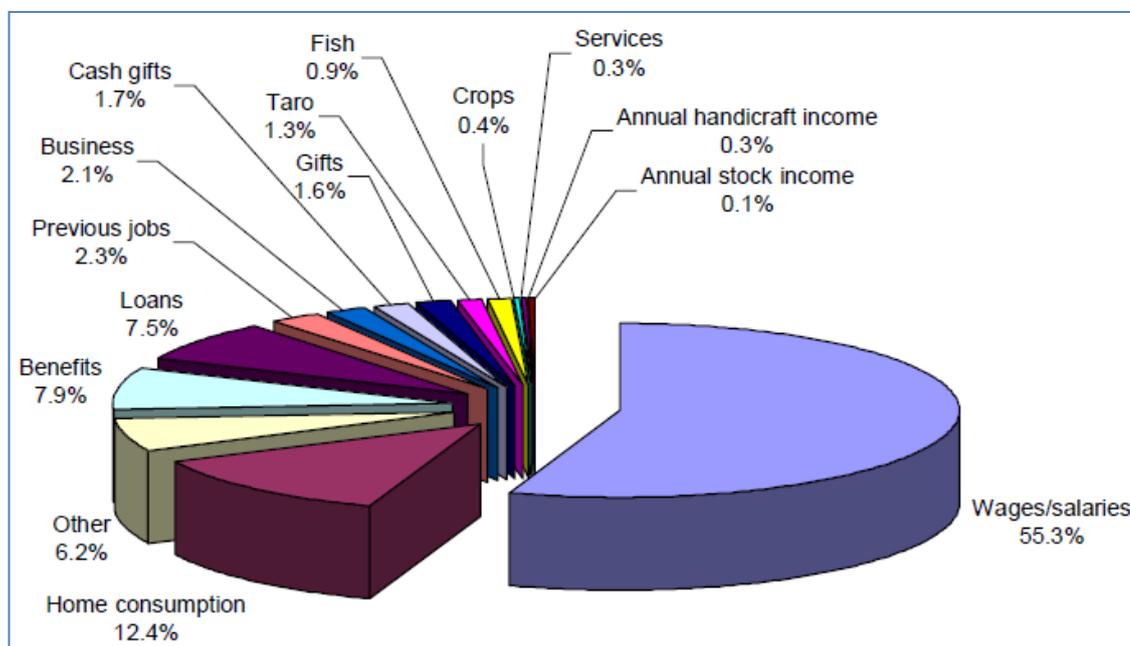
The findings from the interviews with growers on their sources of income are similar to those reported by the recent HIES report (Statistics Niue, 2011). The findings (see Table 4.3) show that the main source of income for most (*n* = 22) growers is from a pension or salary – something that is more than 40% of their total weekly income. The second source of revenue for most (*n* = 23) growers is through the sale of local produce – this accounts for between 1% and 40% of their total weekly income. The third source of income for growers (*n* = 9) is from the benefits received from their children and family – something that also accounts for between 1% and 40% of their total week income.

According to the most recent HIES report, the average annual household income in Niue is NZ\$32,487 (see Figure 4.5). The main source of income for households is from wages and salaries, especially from public sector employment, followed by subsistence activity, i.e. food items produced and consumed by the households themselves, and from welfare payments, benefits, superannuation and loans (see Figure 4.5).

The HIES report states that the average annual household expenditure it is NZ\$31,757. The main source of expenditure for households is food, including the value of local produce grown and consumed. The other sources of expenditure include transport and household operation. Transportation costs include the purchase of

vehicles and their running costs, and household operational expenses include paying for utilities, household appliances and furniture.

**Figure 4. 5 Source of Annual Household Income**

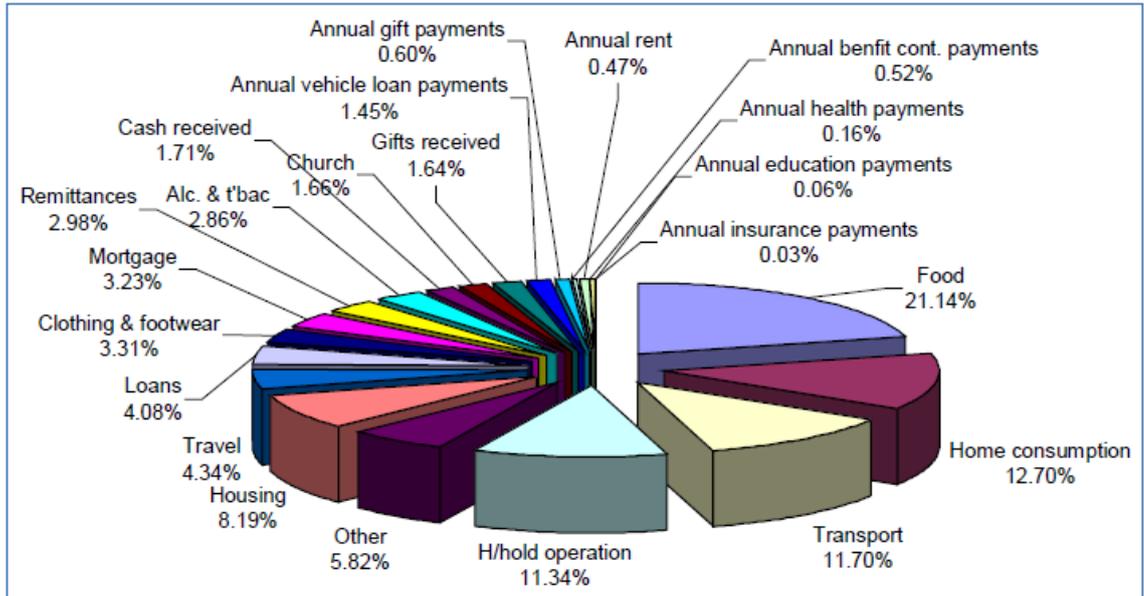


Source: Statistics Niue (2011)

Other costs include expenditure on housing such as purchase of materials for home improvements and on purchasing household goods such as a video (see Figure 4.6).

The growers commented that they have received some assistance from the government such as agriculture advice and encouragement during meetings and workshops and, very rarely, a soft loan to expand their gardens. The growers noted that the government also assisted them with resources such as water catchment tanks in the bushes, irrigation systems, seedlings, piggery units, chicken sheds and tools. However, the growers highlighted that sometimes the resources were not fairly distributed due to corruption. The main sources of household expenditure highlighted by the growers are similar to those reported by the HIES report (Statistics Niue, 2011). To this extent the growers mentioned to the researcher that their three main sources of expenditure are food, petrol for their vehicles, and other household running costs including paying for electricity and home improvement.

**Figure 4. 6 Source of Annual Household Expenditure**



Source: Statistics Niue (2011)

#### 4.2.2 The Local Marketplace

Prior to 2004 the market (see Figure 4.7) operated only on Friday mornings but since then it is also open on Tuesdays. The president of the market said they intend to extend the market days to Saturday in the near future.

**Figure 4. 7 Local Produce Sold at the Market**



Popular local porridge, or *nani*

Coconut crab, or *uga*

At present the growers start arriving at the market around 4 a.m. to prepare their tables with produce and cooked food for sale; the buyers arrive around 5 a.m. The market starts to wind down at about 10 a.m., and by 12 noon nearly all the produce and food are sold and the growers leave. The president of the market noted that market is very flexible and has no set time for when the growers arrive and leave, but those just described were the patterns observed by the researcher.

Growers commented that they experienced better sales of their produce during the pay week for government workers compared with the non-pay or 'blind' week. The market serves about 20 customers on Tuesdays and 50 on Fridays during the 'blind' week; during the government-pay week, the market serves up to 30 customers on Tuesdays and 70 on Fridays. The president of the market pointed out that between 5 and 20 tourists visit the market on market days and they show an interest for locally cooked food such as local porridge, taro, coconut crab (*uga*) and produce.

### **4.3 An Overview of the Tourism Sector**

The Niue tourism sector can be summarised by this series of words/phrases from government officials who were asked to characterise the tourism industry in a word or two: "small", "embryonic", "low key", "huge potential", and "an unspoilt place with clear water and whales". One official from the tourism office said:

*Niue has tried very hard in the past to achieve economic development through various projects, such as agricultural commodities for export, but they have all failed. Tourism does seem to be working and appears to have potential and the great advantage of the sector is that a lot of activity can hang off it such as bringing an export market to your doorstep where locals can sell a range of goods and services to the tourists and also increasing the domestic market.*

Under the Niue Integrated Strategic Plan 2008–2010, the government has identified tourism as one of Niue's three economic planks of development, along with fisheries and agriculture (Government of Niue, 2008a). Currently the Niue Tourism Office and Department of Economic Planning are focusing on developing the tourism sector on the island.

The aim of the tourism sector is:

*To ensure that Niue maximises the potential offered by the sector for economic growth, job creation and increased government revenues, so that tourism development is sustainable, economically, environmentally and socially.*

(Government of Niue, 2008b)

The government argues that if tourism development is managed sustainably, local communities will be able to benefit from the industry:

*Tourism is a valuable national resource that must remain in Niuean hands. Unregulated, unplanned tourism will lead to the exploitation of Niueans, tourism has the potential to create economic independence and security for countless generations of Niueans.*

(Government of Niue, 2005)

The New Zealand government underwrites a weekly air service to Niue, provided by Air New Zealand, but the growing popularity of the destination has meant that there has so far been no need for New Zealand to draw on the underwrite (NZAIID, 2007) – something that is not predicted to change in the foreseeable future (NZAIID, 2012). The assurance of a regular Air New Zealand flight provides the tourism industry in Niue with the level of security and consistency crucial for the private sector to continue investing in the growing industry.

The New Zealand government is working closely with Niue to develop viable opportunities for building more accommodation facilities and, in particular, to support the emerging private sector to step up their investment. The New Zealand government feels that the management of private sector investment in Niue is important for the island's economic growth and future sustainability:

*The private sector holds some promise for increased economic growth while generating alternative, meaningful employment opportunities and prospects for a more sustainable future. Whilst increased investment in tourism could open the door to new income opportunities in Niue, it will be important to ensure this investment is managed carefully and wisely. Niue remains a fragile environment, with a unique ecosystem that will need to be protected through good guardianship to ensure it retains this value for future generations.*

(NZAIID, 2007)

New Zealand encourages specific aid programmes targeted to encourage income-generating capacity through supporting key growth sectors such as tourism and agriculture in a bid to reduce the island's reliance on international aid. The New Zealand government feels that tourism development, in particular, has significant potential as Niue is an attractive visitor destination (NZAID, 2007). According to the Government of New Zealand (2004), private sector investment plus New Zealand's support for growing commercial enterprise means a viable economic future is possible and realistic in Niue.

#### **4.4 The Characteristics of SMTEs**

The majority of tourism enterprises on the island are accommodation providers. The sector is dominated by the government-owned Matavai Resort, the only hotel in Niue. All 19 accommodation providers on the island were interviewed. South Pacific Travel estimated in 2010 that there were only 12 tourist accommodation providers in Niue (South Pacific Travel, 2010). The difference in the data between the South Pacific Travel and this study is an indication that the industry has had lots of recent start-ups and that some are so small that they get missed during the audits that are conducted to ascertain the numbers of operators. Another 14 SMTEs operate tours and activities, with 10 running shops and 8 restaurants or cafés. There are also four vehicle rental businesses and two travel agencies operating on the island. The researcher interviewed 34 owners and operators who are involved in running about 95% ( $n = 62$ ) of the SMTE operations in Niue. Specifically, the researcher interviewed all the operators of the tours and activities, restaurants and cafés, vehicle rental and travel agencies, and 80% of the shop owners (see Table 4.4).

**Table 4. 4 Breakdown of SMTEs Interviewed**

<b>Breakdown of SMTEs interviewed</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Percentage interviewed</b>
Tourist accommodation <sup>1</sup>	19	100
Tours and activities	14	100
Shops	10	80
Restaurants and cafés	8	100
Other <sup>2</sup>	5	100
Vehicle rentals <sup>3</sup>	4	100
Travel agencies	2	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup>excludes village-based accommodation (was under renovation during field work) and community halls (mainly used for village activities, e.g. meetings and feasts; not operated as a business for providing accommodation to tourists)

<sup>2</sup>hydroponic vegetable production, fishing, purchasing organic vanilla, ebony carvings and tourism marketing

<sup>3</sup>cars, vans, motor bikes, scooters, pushbikes, trucks, four-wheel drive and mini bus

The Niue Tourism Office website ([www.niueisland.com](http://www.niueisland.com)) provides a detailed map showing important tourist information such as the scenic areas, villages, accommodation and eating places around the island (see Figure 4.8). Jasons Media Travel are the owners of the 'Niue tourist map' and they have allowed the researcher to include the map in this thesis (see Appendix 9).

Figure 4. 8 Niue Tourist Map



Combined, the accommodation providers interviewed can accommodate 174 tourists per night. The total number of rooms available at the time of this research on the island was 74. The total number of rooms offered by type of accommodation can be seen in Table 4.5. The most common types of tourist accommodation available are guest houses ( $n = 6$ ) and motels ( $n = 6$ ), followed by rental homes ( $n = 4$ ). Motels can accommodate the greatest number of tourists per night ( $n = 48$ ), followed by the hotel ( $n = 44$ ) and guest houses ( $n = 36$ ) (see Table 4.5). The most expensive accommodation is the resort hotel (NZ\$188–NZ\$236/room/night) followed by the motels (NZ\$100–NZ\$150/self-contained unit/night). The guest houses range from two to five bedrooms, with shared facilities. Motels feature between two and five self-contained units and rental homes range from one to three bedrooms. The resort hotel has 22 fully furnished rooms. Home stay is very rare: there is only one operator offering this experience, and that is for just one to two tourists per night. There is one backpacker facility available on the island; it can accommodate eight people per night.

**Table 4. 5 Characteristics of Tourist Accommodation**

<b>Tourist Accommodation<sup>1</sup></b>							
<b>Type of Accommodation:</b>	<b>Guest house</b>	<b>Motel</b>	<b>Rental home</b>	<b>Resort hotel</b>	<b>Home stay</b>	<b>Backpacker</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>n</i>	6	6	4	1	1	1	19
Number of rooms	18	20	9	22	1	4	74
<b>Accommodation capacity:</b>							
Total number of tourists/night	36	48	17	44	21	8	174
Mean number of tourists/night/facility	6	8	4.25	44	21	8	
<b>Average rate/night (NZ\$):</b>	50–80 /person	100–150 /self-contained unit	120 /home	188–236 /room	50 /person	20 /person	

<sup>1</sup>excludes village-based accommodation (was under renovation during fieldwork) and community halls (mainly used for village activities, e.g. meetings and feasts; not operated as a business for providing accommodation to tourists)

Seven of the accommodation businesses that were included in the interviews have been operating less than 2 years, another seven are between 2 and 4 years old, and the remaining five are more than or equal to 8 years old.

The SMTE owners were hesitant to provide specific details about their annual gross revenue or the main types of expenditure during the year but the researcher managed to gather this information due to her persistence and interview techniques. The gross annual revenue of enterprises on the island ranges from NZ\$5000 to approximately NZ\$1.5 million. The major costs for enterprises during the year are wages (range from 0–25% of the gross income), running costs and maintenance (7–75%), and food purchases (0–90%). The amount of profit made by enterprises during the year varies from 0–58%. Overall, SMTE operators commonly stated that they kept limited records of their yearly expenses and sales (see Table 4.6).

**Table 4. 6 Annual Gross Earnings of SMTEs**

SMTEs	Gross income/year (NZ\$)	% gross income/year (Nb: ranges are in % of total costs)		
		Wages	Running costs and maintenance	Food purchases
Accommodation				
Guest house	5000–12,000	0–20	70–75	4–10
Motel	60,000–100,000	0–6	15–60	5–10
Rental home	12,000–12,500	10	30	2
Resort hotel	1.5 million	20	30	15
Home stay	just started	just started	just started	just started
Backpacker	just started	just started	just started	just started
<b>Others</b>				
Shops	14,000–20,000	0–25	7–50	20–85
Vehicle rentals	4000–400,000	3	72	0
Tours	2200–10,000	0–5	80	0–10
Cafés and restaurants	8000–150,000	0–10	10–43	45–90

#### **4.4.1 The Background of the Tourism Operators**

Nearly three-quarters of the operators interviewed (25 out of 34) stated that they run their businesses all year round. The other nine operators struggle to continue their operations throughout the year due to insufficient tourist numbers and so they only operate during the peak tourism season. However, all of these nine operators who do not operate throughout the year pointed out that they are happy to have a season off so that they can relax with their families and prepare for the next peak tourism period.

One operator commented that running a small tourism enterprise only during the peak tourism season is his preferred lifestyle – something that he chooses to do because having a season off means that he can focus on his family after a busy tourism period. All those who run tours stated that they operate all the year round but that their operation declines dramatically during the off-peak tourism season. Tours are only conducted with sufficient tourist numbers or upon request.

Most ( $n = 26$ ) of the owners are married couples. The majority ( $n = 19$ ) of the owners operate only one business; the rest ( $n = 15$ ) are involved in two or more business operations. One owner commented that having more than one business operation is a survival strategy because extending the portfolio of products or services provides supplemental income and an opportunity for a regular revenue flow throughout the year. For example, one SMTE operator has started hand-sewing of local fabric into bags and table covers, weaving hats and baskets for friends, and trialling virgin coconut cold-compressed oil for a cottage industry. More than half ( $n = 19$ ) of the owners are older than 50, another 14 business owners are aged between 31 and 50, and only one is less than 30 years old.

More than half ( $n = 18$ ) of the businesses are fully Niuean-owned (i.e. both spouses are locals) (see Table 4.7). Of the businesses that are fully Niuean-owned, 11 of the owners are either ex- or current government officials. The ex- or current government officials have gained some understanding of running a business from their experience and interactions with successful business people and have established networks for support, and so often venture into starting a small business of their own on the island. Another eight businesses are foreign-owned (i.e. neither spouse is Niuean). Of the businesses that have either one or both Niuean spouse(s) as owners, 24 of the 26 have returned to Niue after working or studying overseas.

Nearly all of the owners ( $n = 33$ ) had worked overseas prior to setting up their current business. The majority ( $n = 14$ ) of the owners did not have any experience in the tourism sector prior to setting up their tourism-related business, while the remaining had some experience in either running a business or had prior work experience in the tourism industry. All of the foreign owners stated that they had accompanied their Niuean spouse to the island and had come to like the local lifestyle, so they'd decided to stay and start a business.

**Table 4. 7 Niuean-owned SMTEs**

<i>Niuean origin of SMTE operators:</i>	<i>n</i>
Both spouses are of Niuean origin	18
One spouse is of Niuean origin (other spouse is a foreigner)	8
Neither spouse is of Niuean origin	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>
<i>Of the SMTEs that are fully Niuean-owned, i.e. both spouses are of Niuean origin:</i>	
Ex- or current government official or member of parliament	11
Not ex- or current government official or member of parliament	7
<i>Of the SMTEs that have one Niuean spouse:</i>	
Ex- or current government official or member of parliament	1
Not ex- or current government official or member of parliament	7

Two non-Niuean spouses who operate businesses came to Niue for a less hectic lifestyle. As one noted:

*I used to have a mechanical workshop and my wife had an ice-cream shop overseas. Our lifestyle was hectic as our business was getting busy. We were employing more people and our friends told us that we could do business in Niue. They told us that this place was really nice.*

Most ( $n = 19$ ) of the operators indicated that their highest education level was at tertiary level overseas and another 11 had been to a high school overseas. The remaining four operators had no overseas schooling or work experience. Overall, an overwhelming number of operators ( $n = 30$ ) have had some overseas education.

#### **4.4.2 Tours, Activities and Other Operations**

The majority ( $n = 11$ ) of the tours and activities that are available are marine related: boat tours, fishing charters, reef walks, kayaking, diving, whale watching and snorkelling. Most ( $n = 9$ ) of the marine-related tours have been in operation for more than 2 years. The tours offered vary throughout the year depending on demand and tourist numbers. The number of marine tours conducted weekly during the peak tourism season and the maximum number of tourists/tour vary from one operator to another. For example, a well-established tour operator provides diving and whale-watching activities on a regular basis, serving 20 tourists daily from Monday to Friday during the peak season and 2 to 4 tourists weekly during the off-peak season.

The manager of the hotel on the island highlighted that it occasionally provides around-the-island and island night tours with locally prepared food:

*We provide tours at times which includes a quick introduction tour to around half the island. During the tourist season when we know there is a demand for it, we at times put out our own vehicles to go around the island.*

Around-the-island tours are also available with three tour operators providing two tours each per month during the peak tourism season, but the tours are provided mainly on an ad hoc base, depending on demand and sufficient tourist numbers. One enterprise offering around-the-island tours has been operating for less than or equal to 1 year, another for 2 to 4 years, and the third for 8 or more years.

There are no full-time land focused operators. Land-based and cultural activities ( $n = 6$ ) are provided on an ad hoc basis when a tourist demands a particular experience, such as culture- and village-related activities which include *uga* (coconut crab) hunting, organic farm tours, collecting shellfish, *umu* (earth oven) and local food preparation, bush walks, cultural performances and local entertainment, and historical tours.

Tour operators stated that they chose to provide around-the-island and marine-related activities for tourists because of their own personal interest for conservation of the local culture and environment. The following comment from one owner of a marine-related operation sums up the feelings of many tour operators on Niue:

*I provide these things because of my interest in that area and I also come to know from tourists of what they are interested in. My activities involve reef walking, photography for marine and land life, bird watching, traditional Niue fishing on the reef with bamboo or mahogany poles, uga hunting, sightseeing particularly around the coastal areas, traditional village site tours (take the tourists from village to village and show them the historical sites) and conchology (collecting shells).*

The most common types of shops in Niue are retail grocery/food outlets ( $n = 5$ ), followed by souvenir and ice-cream shops ( $n = 3$ ); there is also a hardware shop and a salon ( $n = 2$ ). All the operators interviewed had been running their shops for more than 2 years. The majority ( $n = 4$ ) of the shops have been in operation for more than or

equal to 8 years and another three are between 5 and 7 years old; the remaining three shops are between 2 and 4 years old.

The opening hours of the shops are often irregular; i.e. the owners open at their convenience and there is no regular opening time or day. The opening hours of the restaurants and cafés are also very irregular, being at the convenience of the owner. All the café and restaurant operators on the island who were interviewed have been in the tourism industry for more than 2 years. For example, most ( $n = 5$ ) of the restaurants and cafés have been in operation for 2 to 4 years, followed by greater than or equal to 8 years ( $n = 2$ ) and 5 to 7 years ( $n = 1$ ).

Four vehicle rental businesses operate on the island. They have all been operating for more than 4 years, but vary in terms of the number of vehicles each has for rent. For example, the biggest operator has 28 cars, 5 vans, 3 trucks, 1 four-wheel drive, 8 motor bikes, 10 pushbikes, 2 scooters and one 37-seater bus, whereas the other three operators have, respectively, only 25, 13 and 5 cars each. The operators claim that during the peak season nearly all the cars are hired by either tourists or locals; the off-peak season is much quieter in terms of demand.

#### **4.4.3 Number of Tourists Served Annually**

Tourists usually stay in Niue for either 7 (61.7%) or 14 (21.3%) nights. There is no reliable information on the occupancy rate of the accommodation facilities on the island due to the lack of written records kept by the operators. The researcher attempted to get some estimate from the interviews with the accommodation operators on the number of tourists they accommodated during the peak and off-peak tourism season.

Overall, nearly all the rooms available on the island are occupied during the peak tourism season. The occupancy level drops to less than 50% during the off-peak tourism season. Approximately 20 out of the 22 rooms offered at the only hotel in Niue are occupied during the peak tourism season (June to September and December to January). During the off-peak tourism season less than half of the rooms (10 out of 22) at the hotel are occupied. Motels are also a popular choice of accommodation and about 19 of the 20 rooms are occupied during the peak tourism season compared with 12 rooms being occupied during the off-peak period. Rental homes are a popular

accommodation choice for families and tourists travelling in groups, including returning Niueans, and during the peak tourism season usually all 9 rooms are occupied. In contrast, only about 2 rooms are occupied during the off-peak tourism season.

According to the shop operators in Niue the peak tourism season also has an impact on their income – it is a season that allows shop operators to earn additional revenue from tourists. Souvenir and ice-cream shop operators stated that tourists account for 50% of their total number of customers per day during the peak tourism season, whereas retail grocery and food shop operators said tourists account for anywhere between 1 and 20% of their total number of customers per day.

Nearly three-quarters of the SMTEs (45 out of 62) noted that they had not received any financial or industry advice prior to starting their business. Operators said they either used their personal savings or managed to get a loan from the bank, but the ultimate decision to start a business was through their own judgement and experience as they did not know if any industry or business advice was available on the island. The remaining SMTEs (17 out of 62) indicated that they had received some financial or industry advice prior to starting their business. The operators said the types of assistance they received were financial, tourism feasibility reports or business advice.

#### **4.5 The Tourists — A Profile**

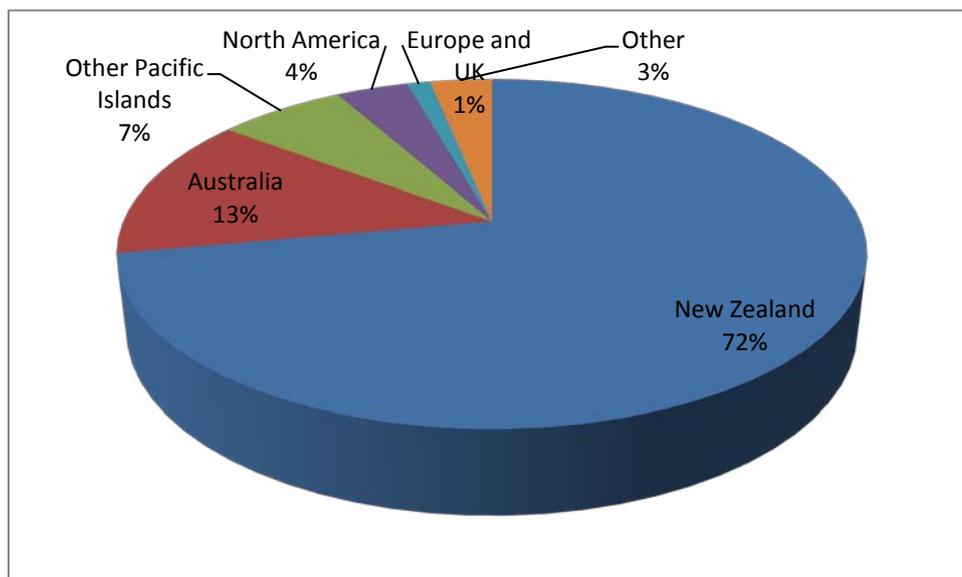
Researchers stress that a yield-driven tourism development strategy that focuses on increasing visitor spend rather than simply growing tourist numbers at potentially unsustainable (and unrealistic) rates is critical if the industry is to become a sustainable source of income and employment generation for local people (Panakera et al., 2011; Milne, 2010b; 2010c; 2009a; 2009b; 2008b; Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008a; 2008b; NZTRI, 2007; 2006). For example, in 2008 the Government of Niue commissioned a 'visitor departure survey report' for the tourism industry in Niue. This report emphasises that the focus needs to be on increasing spend per visitor, ensuring that the economic benefits of tourism are better spread across the island and other economic sectors, and minimising the leakage of tourist spend from the Niuean economy (NZTRI, 2009).

The findings from the online visitor survey ( $n = 284$ ) provide insight into the characteristics of visitors to Niue and are similar to those reported by Statistics Niue (2010, 2007), NZTRI (2009) and the UN (2006). These reports all highlighted that majority of the visitors to Niue are New Zealanders who are interested in ‘marine and nature-based’ experiences and are not the typical ‘sun, sand and sea’ tourists.

The survey showed that the majority of overseas tourists are from New Zealand and that they are middle-aged professionals who have acquired a university education and are travelling to Niue for a holiday. Most of the tourists are on their first visit to Niue and are with their partner or spouse.

New Zealanders make up 72% of the visitor arrivals, followed by Australians (13%) and ‘other’ Pacific Islanders (7%). The latter is probably boosted by the fact that the survey occurred during the Pacific Islands Forum. The limited number of visitors from countries such as Canada, USA and Europe (8%) reflect the seasonal dimensions of the research (see Figure 4.9).

**Figure 4. 9 Breakdown of Nationality of Overall Visitor Arrivals**



The sample obtained from the online visitor survey conducted in 2008 matches closely with the annual and quarterly arrivals to Niue in 2007 (see Table 4.8), with that year seeing 72.7% of arrivals originating from New Zealand (Statistics Niue, 2007).

The majority (40.1%) of New Zealand visitors surveyed are from Auckland, followed by 13.6% from Wellington and Kapiti. Most visitors (82.9%) are from the

North Island. Visitors originating from outside New Zealand are predominantly Australian (47.1% of non-New Zealand visitors), followed by those from other Pacific Islands (23.5%). The USA and Canada also contribute a significant number of visitors (13.3% combined).

**Table 4. 8 Breakdown of Visitor Arrivals for 2007**

Country	Jan–Mar		Apr–June		Jul–Sept		Oct–Dec		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
NZ	294	75.4	533	77.8	858	68.2	832	73.6	2517	72.7
Australia	35	9	66	9.6	136	10.8	134	11.9	371	10.7
Other Pacific Is.	35	9	18	2.6	18	1.4	34	3	105	3
North America	3	0.8	22	3.2	125	9.9	58	5.1	208	6
Europe & UK	19	4.9	33	4.8	92	7.3	62	5.5	206	5.9
Other	4	1	13	1.9	29	2.3	10	0.9	56	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1258</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1130</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3463</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of visitors surveyed (66.7%) were on their first visit to Niue; a further 13.6% were on their second visit. Nearly one in ten visitors (8.2%) had been to Niue more than five times previously. Approximately one in eight (13.1%) of the visitors identified themselves as being of Niuean origin or heritage. More than two-thirds (71.9%) of this group are from New Zealand. Nearly all (95.6%) of the New Zealand-resident Niueans are from the North Island of New Zealand (see Table 4.9).

**Table 4. 9 Number of Times Visited Niue (Niuean and Non-Niuean Visitors)**

Number of Times Visited Niue	Niuean Origin (%), <i>n</i> = 31	Not Niuean Origin (%), <i>n</i> = 212
1	19.4	66.7
2	19.4	13.6
3	16.1	5.8
4	6.5	4.1
5	6.5	1.6
5+	32.3	8.2

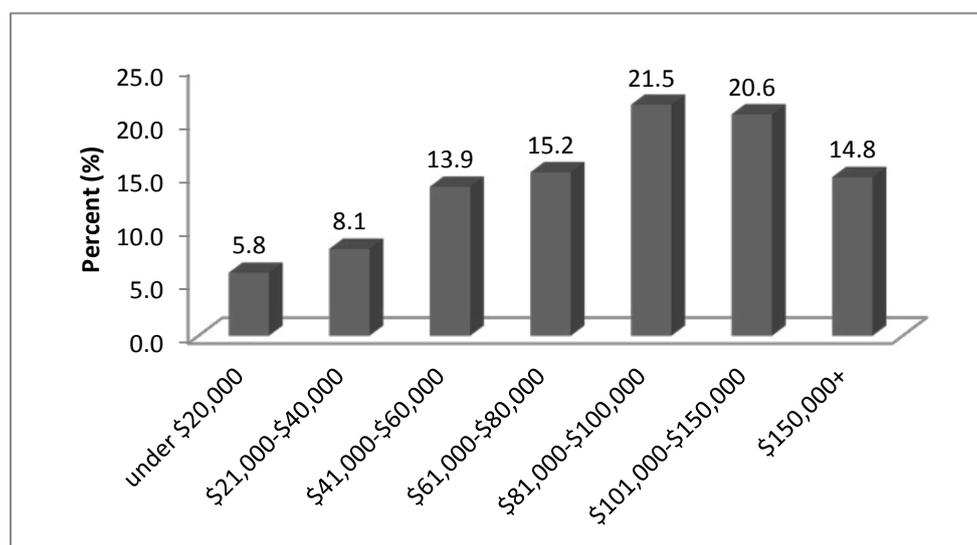
Slightly more males (51.9%) than females (48.1%) participated in the survey. Nearly a third (30.9%) of the visitors surveyed were between 40 and 49 years old, followed by the age groups 30–39 (21%), 50–59 (20.6%), and 19–29 (17.3%). New Zealand visitors have a slightly older profile than all other visitors as a combined group (see Table 4.10).

**Table 4. 10 Source Location and Age of Visitors to Niue**

Age (Years)	NZ (%), n = 175	Other Country (%), n = 68
18 or less	0.6	0.0
19–29	16.6	19.1
30–39	22.3	17.6
40–49	28.0	38.2
50–59	21.1	19.1
60–69	10.3	5.9
70+	1.1	0.0

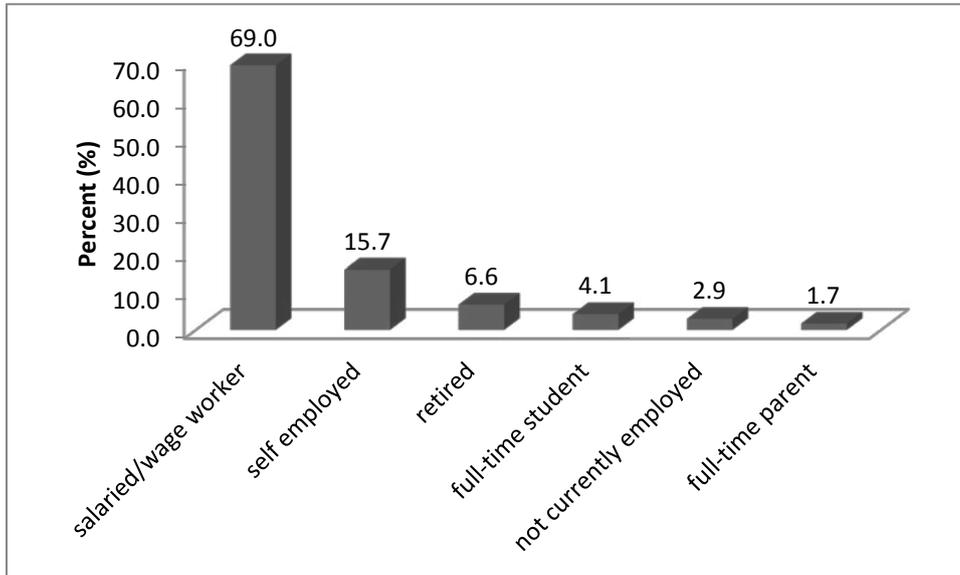
More than two-thirds (69.5%) of visitors surveyed have qualifications from a university or other tertiary institution, while fewer than a quarter of respondents noted a high school qualification (22.6%) as their highest level of academic achievement. Almost one-quarter (21.5%) of visitors stated their annual household income was between NZ\$81,000 and NZ\$100,000. A further 20.6% of visitors earn between NZ\$100,000 and NZ\$150,000, followed by 15.2% who earn between NZ\$61,000 and NZ\$80,000 annually (see Figure 4.10). For comparison, the median annual household income in New Zealand was NZ\$57,947 in 2007/08 (Statistics NZ, 2010).

**Figure 4. 10 Annual Household Income of Visitors**



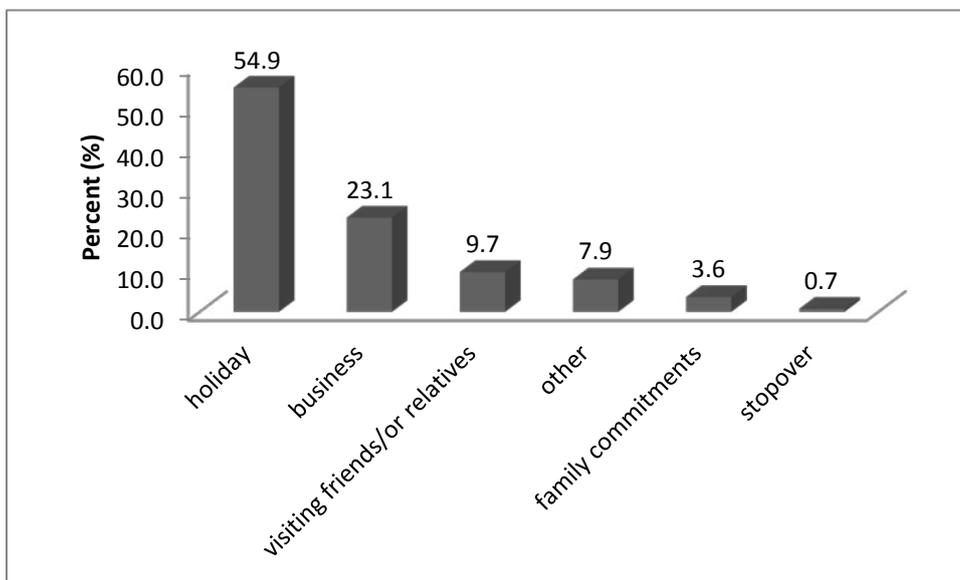
More than two-thirds (69%) of the visitors surveyed are salaried or wage workers; a further 15.7% are self-employed. Retirees account for 6.6% of visitors, and full-time students for 4.1% (see Figure 4.11).

**Figure 4. 11 The Employment Status of Visitors**



More than half (54.9%) of the visitors surveyed stated that the main purpose of their visit was for a holiday, while a further 23.1% stated that their visit to Niue was for business (see Figure 4.12). Nearly one in ten (9.7%) of the visitors surveyed travelled to visit friends and relatives.

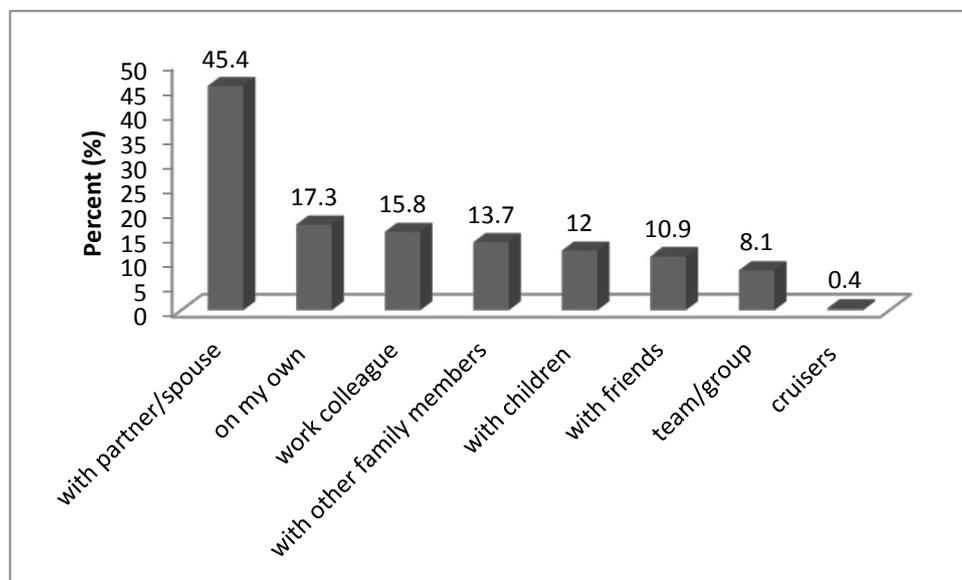
**Figure 4. 12 Main Purpose of Visit**



The 'other' category of the purpose-of-visit data includes the attendance and organisation of the Pacific Islands Forum meeting, diving, swimming with whales and honeymooning. The 'other' category also includes a small number of yacht crew.

Almost half (45.4%) of the visitors surveyed travelled with their partner or spouse, while the next largest group (17.3%) travelled on their own (see Figure 4.13). Only 12% of the visitors travelled with children. Relatively few (8.1%) visitors travelled as part of a larger group or team.

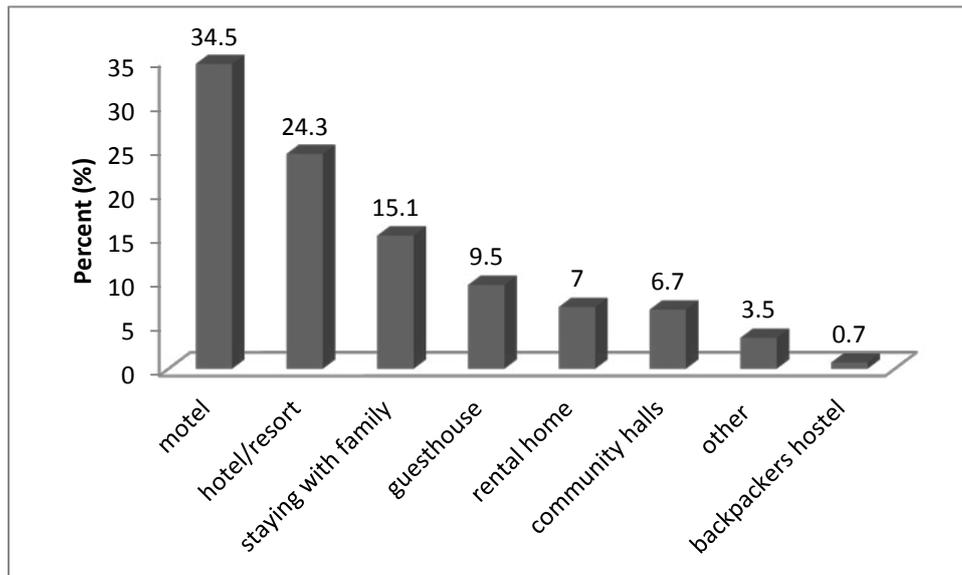
**Figure 4. 13 Travel Companion**



The largest group (34.5%) of visitors stayed in motels, followed by 24.3% who chose to stay in the resort hotel. Community halls and the backpackers' hostel play a relatively limited role, and rental homes account for only 7% of visitors' choices (see Figure 4.14). Community halls are currently not commercially operated as tourist accommodations but play a critical role in providing an additional facility for groups of returning Niueans and families on an ad hoc basis due to the lack of large-sized rooms at the motels and rental houses. Returning Niueans usually travel with their extended families when attending special feasts days or ceremonies on the island such as funerals and cultural events. Returning Niueans who are accommodated at the community halls often give gifts in cash and in kind to their families and village for accommodating them during the stay on the island.

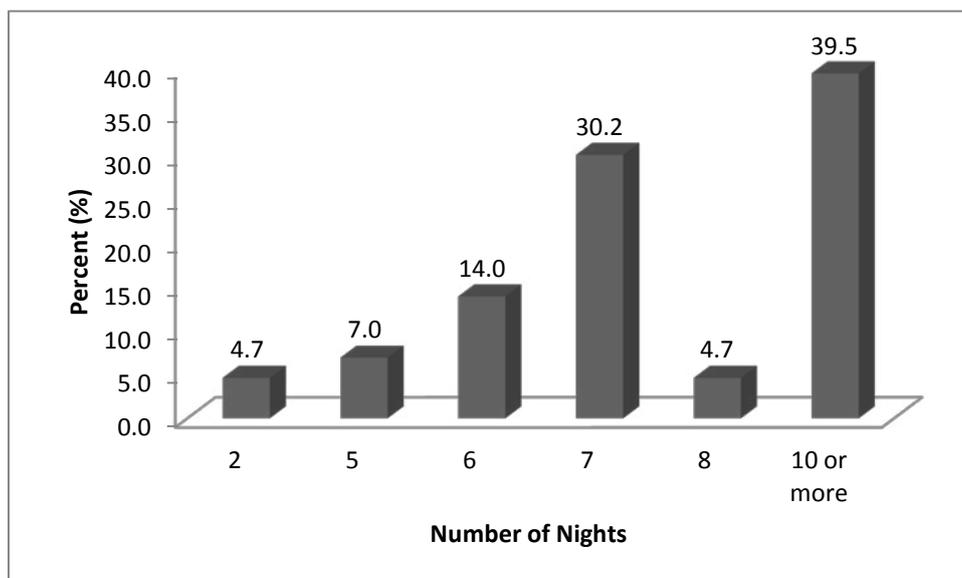
The once-weekly flight schedule in place during the survey period means that most visitors spent 7 (61.7%) or 14 (21.3%) nights in Niue. The average length of stay was 9 nights.

**Figure 4. 14 Tourists Choice of Accommodation in Nue**



Of the 43 visitors (all of Niuean origin) who stayed with family, most stayed ten or more nights. Only a small percentage of those visiting family (11.7%) stayed for 5 days or less (see Figure 4.15). Visitors of Niuean origin have usually visited Niue more than once to be with family and participate in village activities such as cultural feasts, including ear-piercing and hair-cutting ceremonies. Visitors of Niuean origin also stay with their families in order to participate in village-related activities on designated days called 'show days' because these events allow the young people to learn their culture and practise some traditional skills, such as fishing and carving activities organised by the village elders.

**Figure 4. 15 Number of Nights Visitors Stayed at a Family's House (n = 43)**



#### **4.6 Influences on Decision to Travel**

Visitors were asked to rate the role that each of a range of factors had on their decision to visit Niue, using a scale of 1 to 6 (where 1 is 'not important at all' up to 6 which is 'extremely important'). The results can be seen in Table 4.11.

**Table 4. 11 Important Elements Influencing Visitors Travelling to Niue**

<b>Influential Factors</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Natural scenery	4.9
Nature-based or marine-related activities	4.7
People	4.6
Climate	4.5
Local culture	4.1
Sampling local food and cuisine	3.9
Value for money	3.9
Travel time	3.1

Many of the visitors (45.9%) noted that natural scenery was 'extremely important' in influencing their decision to travel to Niue, and another 28.2% said natural scenery was 'very important' in their decision. Overall, 85.3% of the visitors claimed that natural scenery was an 'important' to 'extremely important' influential factor in their decision to travel to Niue — this is reflected in the high mean score of 4.9 (out of 6) for this factor. More than three-quarters of those surveyed (78.8%) indicated that marine-

related activity was 'important' or 'extremely important' in influencing their decision to visit Niue, with almost half (44.1%) of the visitors saying that marine-related activity was an 'extremely important' influence (see Figure 4.16).

Overall, 81.6% of the visitors stated that local people were 'important' or 'extremely important' in influencing their decision to travel to Niue (see Figure 4.18), with more than one-third (37.7%) of the visitors claiming that local people were 'extremely important' in influencing their travel. More than two-thirds (67.4%) of the visitors stated that culture was 'important' or 'extremely important' in influencing their decision to travel to Niue, with one-quarter (25.2%) of visitors stating that culture was 'extremely important' in influencing their travel (see Figure 4.16).

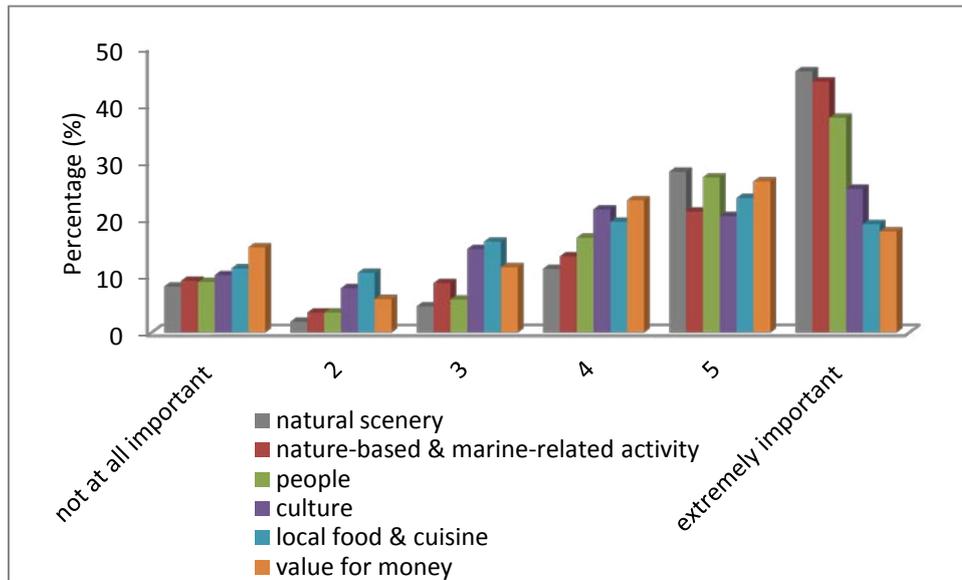
Culture is a far more significant factor in influencing Niuean visitors' travel plans than those of non-Niuean origin or heritage. An overwhelming 61.3% of Niueans living overseas noted that culture was 'extremely important' in their travel compared with only 19.6% of non-Niuean visitors. Visitors of Niuean origin or heritage expressed a strong interest and sense of pride in rediscovering their family roots and culture as shown in the following comments:

*Discovering my heritage and sharing the experience with my children for them to make a decision as to whether they wish to follow and share what the island has to offer.*

*Niue is where I grew up — and would love my son to experience Niue and even if it is once a year we will keep coming back.*

More than two-thirds (67.6%) of the visitors indicated that value for money was of some importance in influencing their decision to travel to Niue, although less than one in five (17.8%) of the visitors stated that value for money was 'extremely important' (see Figure 4.16).

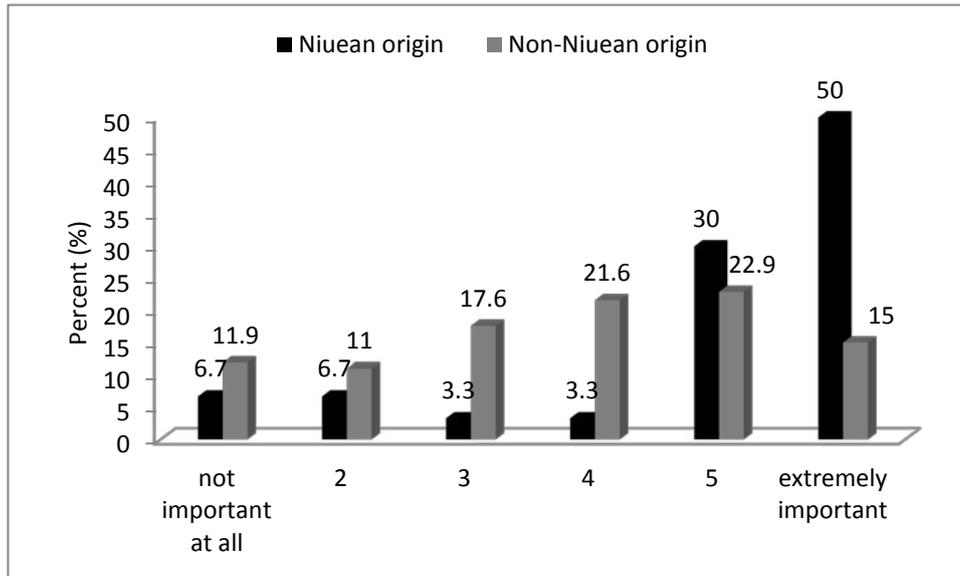
**Figure 4. 16 Factors Influencing Travel to Niue**



Almost one in five (19.1%) of the visitors indicated that local food and cuisine was ‘extremely important’ in influencing them to travel to Niue, and a further one-quarter (23.7%) of respondents stated that local food and cuisine was ‘very important’ in influencing their decision to travel to the island (see Figure 4.17). Nearly two-thirds (62.3%) of the visitors indicated that local food and cuisine was of some importance in influencing their decision to visit Niue.

Half of the Niuean and 15% of the non-Niuean visitors to the island said local food and cuisine was ‘extremely important’ in influencing their travel. An overwhelming 83.3% of the visitors of Niuean origin or heritage stated that local food and cuisine was of some importance in influencing them to visit Niue; this compares with 59.5% of the non-Niuean visitors (see Figure 4.17). The importance of local food in influencing visitors to travel to Niue shows that there is a relatively untapped potential demand for Niuean cuisine – something that provides the island nation an opportunity to earn some income and nurture the linkages between tourism, agriculture and the local community.

**Figure 4. 17 Importance of Local Food for Niuean versus non-Niuean Visitors**



#### 4.7 Tourist Expenditure

Gaining an insight into tourist expenditure in Niue is important in order to understand the potential for increasing yield. The tourists were asked to give detailed information on how much they had spent on the available experiences and services and the reasons as to why they had spent that particular amount on them during their stay in Niue.

The average expenditure per visitor per night was NZ\$92.01. The breakdown of this expenditure is presented in Table 4.12. The highest expenditure is on accommodation (39.6%), followed by vehicle rental (12.7%) and then accommodation meals (10.5%). Another 9.1% is spent at restaurant, cafés and bars, and approximately 8% is spent on activities. In addition, 7.3% of the total spend per person per night is for ‘other’ costs, such as bike rental, departure tax and donations. The remaining 13% is spent on guided tours, shopping for handicrafts, groceries and petrol.

The amount spent on each item is actually higher than the overall spend/person/night figure because this latter figure is an average from both those who did and didn’t spend on that particular item. For example, the overall spend/person/night on accommodation is NZ\$36.47, but this average includes the nearly 30% of visitors who spent nothing because they stayed with family; in reality, those that did pay for their accommodation spent an average of NZ\$61.38 per person per night (see Table 4.12). More than two-thirds (71.1%) of the visitors spent on

accommodation rooms, followed by accommodation meals and drinks (62.3%), and activities (56.7%). More than half (55.3%) of the visitors spent on vehicle rental, just on a half (51.4%) on the restaurant, cafés and bars, and a little over a third (36.3%) shopped for groceries.

**Table 4. 12 Breakdown of the Expenditure per Visitor per Night**

	<b>Overall NZ\$ spent/person/night (all visitors: who did or did not spend)</b>	<b>Overall % spent/person/night (all visitors: who did or did not spend)</b>	<b>NZ\$ spent/person/night (only visitors who spent on this item)</b>	<b>% of visitors who actually spent</b>
Accommodation – rooms	36.47	39.6	61.38	71.1
Vehicle rental	11.66	12.7	14.47	55.3
Accommodation – meals & drinks	9.67	10.5	21.54	62.3
Restaurants, cafés and bars	8.38	9.1	14.04	51.4
Activities	7.15	7.8	17.51	56.7
Other <sup>1</sup>	6.71	7.3	24.78	70.4
Shopping – handicraft	4.08	4.4	6.62	29.9
Guided tours	3.58	3.9	5.57	18.0
Shopping – groceries	3.13	3.4	8.69	36.3
Petrol	1.18	1.3	3.95	13.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>92.01</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

<sup>1</sup>The 'other costs' that visitors spend on include bike rental, the departure tax and donations. Visitors also spend on medical, bills and bingo during their stay in Niue. Yachties also have an additional cost for moorings.

For all Pacific SIDS the main elements of the visitor spend is on accommodation and food and drinks. For example, in the Solomon Islands, visitors spend more than 90% of their total expenditure on accommodation and food and drinks (Milne, 2009b). NZTRI (2007) stated that in the Cook Islands, the two main elements of a visitor's daily spend was on accommodation (49.1%) and food and drinks (23.8%). Similarly in Tonga about 20–25% of visitor spend is on food and drinks (Milne, 2009a). This survey findings on tourist expenditure indicate that the overall visitor spend in Niue is limited. The highest expenditure is on accommodation and vehicle rental followed by food and activities. To this end the lack of opportunity for tourists to eat locally prepared meals or participate in local agriculture and village-related experiences is reflected in the relatively limited amount of money spent on food and activities during their stay in Niue.

In a study on the value chain of fruit and vegetables in Fiji, Veit (2009) points out that the tourism industry demands high-quality produce and is responsible for a large amount of imported fruit and vegetables due to the lack of consistent supply and quality from local producers. Berno (cited in Veit, 2009, p. 23) estimates that F\$30 (US\$18) million is spent annually importing food products for the tourism sector that could be grown in Fiji, despite the fact that 47% of hotel purchases are from local providers. In another study on import substitution in Fiji, Young and Vinning (2007, p. 41) highlight the relationship between food production, food consumption and sustainable tourism and emphasise that about 60% of the tourism dollar is lost due to leakages. Dwyer (cited in Young and Vinning, 2007, p. 42) reported that the food imports of hotels in Fiji were 35% of total food purchases. Dwyer (cited in Young and Vinning, 2007, p. 42) also revealed that 22% of the fruit and 45% of the vegetables purchased by the hotels in Fiji were imported.

The findings from the visitor survey and conversations with tourists in Niue show that the main motivation to travel for New Zealanders is to 'get away from a busy life' and their expectation is not just to relax on the beach and to sunbathe but to enjoy good food and engage in tasting local cuisine, experience culture, participate in tourist activities and interact with local people. For example, the salaried or wage workers visit Niue to escape their daily lifestyle and relax for a short duration before returning to their respective jobs. Visitors are eager to experience a traditional lifestyle that is unique and participate in nature-based activities that are relaxing and adventurous. The potential tourist demand for food and activities provides island nations such as Niue the opportunity to increase the visitor yield from virtually nothing to something.

#### **4.8 Sources of Tourist Information**

Thorough and up-to-date tourism information has the potential to guide and shape visitor behaviour (Britton, 2004, 1981). According to Levinson and Milne (2004), marketing materials shape the impacts of tourism, influencing where tourists go, where they stay, what they do, what they purchase and how they view local cultures and the environment. Visitors ranked different sources of information according to

their importance in the planning of their visit to Niue, using a scale of 1 to 6 (1 is 'not at all important' and 6 is 'extremely important'). The results are presented in Table 4.13.

**Table 4. 13 Important Sources of Information in Planning Niue Visit**

Sources of Information	Mean
The internet	4.6
Word of mouth	3.8
Prior personal knowledge	3.7
Travel books and guides	3.5
Travel agent	2.6
Television	2.1
Auckland's Pasifika Festival	1.7

The internet is the most important source of information used by visitors when planning their trip to Niue. Word of mouth and prior personal knowledge are also important. A significant 79.9% of visitors stated that the internet played an 'important' to 'extremely important' role in the planning of their visit to Niue (see Figure 4.18).

Despite its importance, though, there were some negative comments about the internet experience:

*The other negative was the ability to book accommodation through the internet. I made the mistake of making initial enquiries through the travel agent and the accommodation cost NZ\$400 more than it would of if I had booked myself. I did try to book through the internet but the Niue tourism site emailed back saying nothing was available, with no suggestions for any alternatives.*

Nearly a quarter (23.2%) of visitors said word of mouth was 'extremely important' in planning their trip, while another 20.1% said it was 'very important'. Overall, well over a half (59.4%) claimed that word of mouth played some role in the planning of their trip (see Figure 4.18). One visitor said the reason why he would encourage his friends and relatives to visit Niue is:

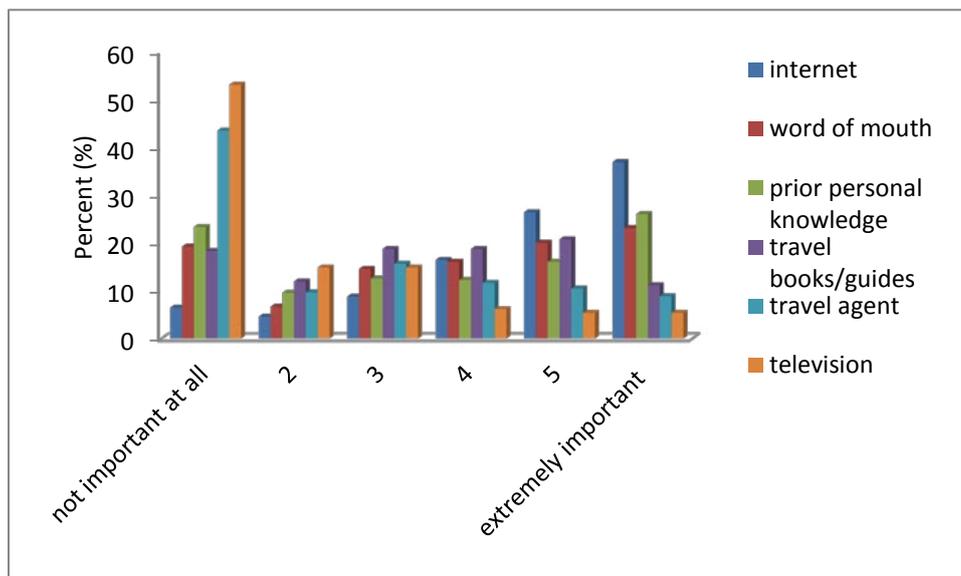
*So they may share in the amazing experience. It is not a location people hear about except by word of mouth. It is how we heard about the island and we have introduced several friend and family members.*

Overall, 54.5% of the visitors claimed that prior personal knowledge was of 'some importance' in planning their trip, with 26.1% of the visitors stating that prior personal

knowledge was 'extremely important' in planning their trip. Another 23.4% of visitors stated that it was 'not at all important' (see Figure 4.18). More than half (50.8%) of the visitors claimed that travel books and guides played an important role in planning their trip, but 18.4% of the visitors said travel books and guides were 'not at all important' (see Figure 4.18).

Travel agents and television do not play a very important role in trip planning. Nearly half (43.5%) of the visitors claimed that travel agents were 'not at all important' in planning their trip, and an overwhelming 82.9% of the visitors said television played a very small role in gathering information prior to their travel to Niue. More than half (53.1%) of the visitors said television was 'not at all important' in planning their trip (see Figure 4.18).

**Figure 4. 18 Importance of Tourist Information Sources in Planning Trip**



The Niue island website <http://www.niueisland.com/> that was set up by the Niue Tourism Office is the major online site containing information about tourism on the island (see Figure 4.19).

Figure 4. 19 <http://www.niueisland.com> website



More than two-thirds (68.9%) of the surveyed visitors said they had visited the niueisland.com website while planning their trip. Although visitors often commented that the website did not always meet all their needs, it still represents the main source of tourism information available on the web. Visitors rated the usefulness of niueisland.com using a scale of 1 to 6 (1 is 'not useful at all' up to 6 being 'extremely useful'). The mean responses are stated in Table 4.14 and reveal a high level of satisfaction on the part of respondents.

Table 4. 14 Usefulness of niueisland.com Website

Usefulness of niueisland.com website	Mean
Ease of finding the site	5.0
A useful source of information	4.9
A useful tool for trip planning	4.7

## 4.9 Tourist Satisfaction

Visitors ranked the following elements of their holiday experience in terms of how satisfied they were after their visit (1 being 'not satisfied at all' and 6 'extremely satisfied'). The elements of the visit that exhibit relatively low satisfaction (mean below 4.0) are availability of tours, and cost and availability of handicrafts. In the detailed discussion that follows Table 4.15, a figure of 4 is taken to mean 'satisfied', 5 'very satisfied' and 6 'extremely satisfied'. An overwhelming majority (94.7%) of the visitors were 'satisfied' to 'extremely satisfied' with their overall experience of Niue. The following comments were received from visitors on their overall experience:

*I was surprised how varied the geography of the island was. The people are terrific; it's a stunningly beautiful Rock, unlike anywhere else I've ever been before. Also it wasn't too expensive. There was no sense of being ripped off.*

*Because there is no place like Niue left on this earth. The kindness of the people, the cleanliness of nature, and the unspoiled beauty is magnificent.*

Several visitors expressed dissatisfaction at the limited availability of local activities, food and tours. The following comments exemplify visitors' responses:

*I felt there wasn't enough to spend money on, and things need to be more advertised you had to go looking for things which took up time.*

*I would love to go around the island and visit the villages and experience the lifestyles of local villagers but unfortunately there are no formal tours for this kind of activity and I have to resort to hiring a car and driving around the island myself but then I miss out on interacting with villagers and experiencing their lifestyle.*

The majority (64.6%) of the visitors stated they were 'extremely satisfied' with the friendliness of locals (see Figure 4.20). Overall, 88.3% of the visitors were 'satisfied' to 'extremely satisfied' with their opportunities to have interactions with locals, with nearly half (47.3%) 'extremely satisfied' (see Figure 4.20). Visitors provided the following comments on their interactions with local people:

*Niue has something to offer people of all ages and is not as resort-focused as some islands. This means more interaction with the locals and that is what makes a holiday a memorable experience.*

*Everyone that I met on the Rock was so friendly and helpful and always greeted us with smiles.*

However, some visitors did not get sufficient opportunities to interact with local people:

*Lack of cultural interaction with locals.*

*Would like to spend more time with local people, would be more comfortable then as we know the culture better.*

**Table 4. 15 Satisfaction of Visitors with the following Aspects of their Visit to Niue**

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>n</b>
<i>Overall Experience</i>	5.1	244
Friendliness of local people	5.5	240
Ability to experience the environment	5.4	225
Sightseeing and watching nature	5.3	206
Snorkelling	5.2	176
Opportunities to interact with local people	5.1	239
Diving	5.0	73
Environment quality and cleanliness	5.0	227
Level of service from people working in tourism	4.9	221
Conservation area excursions	4.8	114
Quality of tours	4.7	108
Information while staying in Niue	4.6	267
Rental transport	4.6	201
Quality of accommodation	4.5	206
Quality of handicrafts	4.5	194
Information before arriving in Niue	4.4	266
Cost of accommodation	4.4	195
Game fishing	4.4	57
Ability to experience local culture	4.4	227
Cost of tours	4.3	120
Village activities	4.3	115
Quality of food and beverages	4.2	235
Cultural activities	4.2	137
Availability of food and beverages	4.0	242
Cost of food and beverages	4.0	239
Availability of tours	3.9	132
Cost of handicrafts	3.6	194
Availability of handicrafts	3.1	213

Nearly one-third (31.3%) of those visitors who undertook village activities said they were 'extremely satisfied' during their holiday experience. Overall, 71.3% were 'satisfied' to 'extremely satisfied' with village activities (see Figure 4.20).

There are few village activities available at the moment and visitors expressed their desire for the provision of more such activities:

*A few village activities would have been good — wasn't made aware of any during the stay.*

*The early start of some of the culture festivals, e.g. 6 a.m. is far too early being on holiday. We arrived at 10.30 a.m. and it was all done and dusted.*

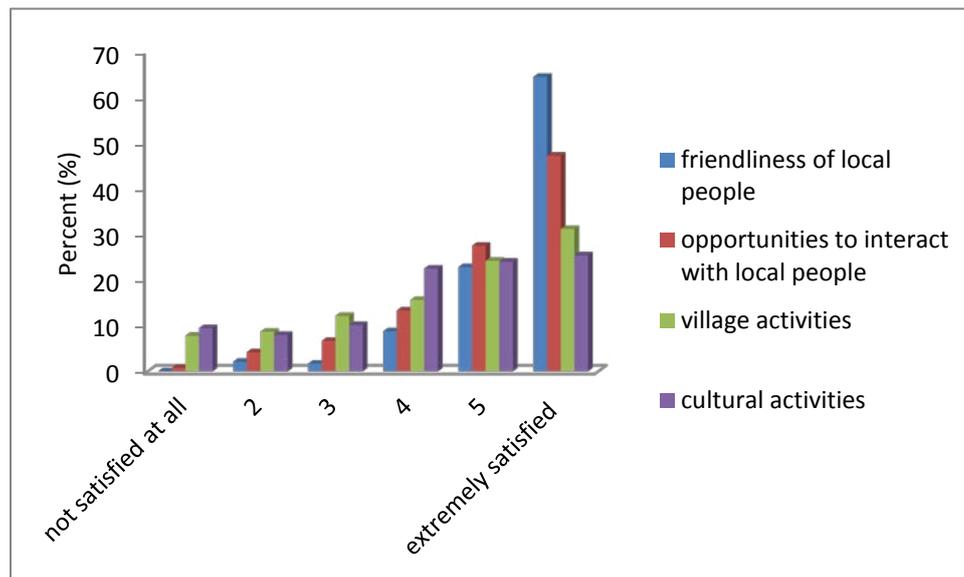
Only one-quarter (25.5%) of the visitors were 'extremely satisfied' with the cultural activities undertaken during their holiday experience, although another 24.1% stated they were 'very satisfied' with the activity (see Figure 4.20). As one visitor noted:

*Love the culture and the language; totally love Niue and want to go back.*

Visitors made it clear that they would like to see a broader range of cultural activities made available:

*Would love to be able to experience more traditional Niuean culture. Opportunities like learning to weave or traditional hunting/fishing.*

**Figure 4. 20 Satisfaction of Visitors with Local Interaction**



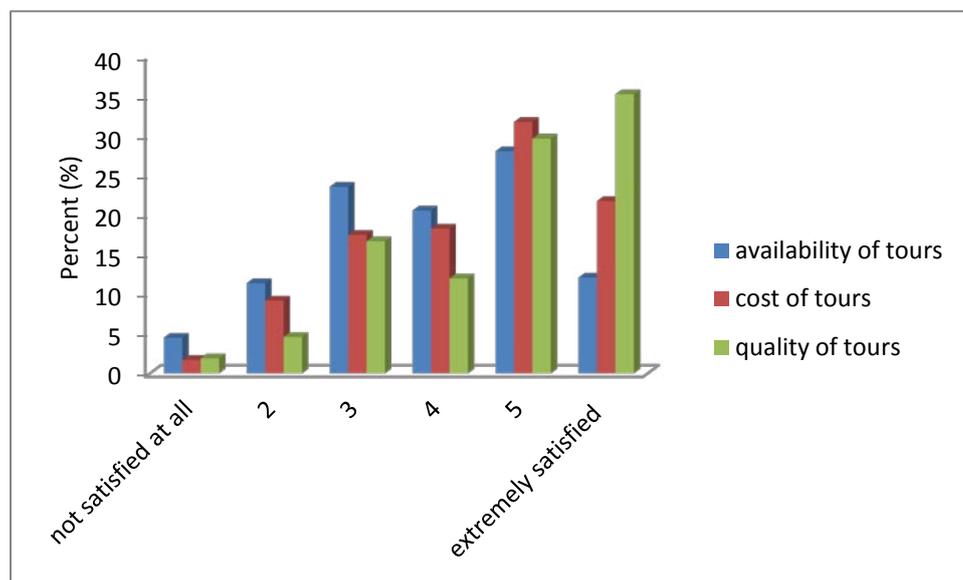
Overall, 60.6% of the visitors were 'satisfied' to 'extremely satisfied' with the availability of tours. The remaining 39.4% were 'not very satisfied' with tour availability — largely reflecting the lack of nature- or marine-based and cultural or village-based activities (see Figure 4.21). Nearly a third (31.7%) of the visitors were 'very satisfied'

with the cost of tours and, overall, more than two-thirds (71.7%) of the visitors were 'satisfied' to 'extremely satisfied' with the cost (see Figure 4.21).

Many (35.2%) of the visitors noted that they were 'extremely satisfied' with the quality of tours; another 29.6% were 'very satisfied' (see Figure 4.21). The remaining 23.2% of the visitors were not overly satisfied with the quality of tours. Visitors sometimes commented on the lack of quality tours available. A visitor commented:

*A strong focus on tourism and supplying visitors with activities and service from the first step off the plane to the last wave goodbye will ultimately draw more people to the island.*

**Figure 4. 21 Satisfaction of Visitors with Tours**

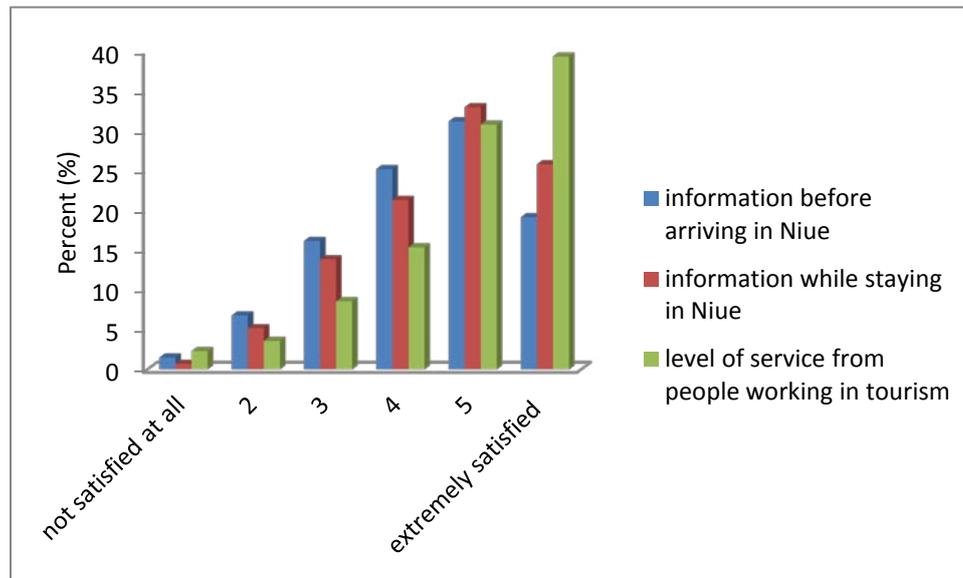


The availability of thorough information to tourists prior to travel is important in creating awareness on the types of activities available including those agricultural, food and village-based experiences that help to increase the linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors. Nearly a third (31.2%) of visitors noted they were 'very satisfied' with the amount of information available to them before arriving in Niue, and another 19.2% were 'extremely satisfied'. Overall, 75.6% of the visitors were 'satisfied' to 'extremely satisfied' with the availability of information prior to their travel (see Figure 4.22).

However, some visitors did express concern about the lack of accurate information on how much cash to bring, activities available and the availability of local food:

*People need to be more aware to bring cash, and that MasterCard is not available. Website says there are no poisonous creatures on Niue, which is a little misleading — the sea snakes and poisonous fish surprised us ... pre-informed would have been better.*

**Figure 4. 22 Satisfaction of Visitors with the Availability of Information**



Recently the tourism enterprises on the island pooled their resources to start a 2-page publication which is distributed at the airport to inform tourists on the activities and experiences available during the week. Overall, 80.1% of the visitors were ‘satisfied’ to ‘extremely satisfied’ with the availability of information while they were in Niue (see Figure 4.22). The major elements of dissatisfaction are lack of accurate and proper dissemination of information to visitors on what tourism-related activities are available, scarcity of information on what tropical fruit, vegetables and fish to eat, and affordable island-style accommodation options. Other common themes to emerge are summarised by these quotes:

*The opening hours of the shops is a problem, especially the internet café being closed at lunchtime!! Also the speed of the internet at the internet café was terrible.*

*Main thing, there is no advertising of shops, you don't know what's available, if they are open, what hours they are open, crazy hours, open 9ish, shut 12ish, open 4ish. Nothing opens at lunchtime when you want it. Can't tell if it's a shop or house. The restaurants that are open at night*

*don't advertise so you don't know if anything is open at night, they just look like houses. No snorkel hire for a place with such great snorkelling!*

Another main concern of visitors was the lack of access to sea tracks and the paucity of accurate directions and information available about places of interest for nature- and marine-based activities. For example:

*The lack of signs on the island was very annoying. We tried to go to several of the locations listed on the tourist map, but couldn't find our way there — there were too many little roads with no signs.*

Overall, 85.6% of the visitors surveyed were 'satisfied' to 'extremely satisfied' with the service they received from people working in the tourism industry, although a small but significant group (14.4%) of the visitors expressed dissatisfaction (see Figure 4.22).

In the visitor survey most (86.8%) of visitors said that they would recommend Niue to others:

*Niue is a worthwhile place to visit. It needs to be helped in whatever way possible for it to remain an ongoing viable entity in offering something unique to the world of travel and tourism.*

*Unique destination still largely unspoilt. Most fascinating island in the Pacific.*

*Niue is a place where it's very natural. Has very exciting things to do. A place where everyone knows everyone. It's a safe place to be.*

More than three-quarters (75.7%) of the visitors stated that they would return to Niue, reflecting their overall positive experience:

*Love the country & all POWER to the locals to keeping it as it is!!! Don't change to the Western world but time will only tell I guess but talking to the locals they are happy as they are. Good Luck and thank you for a lovely time!!*

Comments from tourists highlighted that they want to see a sense of place in the tourism development that would sustain rather than degrade culture and a unique way of life:

*Would be great to see tourism grow in a sustainable way, so that Niue is able to retain its sense of self and not become just another South Pacific Island.*

#### **4.10 Summary and Reflections**

The agriculture sector operates mainly at the subsistence level in Niue and consequently the supply of surplus produce for sale fluctuates throughout the year. The tourism industry is small with less than 5000 visitors a year. The industry is dominated by donor-assisted government investment in the island's only resort and a few small-scale operations run by locals. The uniqueness of the natural environment and the friendliness of the local people are the most satisfying aspects of a tourists' visit to Niue. The average Niuean visitor is highly educated, relatively wealthy and has a thirst for experiences that are 'unique and local' in order to get a 'sense of place'.

The agriculture sector has limited ability to exploit economies of scale and minimise production costs due to the limited land area, population, domestic market and natural resources, as well as the island's remoteness and the expense of developing infrastructure, training and technology needs (EU, 2007, p.35; Tisdell, 2002, Hook, 2002; Chandra, 1995). A lack of fertile land and water required to increase agricultural production to a larger scale combined with the labour-intensive activity of subsistence farming and difficulty in accessing overseas markets for exports compound the barriers to agricultural exports (Prasad and Roy, 2008, p. 165; Adams, 2002; Hook, 2002).

The small domestic market in Niue limits the opportunities for local substitution of imported agricultural products, thus increasing the island's reliance on imports and making it more vulnerable to external shocks of global commodity price fluctuations and competition (Hall, 2009; Connell, 2007; IHT, 2006; Cohn, 2003). Hence the island only exports a few primary agricultural products and has relatively few global trading partners – taro and coconuts are exported to New Zealand on an ad hoc basis (Sharma, 2006; FAO, 2004). Over the years the government has tried to increase the production of local agricultural products ranging from copra, banana, sweet potato, passionfruit and lime for export, but none could sustain the high levels of production required for long-term trade and profitability (Government of Niue, 2007a; 1989).

Exploring the potential for small-scale increases over time in garden-based production in order to meet the demand of the small tourism industry instead of large-scale agricultural production for export is a more realistic option for Niue – especially

given the interest of, and the support from, both the governments of Niue and New Zealand to nurture the linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors. In other words, tourism is seen as a way to keep local agriculture alive and to allow it to grow in a small and sustainable manner.

Niue does not have the capacity for mass tourism development. The island's small-scale tourism activity and fluctuating tourist numbers throughout the year means that large entrepreneurial enterprises are not an economically viable option. The population decline and lack of entrepreneurial skills, capital for investment, natural resources and tourism–agriculture linkages mean that tourism in Niue will remain small scale for the foreseeable future.

The few tourist activities and experiences available on the island support forms of tourism that are small scale, minimise environmental and cultural interference, and that prioritise community needs (Mowforth and Munt, 2009, p. 26; Fayos-Sola and Bueno, 2001, p. 48; Milne, 1997, pp. 294–295). Although the tourism entrepreneurs in Niue may have limited economies of scale, they may have the flexibility to tailor their products and services to suit tourist needs. For Niue that is focusing on building an industry that will provide more benefits to the local community and conserve the environment, and the findings suggest that a small-scale tourist activity that uses mostly local materials is the way forward (Gladstone, 2005, p. 196; Scheyvens, 2002, p. 11; de Haas, 2002).

The findings of this study show that a potential visitor demand exists in Niue for 'local and unique' experiences that revolve around local agriculture, food and village-related activities. The visitors are very much interested in participating in local experiences that will help them get a 'sense of place' while in Niue. The latent demand by this ideal visitor means that local communities in Niue have the opportunity to explore ways to create and nurture the linkages between the tourism industry and the local agriculture sector.

The findings suggest that nurturing linkages between the agriculture and tourism sectors on Niue may stimulate the sustainability of both sectors. Thus it is worth exploring the options of meeting the 'small' demand of local agricultural produce and experiences by the small-scale tourism industry and visitors. The small latent demand for agriculture-related experiences among tourists provides the

agriculture sector in Niue a reasonable chance to meet the needs of the tourism industry and improve the linkages between them – something that is also found in other smaller Pacific SIDS such as Tuvalu and Kiribati (Milne, 2010b; 2010c; 1997; Taiwan Review, 2009). Indeed given the existing conditions necessary for agriculture, such as adequate land area for planting and rainfall, the sector has a better chance to meet a relatively ‘small’ demand for local produce than struggle with unrealistic (and unsustainable) high levels of production required for either long-term export or a large-scale mass tourism industry. The support for and nurturing of small incremental improvement in the linkages between tourism and agriculture can bring positive impacts for the island economy, with the visitor industry providing locals with the opportunity to earn additional income and stimulate agricultural production.

## **Chapter 5: Current Linkages between Tourism and Agriculture**

This chapter reviews the demand for, and supply of, food and agriculture-related tourism experiences in Niue. There is a lack of in-depth studies on tourist demand for local food and agriculture-related experiences in Niue and other island nations in the region (Veit, 2009; Young and Vinning, 2007; Marcotte, 2003). Similarly, there is very little detailed information available on the supply of local produce and agriculture-related activities in Niue and other Pacific SIDS to the tourism sector. Local food and agricultural experiences are rarely promoted or marketed to the tourist industry (Martinez et al., 2010; Milne, 2010a; NZTRI, 2009). The chapter concludes with a review of the current marketing and promotion of food and agriculture-related experiences to tourists through an audit of popular websites that provide information to potential visitors. Websites that provide thorough, up-to-date tourist information can assist in nurturing tourism's linkage to the local economy (Milne, 2009a; Ho et al., 2006).

### **5.1 The Demand for Local Food and Agricultural Experiences**

There are very few truly detailed studies of consumer demand for food and its role in stimulating or deterring tourism's linkage to the local economy especially the agriculture sector. Most research examining tourism and agriculture linkages has failed to address the main force driving hotel purchasing, namely tourist food consumption and preferences (Henderson, 2009; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Torres, 2003; Hall and Sharples, 2003, p. 20; Momsen, 1998, p. 126; Telfer and Wall, 1996). In a study that looked at the economic linkage of tourism in Tonga, Milne (2009a) said that conversations held with visitors on the island showed that food was an important aspect of tourists' experiences:

*There is a real interest among the tourists in eating local food – especially fish and fresh vegetables/fruits. There was often disappointment expressed at the limited availability of local fish on the menu.*

Visitors to Pacific SIDS express little satisfaction with the availability of locally grown produce and their ability to taste local food and beverages or participate in tourist activities (Milne, 2010b, 2009a; 2009b; Berno, cited in Veit, 2009, p. 23; Berno, cited in Young and Vinning, 2007, p. 41, 43; Berno, 2006, p. 216; NZTRI, 2007, 2006) –

something that is also borne out by the visitor survey. Berno (cited in Young and Vinning, 2007, p. 41) said that one in three visitors gave the food in Fiji a 'a very good' rating and only 4% indicated that 'good food' was one of their positive impressions of the island nation.

In this research, visitors surveyed were asked questions about their experiences with food in Niue. Nearly a third (30.6%) of respondents noted they were 'very satisfied' with the quality of food and beverages, while 15.7% stated that they were 'extremely satisfied' (see Figure 5.1). Conversations with tourists in Niue highlighted that they were eager to experience meals at cafés and restaurants that were prepared mainly from locally grown produce. Visitors in general mentioned to the researcher during informal conversations in Niue that they thirst for fresh tropical fruit and vegetables during their stay on the island. Visitors commented:

*The cooked food and the local produce that I bought from the local market were very fresh and tasty....I really enjoyed its quality.*

*I was lucky to get an opportunity to eat locally prepared meals at my friend's house and I absolutely loved the quality...very refreshing.*

The survey findings showed that a quarter (26%) of the visitors were 'very satisfied' with the availability of food and beverages, and a further 13.6% stated they were 'extremely satisfied'. A very small minority (4.5%) of visitors were 'not at all satisfied' and another 37% (36.8%) showed 'very little' satisfaction with the amount of food and beverages available in Niue (see Figure 5.1). In their comments, visitors expressed their concerns about the lack of eating places, limited availability of local fruit, vegetables and fish:

*The availability of fresh fruit and veggies was disappointing. I expected to be eating lots of fresh fruits etc. but instead was eating a lot of hot chips and deep fried food.*

*I am eager to taste more local cuisine but it's not easy to do as the limited number of restaurants on the island have irregular opening times and the meals offered are mostly western-style burgers and chips.*

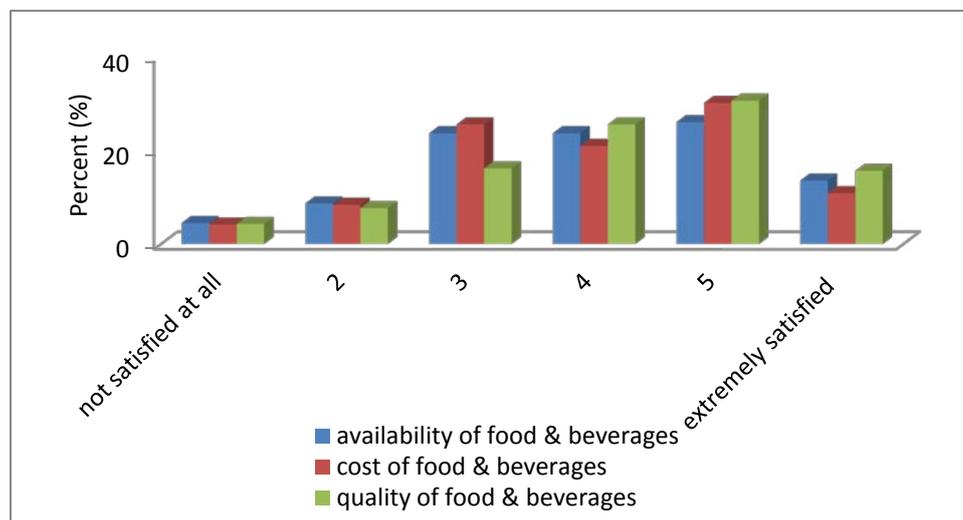
The informal conversations held with visitors highlighted that the absence of a credit card facility means that they cannot obtain extra cash while on the island in order to take advantage of local food opportunities.

One visitor expressed:

*During our last two days in Niue my wife and I wanted to enjoy having dinner at one of the restaurants but we could not because we had run out of cash that we had brought with us from New Zealand. If there was a credit card facility on the island, we would have been happy to obtain some extra cash and enjoy meals at the eating places around the island.*

Just under a third (30.1%) of the visitors noted that they were 'very satisfied' with the cost of food and beverages and about 10.9% were 'extremely satisfied', but a relatively high percentage of those surveyed (38.1%) expressed limited satisfaction with the costs (see Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5. 1 Satisfaction of Visitors with Availability, Quality and Cost of Food and Beverages**



Comments made by visitors include:

*The cost of food is prohibitive. We brought our own food thankfully.*

*Our meals were expensive. Unfortunately we didn't bring much food with us from New Zealand so we had to spend quite a bit on food costs.*

Many visitors (50%) had brought food with them to Niue, such as snacks, confectionary and powdered drink. Some visitors had also brought fresh meat and breakfast cereals. Visitors (mostly returning Niueans) also brought Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonald's with them from New Zealand. Tourists had also brought general groceries, bread, cheese, wine/alcohol, mussels, dry food, fruits, noodles and canned food (see Table 5.1).

**Table 5. 1 Types of Food Brought in by the Visitors**

Type of Food <sup>1</sup>	n <sup>2</sup>
Snacks/confectionary, e.g. biscuits, chocolates, lollies, muesli bars, crackers, nuts	50
Powdered drink/milk/tea/coffee	19
Fresh meat	15
Breakfast cereals	14
Kentucky Fried Chicken	10
Condiments/bread spreads; e.g. butter, Vegemite	8
General groceries	8
Canned food	7

<sup>1</sup>the top 8 types of food that visitors mentioned

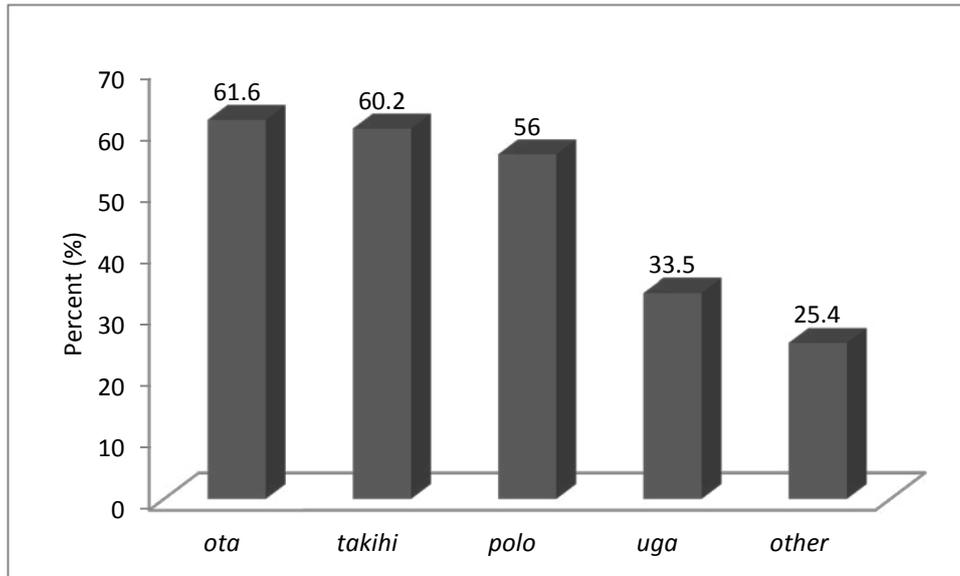
<sup>2</sup>n refers to the number of times the particular food was mentioned

Nearly all (91.5%) of the visitors ate some local food while in Niue – this includes everything from eating locally grown produce or Niuean cuisine to buying snacks and grocery from one of the local shops located around the island such as canned fruit, frozen vegetables or fried chips made from imported potatoes from New Zealand. One visitor commented:

*I enjoyed eating Niuean cuisine ....I think I was lucky to eat local cuisine as I stayed with my relatives in the village. Experiencing local cuisine is an aspect of my travel that I always look forward to ...*

Visitors are certainly able to get a sample of some local food during their stay in Niue. More than half of the visitors had consumed *ota* (raw fish in coconut cream, 61.6%), *takihi* (sliced pawpaw and taro in coconut cream, 60.2%) and *polo* (local greens, 56%) during their visit. Another 33.5% had eaten *uga* (coconut crab) in Niue. A quarter (25.4%) of visitors had eaten other local food during their visit (see Figure 5.2). The ‘other’ local foods that visitors had consumed while in Niue were fish, taro, sweet potato, breadfruit, honey, shellfish and fruits such as watermelon, mango and lime.

**Figure 5. 2 Local Food Consumed While in Niue (n =284)**



Local dishes available on the island are either non-local cuisine made from mainly locally available produce or local cuisine prepared from a mix of local and imported produce. Local dishes made from mostly locally available produce include *ota*, *takihi*, taro in coconut cream, and pork in local greens (see Figure 5.3).

Several visitors indicated that they enjoyed eating local dishes:

*I enjoyed eating local honey, greens such as 'fern leaves', drinking coconut and fruit. They were very tasty especially the 'fern leaves'.*

*I cannot forget the wonderful taste of local oysters, corned beef dish, umu cooked fish and pan prepared fish ... these were my favourites.*

*I am of Niuean origin and during my holiday in Niue I enjoyed eating the traditional island food such as lupe, peka, ufi, puaka and cowboy chicken. The wild pig or puaka and wild chicken or cowboy chicken were really yummy.*

Figure 5. 3 Types of Local Dishes Made from Largely Local Ingredients



Local food dishes that are prepared using mostly imported ingredients include beef with *polo*, corned beef in noodles, local greens and corned beef in coconut cream, and local spiced bun (see Figure 5.4).

**Figure 5. 4 Types of Local Dishes Made from Mostly Imported Ingredients**



It is important to note that because food is integral to the tourist experience it has become a key element in determining visitor satisfaction (Kim et al., 2009; Sims, 2009; Trunfio et al., 2006; CGIAR, 2005; King, 2003; Deneault, 2002, p. 1). Hall and Sharples (2003, pp. 5-6) point out that food has become recognised as being expressive of identity and heritage and is therefore critical in assisting visitors to get to understand the culture of the destination. To this extent, the relative lack of local produce in meals at restaurants and cafés gives visitors a very limited opportunity to experience some examples of local cuisine. Indeed, a few visitors commented that they did not eat any local food during their stay in Niue, instead relying on hamburgers, imported steaks and fish, and Indian cuisine offered at an Indian restaurant.

More than two-thirds (69.8%) of the visitors would have preferred to eat more local food, whereas just over a quarter (26.6%) said that eating more local food did not matter to them. Visitors commented:

*I was looking forward to eating local food as I had heard from my friends in New Zealand that Niuean cuisine is very tasty but sadly there was not much available ... I hope I can eat more local food next time I visit Niue.*

*Eating local food is not a matter for me because I have many friends and relatives in Niue and one of my family members has a restaurant in Alofi so they spoil me for local food ... all I have to do is tell them what I want to eat and they prepare it for me.*

More than a quarter (26%) of visitors saw local food being prepared during their visit. This response is heavily weighted towards visitors that identified themselves as of Niuean origin: over 80% saying that they saw local food being prepared during their stay on the island. Most non-Niuean visitors did not see preparation of local food because currently there are no organised tours for tourists to see how local produce is grown and experience how local dishes are prepared. Occasionally a tourist is lucky to experience how local food is prepared or see how local produce is planted when they ask a local with whom they have established a friendship. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of the visitors saw local food being grown, meaning that tourists saw produce plots close to the road and tracks when driving or walking around the island on their own.

Milne (2010c, 2008a, 2008b, 2006) noted that there is a relative lack of in-depth information available on the latent visitor demand for agriculture-related experiences in Pacific SIDS, including Niue and other smaller island nations. Consequently the lack of data on the potential for future visitor demand is a factor that continues to deter Niue and other Pacific SIDS from nurturing a yield-based tourism industry that is linked to the local economy, and especially to agriculture (NZTRI, 2009). In an effort to understand where the potential for future visitor demand for tourism/agriculture-related experiences may lie, respondents were asked to rank their interest in undertaking a range of food- or agriculture-related activities using a scale of 1 to 6 (where 1 is 'not at all interested' up to 6 being 'extremely interested') (see Table 5.2).

**Table 5. 2 Interest in Undertaking the Local Activity**

<b>Interest for Activity</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Local village feast	4.7
Seeing local handicrafts produced	4.5
Local food preparation	4.3
Farm visit	3.4

The majority (80.4%) of the visitors showed interest in attending a village feast, with 42.5% expressing 'high' interest in such an activity (see Figure 5.5). Tourists were also eager to experience local village feasts such as ear-piercing and hair-cutting ceremonies and *fiafia* nights. A *fiafia* night provides tourists the opportunity to have a relaxing evening and interact with villagers, share stories, eat local food and experience cultural performances. Tourists were also interested in experiencing tours to bush gardens to see how local produce is actually grown and harvested prior to meal preparations. Overall, the tourists showed an interest in learning how local food is grown and prepared traditionally.

Discussions between the researcher and tourists on the island also show their desire for more local experiences. For example, several visitors at the Mutalau village fishing day spoke to the researcher and expressed their joy at being able to experience local lifestyle and traditional skills. The Mutalau village fishing day is an annual event which provides an opportunity for tourists to experience traditional methods of fishing, especially using poles and canoes to catch fish. Local fishermen from around the island compete to catch the biggest fish using poles and canoes and women engage in collecting shellfish at the Uluvehi Reef. The Mutalau villagers also provide local entertainment and sell locally prepared food and handicrafts. The Mutalau fishing day has become a popular annual village event among Niueans. Informal conversations with villagers in Niue highlighted that they are eager to welcome tourists, including returning Niueans, to experience a day of historical significance for the island. Tourists at the fishing day pointed out to the researcher that the event was something that assisted them in getting to know Niue.

Often the visitors expressed to the researcher their lack of awareness of the schedules of village-related activities. Information on village events is rarely available on websites that promote Niue and is not readily available to tourists when they enquire about tourism activities at the Niue Tourism Office. Discussions with visitors revealed that opportunities to participate in village based activities often only occurred when they were invited by a local Niuean friend. During informal conversations a number of tourists on Niue expressed their disappointment at not being able to taste local food such as fresh fish and drinking coconuts – these are seldom sold at the shops around the island.

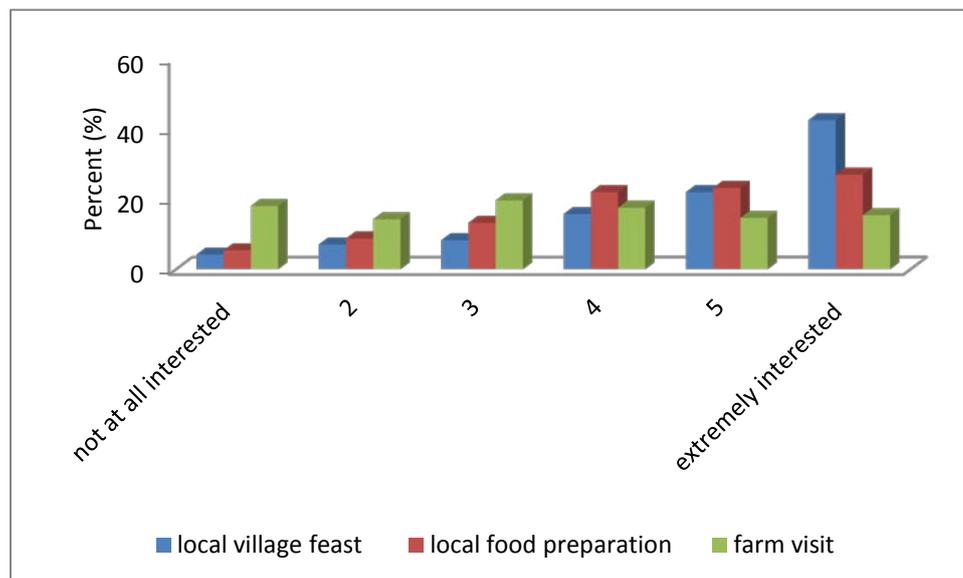
Visitors commented:

*It's such a hot day and I just wanted to drink some chilled coconut water but unfortunately I could not find any at the local shop. I ended up buying canned Coca-cola.*

*I always thought that holidaying on an island means that one can eat lots of fresh fish but I could not find any eating place that provided cooked fish for lunch or dinner.*

The survey revealed that more than a quarter (27.1%) of visitors would be 'extremely interested' in seeing and learning about local food preparation (see Figure 5.5), while a similar number (27.5 %) showed limited or no interest in this potential experience. Nearly half (47.8%) of the visitors showed some interest in undertaking farm visits during their trip to Niue (see Figure 5.5). Conversations with tourists highlighted that they were eager to experience the preparation of traditional dishes such as cooking in *umu* (earth ovens) and participating in the actual gathering, preparation, cooking and serving of local dishes.

**Figure 5. 5 Visitors' Interest Levels for Village Feast, Food Preparation and Farm Visits**



## 5.2 The Tourism Industry's Links to the Agriculture Sector

It is important to understand tourism demand when making decisions regarding the management of tourist products and local investment opportunities that are necessary to meet the needs of potential visitors to the destination (Aref et al., 2010; Brown, 2009). A better understanding of tourism demand is important in order to provide

memorable and satisfying experiences, and those destinations that rely too heavily just on their resources may not be able to upgrade their true underlying competitiveness (Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; Momsen, 1998, p. 126). Therefore understanding tourist demand related to their food consumption patterns and preferences for the types of experiences they desire during their stay at a destination is critical to nurturing the linkages between tourism and local agriculture sector (Henderson, 2009; Smith and Xiao, 2008; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Ashley et al., 2005b; Torres and Momsen, 2004).

The findings from the visitor survey and conversations with tourists in Niue highlight a potential demand for local food, village and agriculture-related experiences. Nevertheless the actual supply of local experiences and the tourism industry's linkages with the local agriculture sector are limited. A significant proportion of the SMTEs (44.1%) and the majority of growers (55.6%) and government officials (66.7%) interviewed said that the linkages between tourism and agriculture are very weak. Another 20.6% of SMTEs and 29.6% of growers stated that no linkages exist between the tourism and agriculture sectors. Overall, an overwhelming 82.3% of SMTEs, 88.9% of growers and 66.7% of government officials believe the linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors are very weak, weak or non-existent (see Figure 5.6). Yet, in spite of the limited linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue, government officials from the agriculture department feel that there is at least some potential to nurture the links between the two sectors:

*We are trying to work towards at least some level of import substitution and not rely fully on imports. We are encouraging growers to provide for tourism. I think the links are evolving as fishermen now are providing more fish to restaurants and the growers are providing more food to them, too. We are trying to see whether or not we can boost a consistent supply of local produce for tourism.*

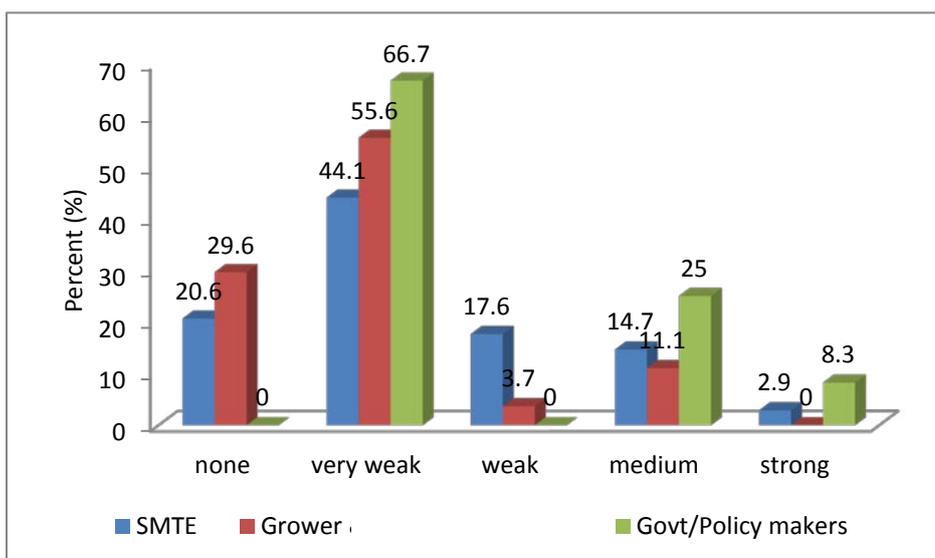
*Niue has some potential for the links to be made as it's just the matter of coordination ... I think first the tourism and agriculture departments need to develop a better coordination between them and then they can work with the growers and SMTE operators to nurture some links between them.*

One accommodation operator mentioned to the researcher that during his informal conversations with tourists about local fruit and vegetables he informs them of the types of produce and meals available on the island – however, this word of mouth

promotion of local food is something that happens at random. The accommodation operator commented that sometimes he even assists tourists to find vegetables from bush gardens if they are not available at the market:

*I tell the tourists what is available and where it is and if they can't get it then I will find it for them. I tell them that they can get pawpaw, banana and green coconuts at the market and if there are none at the market, I would look around for it. Tourists also like lettuce and if it is available I tell them.*

**Figure 5. 6 Current Linkages between Tourism and Agriculture**



Some restaurant and café owners noted that they sometimes promote the consumption of local foods by emphasising to tourists, either verbally or on their menus, that their meals are made from locally grown produce. SMTE owners in general mentioned that sometimes they invited tourists to taste local meals with their family, gave them a locally prepared dish to eat, or informed them through their conversations about the types of produce sold at the local marketplace in Alofi. Inviting tourists to share local meals with family members is a rare occurrence, though, – something that SMTE operators only do for tourists with whom they have come to share a friendly rapport. SMTE operators commented:

*I state on my menus — try some locally grown vegetables. I also have island nights during peak season and I also have my staff explain to the tourist what the local foods are and what it contains.*

*I offer local food to the tourists as part of my refreshment after the tour and also talk to them about the local produce and food.*

### 5.2.1 Sources and Costs of Food Supply

The quality, quantity and reliability of the supply of local produce may be inadequate to meet the demand of the tourism industry and consequently the café and restaurant operators may be forced to rely on imported food especially during the peak tourism season (Hoermann et al., 2010; Buijendijk, 2009; Ashley et al., 2005b; Momsen, 1998, p. 126; Telfer and Wall, 1996). In this study, the SMTE operators said that their major source of imported food and local produce was local grocery shops. In some instances food was also directly imported from suppliers in New Zealand. Café, restaurant and shop operators stated that 80–90% of their total food costs consist of imported food due to the inconsistent supply of local produce (see Figure 5.7). One operator noted:

*Most of the produce is seasonal and the climate is not that conducive here so I can't rely on local supply of vegetables and fruits all year round. I have to rely on imported stuff — have to buy more imported stuff. But I do buy local stuff when it is available.*

Commonly imported foods include meat (pork, chicken, beef and lamb), dairy products, vegetables, fruits, beverages, cereals, bread, spices and canned foods. The quantity and cost of imported foods fluctuates depending on the product and time of year.

The operators noted that they bought local produce from growers at the market whenever available or bought local produce from growers and fishermen who supplied directly to them. A shop owner said:

*My taro supplier is not regular as he only brings it when he has it. I try to have about 15–20 taro bundles a week but it is not possible all the time as he brings it when he wants.*

All of the restaurant and café operators said that during the peak tourism season they sometimes request their staff or relatives to supply locally grown fruit and vegetables from their own bush gardens for meal preparations because of the inconsistent supply of local produce at the market:

*When we can't find any local stuff that we need at the market or shops, we normally ask the staff to bring it in and they get it from their garden or from their relatives. Sometimes we have a problem with the quality of local produce — not fresh enough and we reject them. So sometimes we have to go to the shop to buy imported ones.*

Figure 5. 7 Imported Food Sold at Shops



The SMTE operators said that local produce is generally cheaper than imported products; many also like to purchase local produce because they feel they have a social responsibility to support the local growers:

*I like to support the locals and let the money flow into the local economy. I give them an income and they can spend it in my shop to buy things or spend somewhere else but it stays within the economy.*

The operators highlighted that although they pay a slightly higher price for local produce during the growing off-season; the quality of locally grown produce is very satisfactory compared with imported goods. One operator said that due to high production costs associated with raising chickens, their price is almost the same as imported meat; however, he feels that locally raised chickens are preferred over the imported ones due to quality and taste.

The researcher travelled around the island on numerous occasions but did not see any signposts that promoted local food — indeed signs along the roadside marketed non-local food (for example, see Figure 5.7). The lack of signposts, especially

those that promote local food and agriculture/village-related experiences, means that visitors can miss out on getting to know what experiences are available for them and consequently the economic benefits for the surrounding community will be limited (NZTRI, 2009; Hardy, 2003). Even though there are no canneries on Niue and meat production is limited, several of the SMTE operators interviewed felt there was an opportunity for local fruit and vegetables to be promoted – a critical area for improvement especially if the tourism industry is going to be at all linked to the local community.

The SMTEs that serve food, especially restaurants and cafés but also to a limited extent shops, tour operators and accommodation owners, use small amounts of local produce in their businesses. The types of local produce purchased by SMTE operators include root crops, fruit and vegetables such as banana, pawpaw, tomato, cucumber and cabbages, eggs, fish and shellfish and very occasionally pork or chicken. For example:

*I use fresh produce as much as possible from wherever available. The sources of local produce are either the local market or through staff via word of mouth. Our regular supplier hasn't brought any produce in lately due to bad weather. I purchase local produce totally on ad hoc basis, no contract with anyone. At times I buy produce in advance or bring it in on daily basis to keep us going. When people have something to sell, they turn up and I buy off them — this is a common thing that happens here.*

The tour operators on the island stated that sometimes they provide refreshments such as biscuits, chips, tea, coffee and local fruit and juice, depending on availability, to tourists after the activity. The local fruit and juices supplied by tour operators are often from what is available in their own bush gardens.

### **5.2.2 Tourism Experiences Incorporating Agriculture and Food**

Currently the island has only one accommodation operation, the Matavai Resort, providing breakfast, lunch and dinner every day. The manager of the hotel commented:

*Basically we provide food and accommodation. We are starting to establish a market where tourists keep coming back. We provide food because tourists have got to eat and we provide food for locals, too, who want to come and eat.*

Tourists often complained of not having local fruit for breakfast; for example, the menu at the Matavai Resort consists mainly of cereals and imported, non-tropical canned fruit such as pear slices and peaches — the hotel very rarely provides fresh local tropical fruit such as pawpaw for breakfast (see Figure 5.8).

**Figure 5. 8 Imported Fruits and Cereals for Breakfast at the Matavai Hotel**



This was not an isolated phenomenon because one SMTE operator noted:

*Many tourists complain that at restaurants and cafés they get tinned fruit for breakfast and not fresh fruit as they expect to get tropical fresh fruit from the island.*

One motel operator provides breakfast if requested by tourists:

*Tourists normally want us to provide local food and we give them pawpaw, local porridge called nani and other local fruits like bananas and passionfruit for breakfast. For lunch we give them taro, banana chips, chicken with fern leaves cooked in coconut cream on a stove and breadfruit chips with a drinking coconut. For dinner we give them uga, fish steak or raw marinated fish, baby taro cooked with taro leaves and coconut cream cooked in the oven, taro and drinking coconut and local fruit salad as dessert. All the tourists who have requested meals have always gone for local dishes. One time a tourist even asked for sea snails. They love local food and want to try it.*

Another guesthouse owner who operates a bed-and-breakfast facility claimed that she provides a breakfast made from organic ingredients, but all imported from New

Zealand. The remaining accommodation operators mainly provide a complementary pack which contains tea, coffee, sugar, milk and local fruit, depending on availability, to tourists when they first arrive on the island.

Currently the menus offered by restaurant and café operators lack a range of local dishes; instead they focus on fish and chips, burgers, panini wraps, salads, sandwiches, meat and vegetable curries, and chow mein. Restaurants and cafés are also unable to always provide all the dishes on their menus: dishes offered depend on the availability of ingredients, especially local fish as in the case of fish and chips (see Figure 5.9). The high period of purchasing local and imported produce throughout the year by operators also coincides with the peak tourism seasons which are June to September and December to January.

**Figure 5. 9 Fish Supply and Demand**



The café and restaurant operators said that they provided mainly café-style fast foods and takeaways as they need to maintain a balance between the availability of ingredients, local produce and fish. Also the affordability of the restaurant's menu for customers, especially locals and their taste preferences for fast food, and the fluctuating number of tourists further limits the choice of meals offered by cafés and restaurants. The beverages provided by the restaurants and cafés are mainly soft

drinks because, again, local fruit juices and drinking coconuts are limited due to irregularity of supply and price (see Figure 5.10).

**Figure 5. 10 Local versus Imported Foods and Produce offered by SMTEs**



A café offering local meals when locally grown produce is available

A shop selling local drinks (coconuts), when available

A shop selling local lettuce hydroponically grown

A shop selling smoothies made from local fruits and local jams

A bar offering local snacks (breadfruit chips and coconut slices)

A restaurant offering local fish dishes, when available

### 5.2.3 Emerging Success Stories of Agriculture-related Tourism Experiences

Currently only one restaurant operator, Jenna’s, provides a local food buffet, on Tuesday nights, and they also offer locally prepared fish and chips on Friday nights. The restaurant operator said that the local food meals reflect the culture and lifestyle of the people:

*Our meals reflect our culture in terms of what food we give to people. How we live and the type of food we eat. Also we have tried to contemporise the food so it’s palagi friendly or people friendly and visitor friendly. We also try to make our food so people can see the variety and diversity of food we have and food cooked well. Simply food cooked well so that even the blandest looking thing like taro could taste nice. I like to provide it to the tourists because it’s the love of my country and that’s Niue by nature. We are raised and brought up like that, to welcome people. And it comes from the fact that we are small country and that’s how we welcome strangers. Although we have similarity in food, like taro throughout the Pacific and the*

*similar ways of preparing food, there are things that are found here that are not found anywhere else, like fern tops.*

Family members are the key workers at Jenna's – something that is considered a communal activity where relatives assist in preparing local food for tourists (see Figure 5.11). The owner of Jenna's said:

*I use my extended family to help out in the business; it's a family affair. For the extended family members that help in the business they get to enjoy a good meal as a family after the tourists leave and sometimes I give them money. By helping out in the business they gain some skills such as food preparation and cooking and this is a good way to teach the younger ones about our traditional food – what it is and how it is prepared and cooked.*

**Figure 5. 11 Family Members Helping in Meal Preparations Prior to Island Buffet Night at Jenna's**



Children are key helpers in food preparations

A restaurant kitchen — family members busy with preparing meal for tourists

This opportunity to experience local food and culture generated a lot of positive comment from tourists including:

*Everything that Jenna had at her buffet was local. It was excellent and Jenna is great.*

*Lots of local things at the meal at Jenna's — it was beautiful.*

From the researcher's experience on the island, the weekly island buffet night is a very popular activity among the tourists (see Figure 5.12).

**Figure 5. 12 Tourists Enjoying Weekly Island Buffet Nights**



The visitors pre-book in person during the day at the restaurant. At any given buffet night the tourist numbers can range from at least 20 to 60. The local buffet night is also becoming a popular activity among the returning Niueans who usually come with their family members, including those who live in Niue as well as the ones who are visiting from overseas. At the food buffet, tourists can experience cultural performances as they fill their plates with locally prepared dishes, with the music being provided by extended family members (see Figure 5.13). In the words of a tourist, the atmosphere at the local buffet night can be described as follows:

*The local buffet night brings about a glow of excitement and happiness on our faces as we get an opportunity to chat with locals at the café and share stories of local cuisine, culture and lifestyle. After a few hours of this unique experience, we leave with delight and admiration for the locals.*

*The café operator is a local woman who buys mostly local produce and prepares local dishes for us and we just love it.*

*We are so happy to eat such a tasty local meal ... otherwise we would have left the island without even getting an opportunity to see or eat local food and even see or hear cultural songs and dances ... we even got to participate in the cultural dance where we had to hold each other's ears and dance to the rhythm of the traditional music.*

**Figure 5. 13 Local Entertainment Enjoyed by Tourists at Weekly Island-Buffer Nights**



The history of Jenna's operation dates back to the late 1980s. Jenna's started on an ad hoc basis in 1988 as a fast-food takeaway café, and then in 1990 it started operating on a more regular basis. It was not until 2004 when cyclone Heta destroyed the café that the present Jenna's began operations. The owner of Jenna's mentioned that she chose to open a restaurant business in Niue after she had returned from studying and working in New Zealand because she saw the need for an eating place for tourists due to the lack of cafés and restaurants available on the island. In the future, the owner of Jenna's expressed that she will continue to provide food-related experiences for tourists, including returning Niueans:

*I want to continue being the best restaurant in Niue where tourists feel very satisfied with the food experiences that I provide.*

The example of Jenna's represents a potential model for future Niuean entrepreneurs on the island. Jenna's exhibits some critical entrepreneurial attitudes that are workable for Niue. The owner of Jenna's identified an opportunity to provide local food-related experiences for tourists – something that was largely non-existent in Niue. Another attribute that Jenna's exemplifies is the communal-based approach in entrepreneurial activities – something that shows the importance of extended family members in running a small-scale enterprise on the island. Overall, it is important to note that Jenna's showcases an example of a local entrepreneur with an ability to accumulate savings and expand the business over the years due to her vision for her business, a vision based around bringing local food and cooking to the visitor.

The way forward for future entrepreneurs will be to focus on a niche product that provides a tourist experience that is somewhat different from the already existing businesses. Future entrepreneurs in Niue have the option to set up small-scale businesses that provide tourists an opportunity to experience an aspect of local lifestyle, such as village life, food and agriculture-related activities, in order to meet the needs of the latent tourist demand – something that is highlighted by the visitor survey and discussions with tourists on the island. To this extent, the researcher feels that it is important that Niue focuses on setting up a few small-scale tourism enterprises, including community-based initiatives, because these will have a greater chance of remaining feasible in the future than many large-scale businesses.

One tour operator (Misa) provides bush-walk tours a few times a week upon requests from tourists. While walking, he shares cultural information and stories with tourists about the use of traditional medicinal and edible plants, techniques of growing crops in the forest, building a temporary shelter, starting a fire, cooking food and survival skills required in the bush (see Figure 5.14). Misa commented:

*For my tour, I usually take a few tourists for a walk through the bush. As I walk with the tourists I point out the medicinal plants that we have used over the years to treat diseases. I also show the edible plants that are important for our survival. An important thing that I love to talk about is how we plant crops in the bush and tourists are always fascinated to see that the soil in the bush is very fertile. I ask tourists to push a stake into the ground and to see for themselves the depth of the soil and this is amazing for them.*

Misa explained that his tour emphasises the survival of Niueans in the bush:

*I show tourists how Niueans build a typical shelter using resources from the bush and how we cook our edible plants. Starting a fire in the bush is an amazing experience for tourists because culturally we don't use matches but we rub two stones together to ignite fire. Tourists also get to husk coconuts on stakes and set up uga baits. Many times tourists are amazed to hold an uga. An interesting thing for many tourists is to see the bush environment including the coral and land formations and caves. I point out to the tourists the significance of the caves in our culture.*

Tourists are delighted to experience the cultural significance of the tour – something that helps them to get a 'sense of place' in Niue. Those who had done this tour commented favourably about the experience in the survey:

*Our favourite activity was bush walking with Misa.*

*Misa's tour was very enlightening and it would be great to see more of these traditional ways being adopted by other locals.*

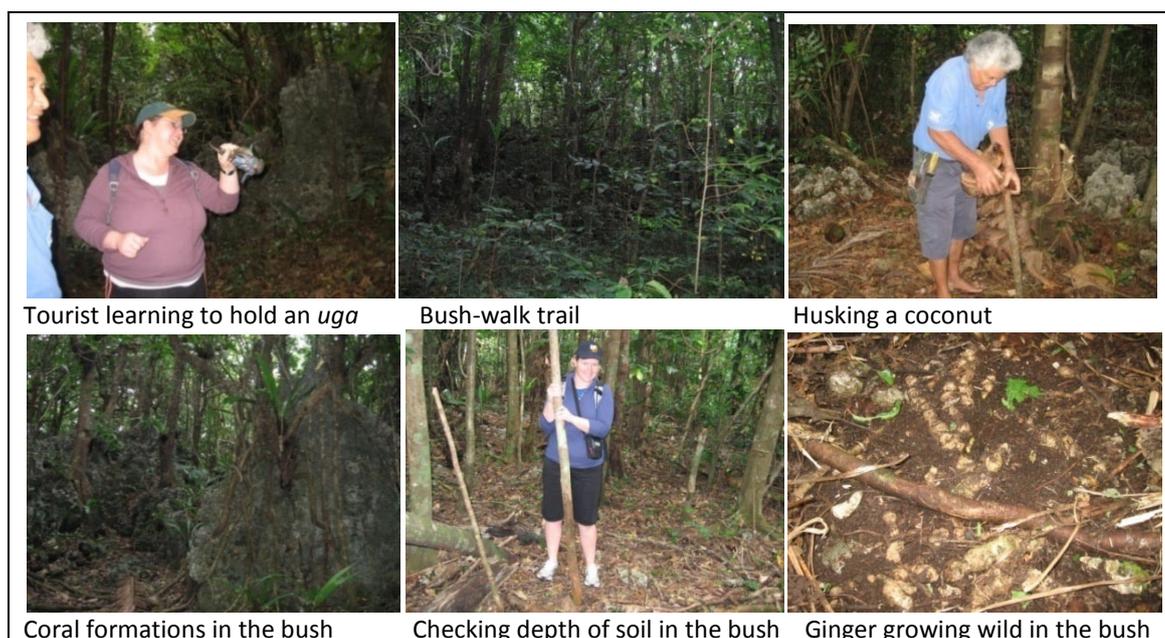
*I'm so glad that there was this local tour ... I loved chatting with Misa during the tour as I really got to see the side of Niue that I never would have seen if it wasn't for his tour.*

Misa's tour has been in operation since the late 1980s. His business is feasible because of his passion and pride for his Niuean culture and lifestyle, and it means that Misa can earn some money as well as continue to live a traditional village lifestyle. Participating

in both an economic activity as well as daily village life is something that is important for Misa because it enables him to lead a 'balanced' life. He commented:

*I'm proud of who I am, my heritage and tradition and I want to share it with people who are interested ... I'm passionate about my culture and what I do everyday and therefore I don't mind taking tourists out to the bush and show them how Niueans survive in the bush ... it is good that I earn some money and continue to live in the village with my family and engage in cultural village activities.*

**Figure 5. 14 Tourists Enjoying a Popular Bush-walk Tour and Learning Traditional Survival Skills**



According to business interviews, there is an increase in interest among tourists for local activities such as coconut crab (*uga*) baiting, hunting octopus, seeing traditional plants, and gathering and preparing food from the sea and bush. This tends to support the tourist survey findings presented earlier that many visitors to Niue are interested in local experiences related to village and agriculture. At least two Niueans who have recently returned to Niue and who are aspiring to establish tourism businesses have become aware of a growing visitor interest for local island-based experiences. One of the returning Niueans said that when he is conducting his normal activities of going to the bush for hunting and gathering food, he sometimes takes a few tourists with him on an informal tour whenever possible, especially visitors with whom he shares a rapport. This returning Niuean said that he feels a sense of appreciation of his cultural lifestyle when tourists show their interests and excitement during the tour:

*... when I'm not operating my café but going to the bush, I don't mind taking tourists with me to share my experience as it's my daily lifestyle...I get excited to see that the tourists are interested in my village lifestyle.....this surely makes me proud to be Niuean....*

Another Niuean who has returned recently expressed similar sentiments:

*I'm a very friendly person and often I stumble across tourists who request for local experiences ... so when I'm not working, I conduct special tours for tourists who have become my friends as I feel a sense of worth that a non-Niuean is eager to share my culture and it makes me value myself a lot more ... I just love to see the excitement on the faces of tourists ... I can't believe sometimes that the everyday lifestyle that I take for granted is of so much excitement to someone else ...*

*I take tourists out to sea and collect sea shells and fish and I explain to tourists what is edible and different species of marine life that we eat and don't eat. I talk about the marine food most popular overseas like sea cucumbers and this is a very educational tour and we also catch things like octopus ... of course when we come back we eat what we have or I prepare some fish and we have food to eat.*

**Figure 5. 15 Informal Tour of Gathering Shellfish and Eating Local Food**



A group of tourists who had experienced gathering shellfish and octopus from the sea with this Niuean commented:

*We thirst for local food, culture and village-related experience and knowledge. Recently we bumped into a lady and upon chatting with her about our thirst for local experience, she was kind enough to take us on an octopus tour, where she showed us how to catch it and this has been a unique experience for us.*

Similarly another grower mentioned that discussions with tourists have made him realise that visitors to the island are eager to see a bush garden and how local food is grown. Hence he is developing an organic farm tour of vanilla orchards, vegetables, fruits including passionfruit and pawpaw, and local pig and chicken pens. The grower is also developing farm-based activities including husking coconuts and making jams from local fruits (see Figure 5.16). This particular grower intends to use his existing bush garden as a tourist attraction, and he is currently planting a range of local crops in order to offer agriculture-related activities such as bush-garden tours. This grower has developed jam recipes using local fruits from his organically certified bush garden as he intends to sell home-made organic jams to tourists participating in the tours. The grower has already produced some local jam and is currently trialling its sale to tourists in order to gauge their preferences for taste and demand for the product. The local jams are trialled at two shops located in the town centre in Alofi, and also on village show days.

Figure 5. 16 Components of an Organic Farm Tour



One villager has recently started a small-scale fishing enterprise that focuses on supplying locally caught fish to cafés and restaurants. He has realised the growing requests from café and restaurant owners for local fish due to the rising visitor demand for meals made from locally caught fish (see Figure 5.17). The local operator said that he knew of the demand for local fish by the tourists and therefore he decided to utilise his skills and earn additional income from tourism. A café operator commented:

*I'm so glad that there is a local who has seen this opportunity for the demand for fresh fish and has started supplying it to us. We get so many requests from tourists for local fish. Even Avi's fresh fish supply is not sufficient to meet demand. I hope more locals will see this opportunity and start doing something ... we are always looking for local food suppliers ... it's a good business ... locals get to earn some money and tourists are happy to enjoy local meals.*

**Figure 5. 17 Local Operator Supplying Fresh Fish for Tourist Meals**



### **5.3 The Agriculture Sector's Linkages to Tourism**

Researchers highlight that nurturing the linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors is important for sustaining future economic development and providing income-generating opportunities for resident communities (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011; Sanagustin Fons et al., 2011; University of Hawaii, 2006; Butler, 1995, p. 39). In spite of stressing the importance of tourism and agriculture linkages (CGIAR, 2005; Flyman, 2003; Busby and Rendle, 2000), the linkage concept remains unexploited in Niue and other Pacific SIDS. High economic leakages through importation of foodstuff for the tourism industry is prevalent throughout the region (Milne, 2009a; Berno as cited in Veit, 2009, p. 23; Berno as cited in Young and Vinning, 2007, p. 41, 43); Berno, 2006, p. 216). It is important to note that the availability of agriculture-related experiences in Pacific SIDS including Niue is also scarce (Berno, 2006, p. 216) especially compared with developed countries including New Zealand (Weaver, 2006, pp. 43–44; Sharpley and Vass, 2006). Berno (2006, pp. 216–217) points out that a key way to improve the economic benefits of tourism is to foster backward linkages by optimising the amount of local food used in the industry. This suggests that the failure of the agriculture sector in Pacific SIDS to meet the demands of local food and agriculture-related experiences required by tourism will lead to a loss of economic benefits and any local multiplier effect offered by the industry (Berno and Oliver, 2010, p. 14; Telfer and Wall, 1996; Belisle, 1983).

This study highlights that currently the supply of food- and agriculture-related experiences to the tourism industry is limited, although villages and growers show

enthusiasm to meeting the demand from the industry. One official from the economic planning and development department said the tourism and agriculture sectors are starting to realise that they can benefit from each other; for example, the growers are slowly starting to sell their products to the tourism industry and SMTE operators are showing an interest in purchasing them:

*Tourism benefits from agriculture through people supplying food crops and also handicrafts. I think at the moment there is very little link between the two sectors. Because tourists right now eat only what is available at the hotel and restaurants — mostly imported food but if they stay at the village then they can eat local food produced and made by villagers.*

### 5.3.1 Supply of Local Produce

If the cycles of the peak tourism season and harvest time for fruit and vegetables are not synchronous then the amount of local produce used by the tourism industry, especially during the peak tourism season will be limited (Hoermann et al., 2010; Buijtendijk, 2009; Bolwig et al., 2008; Ashley, 2006; Ashley et al., 2005a; Telfer and Wall, 1996). In this study, there are some differences in opinion between local growers as to the seasonal lows and highs for growing local produce. Some said that the peak season for planting certain vegetables was during winter while others noted summer, and some commented that fruit and vegetables peaked during summer due to rainfall while others opted for winter because of a relative lack of pests and diseases. The production of agricultural produce is also affected by weather patterns; for example, heavy rainfall destroys crops.

The majority ( $n = 20$ ) of the growers who sell produce and food at the market or from home sell very little (1–10% of their total sales) to the tourism sector, i.e. to restaurant, café, shop and accommodation operators, or to tourists. The remaining nine growers said that between 20 and 50% of their total sales are to tourism operators and tourists (see Table 5.3).

**Table 5. 3 Sale of Produce to the Tourism Sector**

Sale of food and produce to the tourism sector as percentage of total sales	Number of growers ( $n$ )
1–10%	20
20–30%	4
40–50%	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

One small-scale, semi-commercial grower focuses on planting local produce such as pawpaw, cabbage, tomato, cucumber, lettuce and beans to supply the tourism industry with fresh fruits and vegetables (see Figure 5.18). However, he noted that the supply is currently very limited when compared to potential demand

*I cannot meet all demand of the tourism industry ... there is room for other growers to do this. There is room for collective effort by all the growers to try and meet at least some of the demand for local produce.*

**Figure 5. 18 Semi-commercial Plantations**



Apart from selling at the local marketplace, the growers said that they also enjoyed selling locally prepared food, drinks and crafts at the airport for tourists (see Figure 5.19). Discussions with tourists at the airport showed that they appreciate the food and drinks sold by local growers – something that visitors feel is important to them especially due to the early-morning flight time. Tourists commented:

*Thank goodness that there are food stalls at the airport. I was craving to have a coffee while waiting for my early morning flight.*

*My kids were hungry and all the shops and cafés were closed at night. I was so relieved to see the food stalls at the airport and therefore I was able to buy some food and drinks for my kids.*

One grower had developed a small stall of drinking coconuts and ripe bananas on the side of the road for tourists; he'd started the business in 2005 to supplement his income but has currently stopped his operations due to lack of sales:

*I also have a coconut stop near my house where I sell drinking coconuts. I used to sell on Mondays there as I leave the coconuts with my tin of money while I go out to the bush but many times no coconuts get sold. This discourages me and so now I don't want to sell coconuts there but I think I will start again as I heard that tourists are coming again. I think the Tourism Office should better coordinate the tourist activities and so I know when I need to sell coconuts there. I do sell my produce at the market to the tourism sector. Very few sales are made from the tourism sector, only about 5% compared to about 95% that are bought by the locals.*

**Figure 5. 19 Food Stalls at the Airport**



The grower who has a coconut stop has not given up hope and wishes to renovate his old house near the roadside and open a shop for local food and drinks for tourists in the future. Other growers have also had small stalls on the side of the road for selling vegetables, fruits and local food to tourists, but they too have stopped operations (see Figure 5.20).

**Figure 5. 20 Roadside Food, Vegetable and Fruit Stalls**



Empty stalls with no fruits, vegetables or food for sale.

From the researcher's experience there are five small stalls on the side of the road around the island for selling local fruit, vegetables, food and drinks. However, there is hardly any visible signage on the side of the road informing tourists of the location of the food stalls – so visitors are not able to easily identify these small stalls and consequently the villages miss out on the opportunity to earn some money.

Currently all the roadside fruit and vegetable stalls are empty. Discussions with village councillors showed that the stalls are currently not in operation because of the breakdown in communication between them and the Niue Tourism Office including the round-the-island tour operators. The researcher feels that a user-friendly signage around the island as part of a themed touring route could assist visitors to opt in and out of the route and diffuse demand along both the route itself and its surrounding locality. According to Hardy (2003), the routes need to be developed with the visitors' needs in mind, rather than being completely supply-driven. To this extent the role of the government is important in developing distinctive themes and relevant signage for tourists around the island (NZTRI, 2009, 2005; Hardy, 2003). It is important to note that the lack of collaboration between the tourism office, SMTEs and villages hinders the flow of the economic benefits of tourism to the surrounding community.

The lack of marketing and knowledge for visitors on the food-related experiences available around the island shows a clear need for more information about these opportunities in order to nurture some linkages between the growers and the tourists who are cycling or driving around the island. The lack of communication between the tourism office, round-the-island tour operators and villages means that the villagers are not aware of the timing of tours and consequently the stalls remain empty. An owner of a roadside stall said that he was eager to sell local food, fruit and drinking coconuts to tourists when tour operators conducted their round-the-island

tours – provided that someone either from the Niue Tourism Office or the tour operators would inform him of the timing of the tour. The roadside stall owner commented:

*If I know the timing of the tours and the numbers of tourists on the tour then I will have the confidence of when I need to sell food at my stall. I will also know how much food I need to prepare for the tour. I just wish we had better communication between us and the Niue Tourism Office.*

### **5.3.2 Cost and Quality of Local Produce**

The predominance of subsistence-based agriculture and small economies of scale can result in high production costs of local produce (Smith and Xiao, 2008; Meyer, 2006; Torres, 2003). The fact that poor coordination among the growers can lead to frequent gluts of local produce during its season has an impact on its availability and selling price throughout the year. Consequently, the selling price of a particular agricultural produce may be slightly cheaper during its season but expensive during the off-season (Hoermann et al., 2010; Buijendijk, 2009; Ashley et al., 2005a; Torres, 2003).

In this study, the growers claimed that the cost of their produce is very reasonable as often they undercharge their customers. If the expenses involved with production such as labour, time, transport and sometimes chemicals and fertilisers were calculated, then the growers would have to sell their produce at a much higher price in order to make a profit. For example, growers said that watering their produce was labour intensive as they usually had to manually carry water; there are also the high petrol costs for transportation to their bush gardens. A grower said:

*If I really analyse the cost of growing my cabbages it will be very expensive as I hand-water them every day and spray them and if I put my price on the time I spent then it will be too expensive. The area that I'm using for planting now is far away from the water tanks and irrigation and so what I'm doing now is filling the water in knapsacks from the tanks and hand-spray the water in my plots.*

For many growers, involvement in agriculture is about lifestyle and passion for the land rather than simply income. One grower expressed:

*I love planting and also I thought I will get some money from planting and that's why I started planting. This is where I was born and this is my home and that's why I continue growing after my retirement.*

Growers pointed out that although sometimes they sold their produce with a very minimal profit margin they strived to continue growing and earn additional income to pay their bills. The growers feel that the quality of their produce is very good because it is home-grown with minimal chemicals. Growers claimed that the selling price is very flexible as customers can bargain and if the produce is not sold then they usually reduce the cost in order to sell:

*I make the price affordable for the customer. If I feel that the price is too high and people are not buying, I drop the price, I make compromise and so I don't keep to a set price. I think the overall quality of all my produce is very good. Some customers can bargain, others come and go and come again.*

### **5.3.3 Promotion of Local Produce**

The growers promote their produce mainly through word of mouth and by selling at the market and village show days. Local produce is very rarely promoted through the radio, local noticeboards or on signposts. One grower commented:

*The people here know me and they know what I bring to the market and so they wait around and they start grabbing things as soon as I arrive.*

The growers pointed out that the government has not helped them in any way to promote their products and services to the tourism sector. The only assistance that growers feel that the government has given them is the funding to construct and maintain a local market facility. Growers commented:

*Sometimes the tourists come here but when they are about to return they come to know that a village show day is coming up, the poor tourists have to go back as their flights are booked and if only they knew about this beforehand they could have come in time for the show days. The internet should tell the tourists about the show days and that best handicrafts are available then and best designs are showcased then.*

### **5.3.4 Village-based Accommodation**

In order to provide village-based accommodation for tourists, two village councils (Lakepa and Avatele) have opted to renovate old school buildings while another one (Hakupu) is in the process of building two self-contained units or bungalows (see Figure 5.21). Senior members of village councils said there are many vacant family houses that could also be renovated for village-based tourist accommodation but such ventures can be time consuming because of the process involved in securing legal land

titles and permission from families. The families who own the vacant houses are scattered — some are on the island but others are in New Zealand or Australia — and legal permission needs to be obtained from everyone before renovation can begin. To obtain permission from families to renovate the vacant houses, the village council needs legal title to the land in court and this is normally a lengthy process. Furthermore, renovating the vacant houses would be just as costly as building new accommodation because the buildings are run down.

**Figure 5. 21 Village-based Accommodation**



Government officials support the development of village-based tourism experiences as it is anticipated that these will strengthen local economic linkages from tourism and enhance understanding between host and guest. The village-based accommodation will mainly cater for returning Niueans and tourists who opt for home-stay type accommodation and want to have a village experience. The village councillors commented that currently Niueans living overseas do not usually return because they no longer have their house on the island, and the village-based accommodation would enable them to return home and maintain their culture and family ties. A village council member highlighted:

*The village-based accommodation will be a key to creating economic development for the village and allow the returning Niuean families to come and live in the village rather than staying in Alofi all the time.*

The researcher followed up on the progress of the village-based accommodation with the village councils and found that one village (Lakepa) had completed the renovation of an old school building at the end of 2010. The renovated building started operating

as a village-based accommodation for tourists, especially returning Niueans, from the beginning of 2011. Such developments offer the potential to further nurture the linkages between tourism and local agriculture sectors in Niue.

Usually only one or two of the senior members of the council are involved in working on village projects, and these are very often government workers. The island faces a shortage of carpenters and skilled builders and consequently the construction of village-based accommodation was often delayed.

Lakepa village councillors pointed out that a family has been awarded funds through the government to establish a botanical garden that will consist of a local natural bush area and fruit trees for interpretive walks and relaxation. Hakupu villagers also have a conservation forest area that has been established and funded by the government (see Figure 5.22). The conservation area is intended to promote awareness and sustainability of forest resources. The purpose of the conservation area is to help local communities to protect natural resources and biodiversity:

*We take care of the forest to see that people don't hunt pigeons and flying foxes and create education and awareness to promote the forestry resources and type of trees and species. At the moment we have a programme to teach people in the village methods of how to conserve the forest so that we will be able to organise documentaries and educational tools.*

**Figure 5. 22 Conserved Forest Area near Hakupu Village**



The forest conservation project started in December 2007 with an initial grant of NZ\$20,000. Since then the villagers have managed to get another NZ\$12,000 for conducting workshops, establishing a village steering committee, and have constructed three shade houses to propagate native trees and plants that are endangered. The

villagers have also used the funding to maintain sea tracks and scenic sites and draw up a conservation plan for the village. The village hopes to revive the 'Green Star' youth club in order to involve the younger generation in conservation and sustainable agriculture activities.

The villagers of Mutalau also intend to renovate an old school building for coconut-oil production, sports and recreational activities, and to have an office for a sustainable land-management project (see Figure 5.23).

**Figure 5. 23 Renovation of an Old School Building in Mutalau Village for Coconut-Oil Production**



The senior Mutalau village council members said that they plan to develop a locally pressed coconut oil for tourists to purchase and currently the villagers are working with technical experts from Samoa on this project. The villagers have partly renovated the old school building and bought basic oil-processing equipment with government funding. Trials of coconut oil have been undertaken, and currently the villagers are working on producing coconut-oil products for cooking and for hair and body oil and soaps. The villagers intend to utilise the waste products from the production process: scraped coconut waste for animal feed, husks for vanilla mulching, and fuel and shells for charcoal. Currently the villagers are trying to extract essence from the leaves of other endemic plants to add to the coconut oil as a fragrance.

Government funding has assisted the Mutalau villagers to construct a shade-house to raise seedlings and revive food crops and ornamental plants. These are used in a sustainable land-management project which involves 50 acres of land being developed for farming and for providing agricultural training and skills to youths (see Figure 5.24).

One constraint faced by villagers when developing the 50-acre farm is the legal land-titling process, which is time consuming. The village has managed to title a portion of the 50 acres, which has been planted with crops and fruit trees. A village council member said:

*The whole idea of this project is to learn about how to manage land sustainably and the pilot farm is like an outdoor activity of how to map, soil-test, grow economic crops and young farmers learn with hands-on experience. It is supposed to be fully organic farm and we are trying to get it certified.*

**Figure 5. 24 Planting Trees and Crops for Sustainable Land-management Practices**



Senior Mutalau village council members said that work has also started on building a sheltered stage for food and cultural performances for tourists, and on creating access to and constructing signposts for historical sites and sea tracks (see Figure 5.25).

**Figure 5. 25 Constructing Access to the Coast**



Lakepa village has a website (<http://www.lakepa.nu>) that is used to communicate and share information with Niueans living overseas and they plan in the future to upgrade the site to promote their village-based activities and products. The village also said that

they currently produced newsletters regularly and they hope that in the future these would be available on their website in order to provide information on village events.

Hall and Sharples (2003, p. 5) believe that food-related experiences through cultural events are not just about promotion to visitors; they also have substantial local drivers for being conducted that relate to the consumption and production of food and maintenance of the local residents. Food-related experiences at cultural and village events are therefore strongly connected to the 'sense of place' and local community pride in their agricultural produce – something that can allow visitors to get to understand and appreciate the destination (Smith and Xiao, 2008; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Hall and Sharples, 2003, p. 5). It is important to note that food and the emotions and necessities that surround it are significant not just for growers but also for visitors and other local residents because the consumption of particular products may have implications for identities and lifestyles (Hall and Sharples, 2003, p. 5).

In this study, several visitors commented that the island lacked village and culture-based activities and information about village show days:

*Would love to be able to experience more traditional Niuean culture. Opportunities like learning to weave or traditional hunting/fishing. Planning holidays around village festivals is hard as dates on your website are not fixed.*

Show days are a village-based activity which provide an opportunity for tourists to experience agriculture, food and village-related activities; consequently, show days can create some links between tourism and agriculture in Niue. On show days villages sell local dishes and handicrafts and exhibit local produce (see Figure 5.26).

**Figure 5. 26 Local Food Dishes Sold at Village Show Days**



Village show days provide tourists with the opportunity to experience cultural performances and traditional sports such as village-style golf, 'slippery pig', and weaving and coconut husking-competitions (see Figure 5.27).

Unfortunately opportunities for tourists to experience show days are limited because information is not readily available — the few tourists who do attend hear about village events via word of mouth.

**Figure 5. 27 Local Performances and Traditional Fishing Exhibitions at Village Show Days**



#### **5.4 Marketing of Agriculture and Tourism Links**

The growing importance of online marketing in disseminating appropriate information to potential tourists has been instrumental in making a destination 'globally visible' (Ho et al., 2006). The provision of destination information to tourists not only affects their destination choice but also their satisfaction at the destination and their repeat visitation (Huang and Lee, 2009, p. 356). For Niue, the main tourism information sites and individual SMTE websites need to provide thorough information on the types of activities available on the island, including food and agriculture-related experiences, in order to ensure that potential tourists are aware of what they can do during their stay. The internet is an important tool for promoting linkages between tourism and agriculture because of its prominent role in providing information to potential tourists

— nearly 80% of the visitors who participated in the survey said that the internet was an important source of information when they planned their trip to Niue.

#### **5.4.1 Audit of Popular Websites**

Based on the online visitor-survey results, the major websites used by tourists to gather information about Niue prior to their travel are the Niue Tourism Office ([www.niueisland.com](http://www.niueisland.com)), the Niue government site ([www.gov.nu](http://www.gov.nu)), and South Pacific Travel ([www.spto.org](http://www.spto.org)). These three websites were reviewed at the time of the research and after the field work (2009) to see if they provided sufficient information to tourists about the products and services available on the island in terms of agriculture and village-based experiences.

The Niue Tourism Office website mentions a few unique village-based experiences including village show days (see Figure 5.28). However, these are only briefly described with minimal pictures and information and have no reviews or recommendations from locals and tourists; the web page also fails to give confirmed dates for these events:

*For the latest confirmed dates, check the Events Calendar or contact the Niue Tourism Office.*

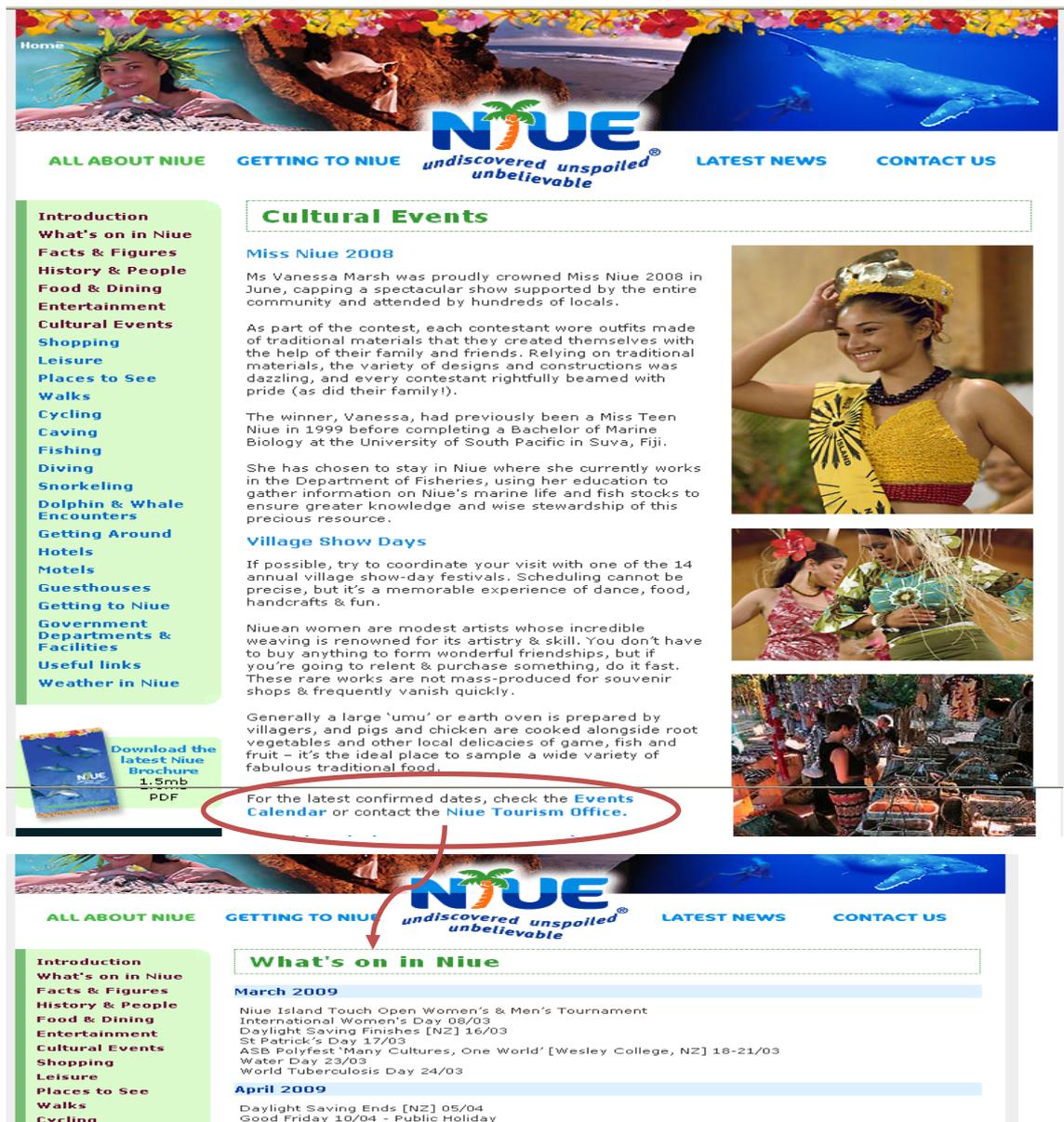
(<http://www.niueisland.com/>)

The calendar of events to which the events web page is linked does not contain sufficient information on how a tourist can participate in village-related experiences in Niue. The information shown in the calendar of events consists mostly of a list of public holidays and significant internationally recognised days – it largely fails to provide information on local and village-based events. The visitor survey reveals that the website needs to be at the forefront of marketing and promoting agriculture and village-related events on the island. In particular, it should be listing more of the events available and providing thorough information on what each activity offers.

The tourism office plays a critical role especially in developing countries in destination promotion and marketing (Nielsen and Spenceley, 2010; Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009; Hall, 2008, p. 164; Britton, 2004, p. 142; Shaw and Williams, 2002, p. 318). Nielsen and Spenceley (2010), UNESCAP (2007; 1999), and NZTRI (2005) feel that due to the absence of a developed and innovative private sector in developing countries, including Niue and other Pacific SIDS, the government needs to be at the

forefront of tourism promoting and marketing. The linkages between tourism and the local economy, including agriculture, can be nurtured if the main tourism office website provides comprehensive tourist information on surrounding activities and creates web links to the websites of SMTEs and community and village groups (Milne 2009a; Levinson and Milne, 2004; Soteriades et al., 2004; Poon, 1993, p. 121).

Figure 5. 28 <http://www.niueisland.com> Web Page for Cultural Events



Reviews from tourists and locals who have experienced the village events and more pictures showing the significance of the activities can be provided on the site. The website can also focus on providing information to potential tourists on how they can participate in the events; for example, by providing the facility for prior bookings, and

information on costs and if there is any requirement or knowledge they need to be aware of before the activity.

The Niue Tourism Office website mentions a few traditional local foods such as taro, cassava and breadfruit which can be bought at the market, but the site fails to inform tourists of the best time (early morning) to visit the market to purchase fresh local produce. Limited information and pictures are available on the website for the range of local produce available at the market and local shops. The web page on local dining from the Tourism Office website provides brief information on the local produce and prepared food that tourists can experience on show days but fails to state the timing of the events:

*... the very best range of traditional local food is found at the annual village show days — each of Niue's fourteen villages hosts a show day every year to showcase local cooking, craft, sporting and cultural skills. A large earth oven, or 'umu' is prepared and visitors can sample some rarely found and delicious treats. Try to co-ordinate your visit with one of these show days, for it will expose you to the full fabric of Niuean life ...*

(<http://www.niueisland.com>)

The Tourism Office website lists some places for dining out. However, it does not detail the types of dishes and traditional meals offered, nor does it contain any pictures of local meals or dishes currently being provided by the restaurants and cafés on the island. Similarly, the web page does not give details about the eateries' opening times, how bookings can be made, or the cost of meals:

*For the most up-to-date list of opening hours, check with the Niue Tourism Office ... Matavai Resort ... Bookings essential ...*

(<http://www.niueisland.com>)

The same web page states that tourists who plan to cook their own meals should do their grocery shopping as soon as they arrive to avoid problems — yet it fails to state where and how they can buy their food or what the problems are:

*We strongly recommend that if staying in a motel or if you plan to cook your own food, you do your grocery shopping as soon as you can after arrival to avoid any problems.*

(<http://www.niueisland.com>)

The web page can provide thorough information and pictures of the types of meals and local food available at each of the cafés and restaurants, as well as the costs of

their menus, their confirmed opening times, and how bookings can be made. Information on how tourists can buy their own ingredients for cooking and the problems of purchasing food products also needs to be made available on the website.

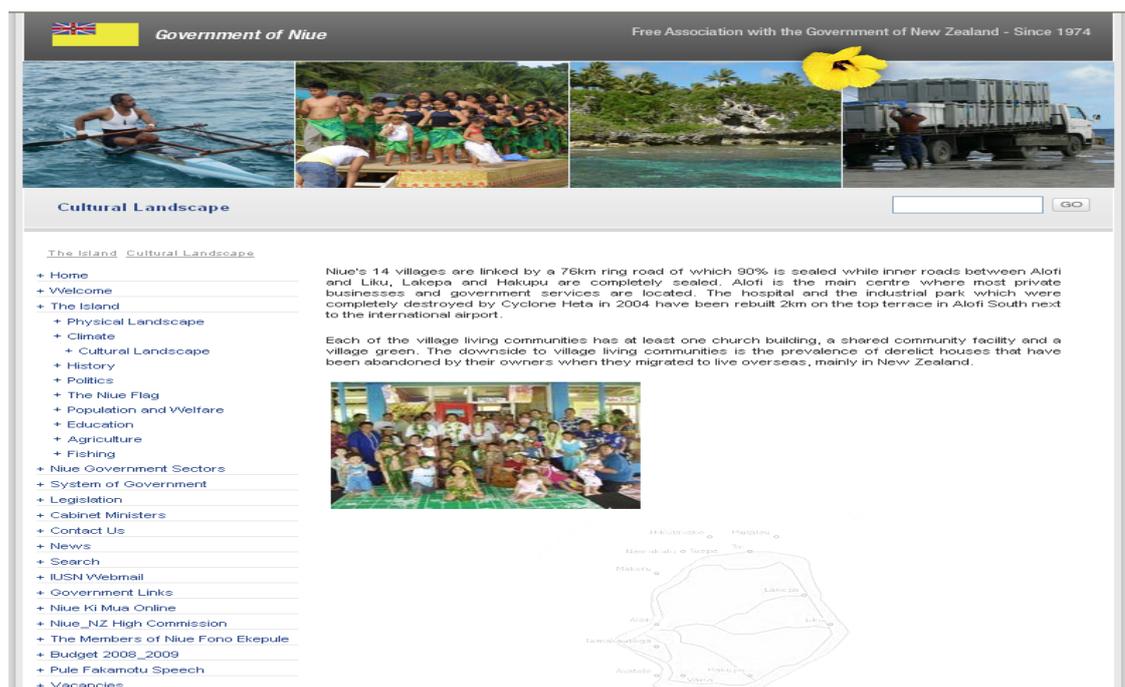
The researcher followed up on the progress of marketing tourism and agriculture links by the popular websites that provide online tourist information and found that the Niue Tourism Office site ([www.niueisland.com](http://www.niueisland.com)) was upgraded in 2011. In an attempt to provide thorough information to potential tourists, the upgraded Niue Tourism Office site features information and pictures of a range of local foods and on the cultural dimensions of the island. The upgraded site even provides tourists the opportunity to post blogs on their experiences on the island. The Niue Tourism Office is making an effort to regularly post news articles and media releases written by local villagers and journalists. While there is still work to be done in developing more information on food and cultural activities on the site, it is clear that the stakeholders can see that the website is an important resource in providing thorough information to potential tourists. The attempt to provide local activities and up-to-date information for potential tourists implies that the stakeholders can clearly see the vital need to enhance not only the tourists' experience of their visit but also the local community's experience of tourism.

The Government of Niue website contains limited information on local villages and people. No information is available on local village lifestyle and agricultural experiences, nor is there any information available about tourism in Niue and what tourists can expect during their holiday on the island (see Figure 5.29). The Government of Niue website is not primarily designed for tourists but provides some basic information on the number of villages on the island, local culture, physical landscape and history of Niue. The Government of Niue website mentions very little about local food: there is only one picture of local produce and no information on the characteristics of growers or the lifestyle of village communities. The government website could provide more information, including pictures, on island life, agriculture and village-related experiences for tourists and be linked more effectively to the Tourism Office website.

The researcher followed up on the progress of marketing tourism and agriculture links by the Government of Niue website and found that the site

(<http://www.gov.nu/wb/>) was upgraded in 2011. In an attempt to give the visitor a 'sense of place' while in Niue, the website features an online newsletter called *Tau Tala Niue*, although it is published only on an irregular basis. The newsletter contains stories and pictures of current happenings in Niue, including major local events and experiences for visitors on the island such as village show days and competitions, the welcoming performances for visitors at the airport, and the arrival of the new A320 Air New Zealand flight. The website also features press releases made by the government – something that provides further information on the local happenings on the island. While there is still work to be done in providing more up-to-date information on local experiences on the site, it is clear that government officials can see the opportunity to create linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors through an effective dissemination of tourist information to potential visitors.

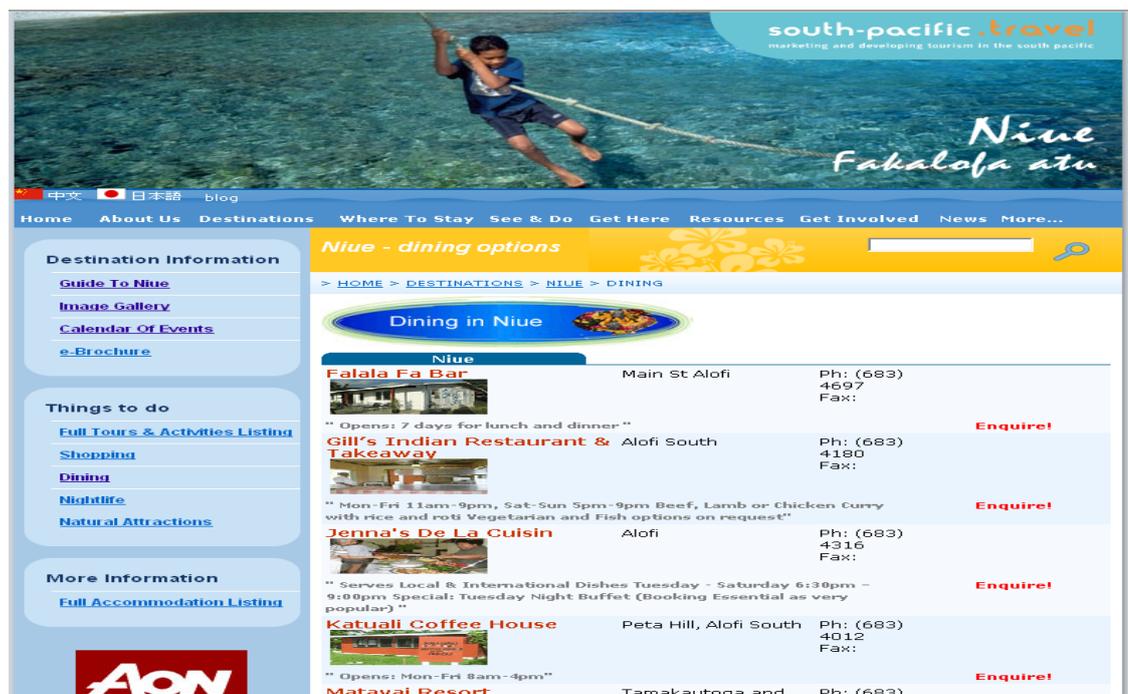
**Figure 5. 29 Information on Culture and Village-Based Experiences on the Government of Niue Website**



The third website audited by the researcher in 2009 was that of South Pacific Travel: <http://www.spto.org/spto/cms/destinations/niue/>. This website does not contain any information on how tourists can experience local produce and its list of restaurants and cafés does not contain any information or pictures on the types of local food available for tourists (see Figure 5.30).

The South Pacific Travel website highlights only one café (Jenna's) as a place to find local food. The website does not state any other food- or agriculture-related activities and tours for tourists. Furthermore, the current list of tours and activities mentioned on the website is not updated to accurately show those that are in operation, there is no information available on what the tours and activities entail, and no reviews or recommendations made by locals or tourists. The website is a critical portal for potential tourists looking for information, and it needs to be showing more pictures of local food, people, agriculture and the Niuean lifestyle and to have reviews of the island's unique cultural experiences. The website could also be linked to both the Government of Niue and Tourism Office websites for a coordinated marketing approach.

Figure 5. 30 Information on Local Food Experiences on the South Pacific Travel Website



The researcher followed up on the progress of marketing tourism and agriculture links by the South Pacific Travel website (<http://www.south-pacific.travel/spto/cms/destinations/niue/>) and found that hardly any upgrade had been made in 2011. The only noticeable feature that the researcher could see on the website was that the list of tourist accommodation providers in Niue had increased from 12 in 2009 to 16 in 2011 – at least this information shows that more locals are starting to participate in the tourism industry and set up entrepreneurial activities. The

potential of the South Pacific Travel website to promote local experiences and disseminate key information to potential tourists to Niue is currently not being maximised.

#### 5.4.2 Individual SMTE Websites

Hall (2005b, p. 170) highlighted the importance of networking for the promotion and marketing of the tourist experiences offered by the destination; this networking can occur through web links on the websites of SMTE operators, with each other and with the national tourism office, and by web links to local community and village websites and other online virtual groups. The failure of stakeholders to collaborate and network among themselves will mean that thorough and up-to-date tourist information is not being provided to potential visitors and, consequently, the opportunities for economic linkage within a destination will be limited. It is clear that a well coordinated approach for tourism promotion and marketing can lead to the improvement of the overall competitiveness of the industry in the long term (Brown and Cave, 2010; Hall, 2005b, p. 170; Milne and Ateljevic, 2001).

In this study, slightly more than one-quarter (26.5%) of the SMTE operators had their own website at the time of the interviews in 2008 (see Table 5.4). SMTE operators often rely on the Niue Tourism Office website to assist in promoting their services and for bookings — the website can take online bookings for accommodation and lists vehicle rentals, shops, cafés, restaurants and tours.

**Table 5. 4 SMTE Operators who have their Own Websites**

Type of SMTE	Number (n)
Accommodation	4
Rental	2
Tour	2
Cafés and Restaurants	1
<b>Total (out of 34)</b>	<b>9</b>

One accommodation operator stated:

*The Tourism Office has listed me on their website and tourists go and do online booking but this does not happen often. Most of the current tourists that I get are through word of mouth. It's either someone goes and recommends me to their friends or when they come here, they hear about me.*

Direct communication, either face to face or by telephone, is common with local suppliers. The operators said that mainly word of mouth is used to find suppliers of local food and to promote their services. Three of the 4 accommodation operators who have their own website were audited: Kololi, Coral Gardens and Namukulu (see Figure 5.31).

These websites focus mainly on providing information on their accommodation facility, i.e. size and costs/night. The websites of accommodation operators have few web links to other SMTEs and the main tourism information sites in Niue: Coral Gardens' website is linked to only one other web page, the rental operator Alofi Rentals (<http://www.alofirentals.nu/>); Namukulu's website is linked to the main tourism office and Air New Zealand; and Kololi's website has no links to any other online sites.

Currently there is little or no information on or pictures of local food, agriculture and village life featured on the three accommodation websites. Coral Gardens' website provides very general information on Niue:

*Food supplies are available from several stores in Alofi. Most goods are imported from New Zealand. Market Day on Niue is Friday — be early for fresh fruit, coconuts, uga crab and traditional Niuean cooked foods.*

Namukulu's website provides brief information on restaurants:

*There are 11 eating places on the Island, mostly situated in Alofi. Jenna's Café is a favourite place for a buffet on Tuesday nights. Washaway Café at Avatele is the place to go on Sunday afternoon and evening. Other popular places are Crazy Uga Bar & Café, FalalaFa Bar & Café and Gills Indian Restaurant.*

Figure 5. 31 Websites of Accommodation Operators



**Kololi's Motel**

Niue is an untapped, unspoiled holiday destination situated in the South Pacific. We are accessed by a weekly flight (Saturday) from Auckland, New Zealand. While we don't have sandy beaches we have so much else on offer we are confident you won't miss them. Take a look at our attractions page for ideas of things to do while you holiday with us.

Enjoying a tropical climate bathed by southeast trade winds, Niue has warm days and pleasantly cool nights. The average temperature from December to March is 27 degrees centigrade, while April through to November is 24 degrees. The weather is generally pleasant year round.

Situated in Alofi and very central to shops, offices and reef swimming pools, Kololi's is a superbly appointed Motel, with all the comforts of home.

Kololi's offers the following rooms: 3 self contained units (chalet type), two 2-bedroom units, one 1-bedroom unit, all units have separate bedrooms, a lounge, adjoining kitchen and separate bathroom.

The main guesthouse features a large bedroom with ensuite upstairs and four bedrooms downstairs shared bathroom.

Featuring a modern, fully equipped kitchen, large lounge, dining room, and laundry facilities the guesthouse accommodation is perfect for families or friends holidaying together. A barbecue area is also available for all guests to use.

Home  
Accommodation  
Brochure  
Attractions  
Location

Book Online

P O L S

Source: <http://www.niueaccommodation.nu/>



**Coral Gardens Motel**

*Fakaalofa Lahi Atu!*

Home  
Motel Information  
Niue Information  
Travelling to Niue  
Contact us

Coral Gardens Motel is situated on the main road at Makapu Point six kms north of the main village and port of Alofi.

Five studio-type comfortable fales have cliff top ocean views and have been designed for holidaymakers and professionals visiting Niue.

Source: <http://www.coralgardens.nu/>



**Namukulu MOTEL**

Home Location Facilities Services Tips Contact Us

**New Website has arrived**  
[www.namukulu-cottages.nu](http://www.namukulu-cottages.nu)

**Welcome to Namukulu Cottages & Spa**

**Namukulu Cottages & Spa** is situated just 10 minutes drive from Alofi in totally tranquil tropical surroundings and has 3 fabulous Cottages of superior quality, each with magnificent panoramic sea views.

The timber interior and Italian tiled floors ensures a light, airy, comfortable atmosphere. Each Cottage has a separate bedroom, large bathroom, and spacious kitchen/living area as well as a generous deck area outside on which you can relax and enjoy a drink while watching the spectacular sunsets.

Source: <http://www.namukulu-motel.nu/>

The websites of tour operators Kayak Niue and Niue Dive focus mainly on providing information related only to the activities they offer. Neither Kayak Niue's nor Niue Dive's websites provide any information on or pictures of local food and agriculture experiences available for potential tourists to Niue.

The researcher followed up on the progress of marketing tourism and agriculture links on the websites of SMTE operators and found that only two noticeable upgrades had been made in 2011: the website of Coral Gardens is now linked to Niue Travel Guide (<http://niue.southpacific.org/>) and the Niue Tourism Office ([www.niueisland.com](http://www.niueisland.com)) sites, and Namukulu's website is now linked to a number of sites ranging from Qantas to local car rental companies. The Namukulu website has also provided web links to Trip Advisor and Lonely Planet – now visitors to the Namukulu website can write about their experience of the accommodation and Niue. While there is still work to be done in developing more information on food and cultural activities on the SMTE websites, it is interesting to note that the operators are beginning to realise the value of a more extensive range of tourist information on their sites.

The researcher also followed up on the progress made by local communities in Niue to nurture the links between tourism and agriculture as well as to provide online tourist information in 2011, and found out that they are filling some of the information gaps left by the major tourist websites and individual SMTE sites. One village (Mutalau) has taken the initiative to provide agriculture-related experiences for tourists in 2011 through an island night every Saturday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. The island night at the village provides tourists an opportunity to experience local cuisine, traditional activities and cultural entertainment (<http://www.niueisland.com/content/restaurants>). Mutalau has also set up Facebook page for the village, which is used for communicating and sharing information with Niueans living overseas – it is hoped that this will encourage Niueans living overseas to return for holidays and visits. And the village has an online virtual group ([http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cyber\\_muta/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cyber_muta/)) which is used, among other things, to raise funds for village activities such as show days.

## **5.5 Summary and Theoretical Reflections**

The findings from the tourist survey and interviews with local communities in Niue highlight the evolving nature of tourism and raise some important insights into the ability of the regulation and dependency theories to come to terms with the realities of the industry's development in Niue.

### **5.5.1 Reflecting on Regulation Theory's Regime of Accumulation**

The findings from the online survey and discussions with tourists on Niue show strong demand for local food and experiences including agriculture- and village-related activities which are currently limited in supply. Theoretically it can be argued that the strong visitor interest in cultural experiences, including agriculture- and village-related activities, reflect the rise of the 'new tourists'. The findings of this research support Brown and Cave's (2010), Milne's (2009a), Moscardo's (2008, p. 10), Lansing and De Vries's (2007), Brohman's (1996), Urry's (1995, p. 142) and Poon's (1993, p. 121) argument that the 'new tourist' in the post-Fordist era is seeking 'real and natural' experiences, often based on 'customised' forms of travel. Many commentators point to a growth in demand for specialised travel packages and for 'alternative tourism products' that emphasises 'quality and 'down-to-earth' experiences (Gursoy et al., 2010; Brown, 2009; Mowforth and Munt, 2009, p. 26; Lansing and De Vries, 2007; Ayres, 2002, p. 147; Cleverdon and Kalisch, 2000; Milne, 1997, pp. 294–295; Brohman, 1996; Urry, 1995, p. 142; Poon, 1993, p. 121). Such markets appear to offer the promise of a 'new' tourism that is more economically beneficial and sustainable than mass forms of travel.

The 'new tourist' also appears to be more willing to accept and appreciate local conditions, culture and food, and does not necessarily seek international-standard facilities. The findings of this research show that the visitors who choose to travel to the island nation are mostly New Zealanders or returning Niueans who are not seeking for a 5-star luxury destination but somewhere where they can get away from a busy life for a short period of time and experience a slower pace of life before returning to their respective jobs. The expectation of the visitors to Niue is not just to relax in the quietness of the island but to also engage in 'local and unique' experiences that relate to Niuean culture and lifestyle. In particular, for returning Niueans there is a desire to

connect to their cultural roots – something that they look for when they visit Niue with their spouses and children. Returning Niueans are especially eager to experience village, food and agriculture-related experiences during their time spent on the island – this is something that is especially important for the young returning Niueans who are enthusiastic to eat local food and participate in activities that help them experience a village lifestyle.

The ‘new tourist’ requires the tourism industry in island nations such as Niue to respond to the rapidly changing consumer demand. Commentators argue that flexible organisational structure of small businesses allows them to achieve high rates of innovation and to cater effectively to the rapidly evolving market (Lansing and De Vries, 2007; Ayres, 2002, p. 147; Cleverdon and Kalisch, 2000; Milne, 1997, pp. 294–295; Brohman, 1996; Urry, 1995, p. 142; Poon, 1993, p. 121). Clearly, the findings of this research show a small latent tourist demand for local experiences related to agriculture- and village-based activities in the relatively small-scale tourist industry in Niue.

The visitor survey shows that latent tourist demand provides economic opportunities for locals to earn additional income, even if it is only on an irregular basis, instead of relying solely on foreign aid, remittances and public sector employment. Even given the latent demand, though, it can be argued that the constraints including economies of scale and fluctuating tourist numbers throughout the year will to some extent continue to hinder Niue from meeting the needs of the tourist industry. The challenge for Niue is to explore the options for providing a wider range of local activities and experiences for tourists in order to increase the yield per visitor and link the tourism industry to the local economy. This is a challenge that is increasingly being met not just at the government and business levels but also by local communities. Thus it is not just small businesses and government that need to respond to the potential created by shifting tourist demand but also communities, including village initiatives.

The internet is becoming an important tool in reaching the elusive ‘new tourist’ – something that is borne out by the online survey and conversations with tourists on Niue. The findings of this research show that the majority of the tourists surveyed use the internet to search for destinations prior to travel and as a result, websites with

thorough, up-to-date visitor information play an important role in the trip-planning process. Researchers argue that the internet has dramatically changed the way in which tourists plan their holidays and how tourism providers promote and sell their products and services (Milne 2009a; Ho et al., 2006; Tribe, 2005, pp. 333–334; Milne and Ewing, 2004; Sofield, 2003, p. 66; UNCTAD, 2002; Poon, 1993, p. 23). Indeed internet technology has, to some extent, removed some of the distribution channel constraints highlighted by Britton (1987, p. 130), and as a result remote Pacific SIDS such as Niue have the opportunity to become ‘globally visible’ to the elusive tourist who is seeking local and unique experiences.

Overstating the current potential of ICT to act as an effective marketing tool for Niue and other Pacific SIDS can lead to some critical issues. Telecommunication services on many islands, including Niue, are poor quality and computer literacy and hardware availability is limited. The onus will clearly be on governments, aid donors and prospective internet service providers to solve these problems (Prasad and Roy, 2008, p. 165; Milne and Nowosielski, 1997). ICT can potentially even reinforce the types of dependency structures highlighted by Britton (1981), especially when the marketing and overall distribution structure of tourism works against local involvement in the ownership of the tourist industry. To this end, the lack of information on locally grown produce and agriculture- and village-related experiences on local websites tends to reduce opportunities for economic linkages in Niue.

Rapidly developing ICT, especially the internet, represent the potential to overcome some of the inflexibility and dependency inherent in the traditional distribution system outlined by Butler (2004, p. 161; 1995, p. 40), providing direct access to the consumer and a greater ability for business operators and destination residents to shape their own marketing images (Levinson and Milne, 2004). The audit of major tourism websites that provide information to potential tourists show that the promotion and marketing of local experiences and activities related to food, agriculture and village were virtually non-existent in 2009, but had improved somewhat by 2011. The lack of thorough and up-dated information on tourism websites about village events such as show days means that potential tourists cannot plan in advance what they can do during their stay or bring sufficient money to spend on the island – this could assist in increasing visitor yield from virtually nothing to

something. Consequently the locals would have the opportunity to earn a supplemental income, even if only on an irregular basis, and gain relief from the sole dependence on foreign aid, remittances and public sector employment.

The findings support Milne's (2009a) and Poon's (1993, p. 121) argument that local entrepreneurs need to use ICT, especially the use of websites, to create awareness and market their local products in order to provide comprehensive information to potential visitors. Clearly the findings of this research reveal that the opportunity to use the internet to its full potential by providing in-depth online information to potential tourists in order to build a yield-based tourism industry is not being fully realised in Niue.

Due to the scarcity of in-depth research conducted to better understand the intricacies of the industry in Pacific SIDS, including Niue, the researcher feels that while alternative tourism appears to offer a potential path towards more sustainable development, the long-term influences remain uncertain. Some researchers feel that the growing interest in local cultures and increasing emphasis on authenticity may prove to be highly disruptive and bring about a tendency to 'museumise' ethnic groups so that deviation from the touristic cultural ideal is reduced (Butler, 2004, p. 161; 1995, p. 31; Milne, 1997, p. 297).

This research stresses that a better understanding is also required of the ways in which communities are involved in tourism development strategies, especially tourism–agriculture linkages. There is a lack of research on the degree to which local people really feel they have some input into and control over the future of the industry and nurturing its linkages to local agriculture – a vital factor in creating an industry that meets the needs and desires of the majority of the local population (Murphy and Murphy, 2004, p. 195; Milne, 1997, p. 297). In this particular case study, discussions with local communities in Niue highlight that they have some control over the future of the tourism industry and its linkages with agriculture sector on the island – something that is also supported by both the Niuean and New Zealand governments. Local communities in Niue feel that a small community-based tourism activity that is closely linked to the local community is more workable for the island than striving towards mass tourism – a vision that is also shared by both the governments of Niue and New Zealand. Consequently, communities in Niue are eager to set up small

tourism enterprises that provide local village and agriculture-related experiences, and the villagers are grateful to the New Zealand and Niuean governments for sharing the same vision and supporting locals in influencing the future development of the tourism industry. Overall, locals in Niue are eager to continue to keep control over the industry, such as by providing tourism experiences through village-based activities in order to maximise the yield per tourist.

### **5.5.2 Reflecting on Dependency Theory**

Dependency structures have dictated Niue's links to the New Zealand economy through aid and imports, and this is something that is not predicted to change in the foreseeable future (Government of New Zealand, 2011; AUSAID, 2006; Pacific Online, 2006; Niue Tourism Office, 2005). Although Niue will continue to exhibit a heavy level of dependency on New Zealand for a regular airline service, investment and aid, the findings of this research show signs that there are small-scale ways that the situation can be changed. The cases of emerging success stories of local food and agriculture-related experiences on Niue show signs of active local engagement in the ownership and development of the tourism industry. The locals who have recently started to provide agriculture- and village-related experiences are enthusiastic and feel a sense of pride in showcasing their identity and lifestyle to the tourists, apart from the economic benefits they gain from participating in the industry. Niueans who return home from either studying or working overseas show signs of being less dependent on overseas aid and investment and being more proactive in setting up small tourism enterprises – a phenomenon that is playing a key role in the cases of emerging success stories in Niue. However, one cannot ignore the role of MIRAB structures, especially remittances, in assisting locals to participate in tourism by setting up small-scale entrepreneurial activities.

Returning Niueans play a key role in stimulating tourism's link to the local economy, and especially the agriculture sector, when they visit their families on the island. The groups of returning Niueans who travel to Niue for a holiday aspire to 'get back to their roots' by staying in the village and participating in cultural experiences, especially eating local cuisine. The findings from this research are somewhat contrary to Britton's (1987, p. 130) argument that participation in tourism will remain limited

and that locals will only receive 'the crumbs from the tourists' table' in Pacific SIDS which will consequently lead to undesirable cultural and environmental impacts.

Although Britton (1987, p. 130) is pessimistic about the ability of island nations to resist the temptation of mass tourism and large-scale foreign investment, Niue's tourism industry has remained small scale and there are no plans by the locals or the Niuean or New Zealand governments to change this situation in the future. Indeed, the locals and the governments of both Niue and New Zealand are eager to continue to encourage high levels of local control and ownership in the small-scale tourism industry on the island. The question that remains is whether Britton's (1987, p. 130) prediction, which is drawn from the dependency theory, accurately reflects the realities of the tourism industry's evolution in Niue.

The findings show the importance of local participation in the development of the island's economies, and a bottom-up approach to developing sustainable tourism and agriculture sectors will maximise economic benefits in the long term. Latent and largely unmet tourist demand provides local communities in Niue the opportunity to earn additional income by providing local food, agriculture and village-related experiences, instead of being solely dependent on foreign investment and imports. This can also assist in meeting the tourists' thirst for 'local and unique' experiences during their stay on the island. The study highlights that visitors are keen to experience local activities that revolve around village life and agriculture, including local food. Alternative forms of tourism may have a long-term role to play especially if consumers demand alternative tourism products or if operators begin to compete on factors other than price, such as quality and flexibility.

The governments of Niue and New Zealand have placed national development objectives at the centre of recent tourism development plans – stressing the need to foster small, locally owned tourism businesses and ensure greater community participation while at the same time controlling future development in a sustainable manner (NZAID, 2011). The Niuean government, with funding from New Zealand, has started village initiatives to provide agriculture- and village-related experiences for tourism. The increasing number of local entrepreneurs and village projects reflect the participation of Niueans in the tourism industry and the vision of both the Niue and New Zealand governments for the long term. MIRAB structures, Niue's dependency on

New Zealand, and the continued ability of locals to meet many of their basic needs through subsistence activities means that the desire for tourism development has not been born out of a sense of great economic desperation. There is also a high degree of awareness among locals and the New Zealand government of the problems associated with overly ambitious and poorly planned tourism developments (Government of New Zealand, 2011). As a result, the stakeholders on Niue continue to support tourism development that does not negatively impact infrastructure, culture, values and the environment or jeopardise priorities of the local communities in the long term (NZAID, 2011; Government of New Zealand, 2011).

Contrary to Britton's (1987, p. 130) argument, it is hard to suggest that the governments of Niue and New Zealand place foreign corporate interests ahead of those of the local population. Researchers argue that the failure to acknowledge this fact creates a sense that local populations are 'victims' unable to exert control over their own destinations (Aref et al., 2010; Brown and Cave, 2010; Hoffman, 2003; Milne and Ateljevic, 2001; Milne, 1997, p. 298). This reflects broader critiques of dependency theory that focus on the framework's obsession with the global system and its unwillingness to grapple with the local factors that influence development outcomes.

The locals and the governments of Niue and New Zealand are aware that a small-scale tourist industry that is linked to the local economy is more sustainable (and realistic) than chasing a dream of large-scale mass tourism. The locals and the governments of Niue and New Zealand acknowledge that even a small incremental improvement in tourism's link to the local economy provides the opportunity to gradually nurture a yield-based industry. The challenge for Niue lies in identifying and setting up agriculture- and village-related experiences that can increase the expenditure per visitor and nurture a higher yielding small-scale tourism industry. It will be critical to ensure that the industry does not disrupt local culture and the environment in the long term but add value to the quality of people's lives.

## **Chapter 6: Factors Influencing Tourism’s Linkage to Local Agriculture**

This chapter discusses the constraints that hinder the linkages between tourism and local agriculture and villages in Niue. A number of constraints are identified and broadly relate to: (i) consistent production of local produce, (ii) supply of tourism experiences, (iii) marketing and promotion of agriculture- and village-related experiences, and (iv) the lack of a strategic focus for nurturing the linkages between tourism and agriculture. This chapter sheds light on each of the four broader constraints and then focuses on examples and cases to reveal the potential way forward for nurturing the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue. Then the chapter highlights the study’s theoretical contributions to the MIRAB model and regulation theory.

### **6.1 Constraints to Consistent Supply of Local Produce**

Local produce is not consistently available throughout the year due to a number of production-related constraints (see Table 6.1). The seasonality of local produce creates difficulties in meeting the tourism industry’s demand for fruit and vegetables consistently throughout the year. Considering the off-season limitations for the supply of local produce, the best that growers can do is to meet at least some of the demand of the tourism industry for fruit and vegetables that are in season. Currently about 10% of the total demand for local produce by the tourism industry appears to be met by the growers in Niue – as at least 90% of the produce used by cafés and restaurants for tourist meal preparations are imported from New Zealand. All the stakeholder groups (government officials, growers, SMTE operators and village councillors) interviewed in Niue feel that with the current tourist numbers, or limited tourism growth, the agriculture sector could have the potential for incrementally increasing the supply of local produce over time in order to meet around 50% of the small-scale industry’s demand for fruit and vegetables that are in season. This means that in the long term growers could gradually meet about 50% of the demand for local produce by the tourism industry from June to September and from December to January. The fact that

the peak tourism seasons are June to September and December to January is also positive, as one official noted:

*Our peak tourist season also coincides with our fruit and vegetable season. Therefore growers can supply some local produce to cafés and restaurants for meal preparations.*

**Table 6. 1 Constraints that Hinder the Consistent Supply of Local Produce on Niue**

<b>What are the constraints?</b>	<b>How the linkages between tourism and agriculture are limited (assumes continued small scale tourism industry)</b>
Seasonality of local produce	Tourism operators may rely mostly on purchasing imported food and produce in the off season
High costs of local produce during the off-season	Tourism operators may prefer to buy imported produce and growers will make limited sales during the off-season
Lack of local fruit and vegetables grown due to traditional diet being high in carbohydrates	Limited sale of local fruit and vegetables to the tourism sector - rarely feature in tourist meals
Growers planting similar types of produce (copycat syndrome) can result in a glut	Lack of sales for growers when there is a glut at the market
Planting for hobby	Production not geared towards sale. Growers may focus on growing only a few types of produce (their favourites) without thinking about the range of produce the market (tourism industry) needs
Niue's high reliance on imported food	Very little local produce will be used by cafés and restaurants for meal preparations.
No formal contract between growers and tourism operators on the supply of fixed quantity of local produce	Growers may have no incentive to grow for the tourism sector as there will be no guaranteed market for their produce
Inconvenient market opening times	Tourists, café and restaurant operators are not able to buy local produce and food from growers - produce may be sold by the time tourists or operators arrive at the market
Limited availability of fertile soil	Growers may not be able to meet all of the demand for local produce
Limited availability of water	Due to the dependence on rainwater, growers may not be able to meet all of the demand for local produce
Lack of technical agricultural skills	Growers will not have the capacity to increase their production to meet the demand for local produce
Lack of young population/shortage of skilled labour/population decline	Limited number of growers will be available on the island to grow local produce for sale
Loss of interest of youth in agriculture	No agriculture- and food-related experiences will be available
Lack of flexible loans, financial support, funds and incentives for growing produce for sale	Fewer locals will have the financial capacity to grow surplus produce for sale
High costs of imported agriculture tools and materials	Growers may not be able to afford the required farming tools to help increase their production
Petrol costs to travel to bush gardens	Growers may not have the motivation to have larger bush gardens away from their homes
Lack of facilities for growing and selling produce (e.g. shade house, pig and chicken pens and marketplace)	Growers may not be able to increase their current production capacity

Although the researcher feels that an estimate of 50% might seem a bit too optimistic given the constraints highlighted in Table 6.1, there is no doubt that there is potential for the agriculture sector to continue to incrementally improve the supply of local produce to the tourism industry from its current status. The fact that both the governments of Niue and New Zealand as well as local communities on the island are committed to nurturing the linkages between the two sectors is a promising sign. It is important to note that even a slight incremental improvement in the supply of local produce that is in season could significantly impact on the amount of supplemental income earned by the growers through the sale of their surplus produce to the tourism industry. Consequently even a slight improvement in the supply of local produce is a step in the right direction to nurturing the linkages between tourism and agriculture – a direction that the stakeholders from both tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue are moving towards in the long term.

The seasonality for growing local produce combined with the island's poor soil fertility and limited water for growing most vegetables and some fruit (as fruit trees grown in the wild and root crops planted in the bush garden do not need much water for survival) critically constrains the ability of the agriculture sector to meet the future demands of tourism if the industry was to expand to a large-scale activity. Due to dependence on rainwater, growers may not be able to supply local fruit and vegetables to the tourism sector if tourist numbers increased in the future. However, if growth is small scale and incremental, which seems the most likely scenario, then there is an opportunity for the supply of local produce to the tourism industry to grow over time. One grower highlighted that the government could initiate a soil-rejuvenation programme to improve fertility, and construct more water bores and tanks near bush gardens:

*Soil rejuvenation is one of the key factors that we should seriously look at for the future sustainability of the agricultural sector. The key factor is to sustain a good soil. Water is another key factor but with underground water resources and the bores in place to promote better agricultural systems. I think it is good to provide bores and tanks so that production is increased.*

This constraint of limited water is the reason behind the initiative of regional and international organisations (GEF, UNDP and SPREP, 2012) to enhance the storage

capacity of water reservoirs throughout Niue in order to provide an adequate supply of water for household and agricultural use. The governments of Niue and New Zealand are encouraging and supporting the building of water tanks as catchments to harvest rainwater and the introduction of drip irrigation because they see a critical need to assist the agriculture sector to improve its sustainability in the future.

If tourism remains a small-scale activity in the future, a direction that it appears to be taking, then the agriculture sector can clearly create some opportunities to nurture linkages incrementally, and over time, with the tourist industry. For example, one official from the agriculture department said that during the peak tourism season, growers can focus on establishing small backyard gardens of fruit and vegetables in order to meet at least some of the demand for local produce by the tourism industry. While the current fluctuation of visitor numbers throughout the year means that it may not be economically viable for the growers to move completely from subsistence and semi-commercial growing to commercial farming, the additional opportunities to supply tourists could lead to a mixed model of farming. This means that the agriculture sector does not have to dramatically shift from subsistence and semi-commercial growing to being commercially based but instead it could focus on supplying surplus produce to the tourism industry during the tourist season rather than just using subsistence farming to meet their household needs. In other words the tourism season provides growers the opportunity to sell whatever surplus produce they have managed to grow in their bush gardens, and then during the off-peak tourist period the growers can focus on maintaining their plots and using their yields for household purposes and village feasts. The fact that the types of root crops grown in the bush garden are not highly perishable commodities is also positive, as one grower highlighted:

*The produce from the bush garden like taro, plantain, kumara, yams and cassava does not have to be uprooted immediately once they are ready for eating as they can be left in the soil for a longer time ... for more than few weeks to months depending on the variety ... this means that we don't have to eat all the produce immediately as they can be used later ...*

However, the future of the bush gardens themselves remains uncertain because many of the growers are getting on in years but the youth of Niue have limited interest in agriculture; there is also a loss of young workers because of migration. If there are insufficient gardens to meet household needs, then there certainly will not be surplus

produce for the tourism section; nor will there be young people to provide agriculture-related experiences for the tourists. The challenge is to find ways that the broader population (including youth) can be encouraged to engage in backyard gardening and to build knowledge, skills and passion among the young generation.

The desire to nurture the linkages between tourism and agriculture may be coupled with an increasing concern for the environment among certain growers in Niue, as found in the Willing Workers on Organic Farms (WWOOF) scheme in New Zealand (WWOOF, 2012). The interviews with agriculture government officials show that Niue has already embarked on organic farming and the government anticipates encouraging more growers to become part of the initiative in order to reduce the use of chemicals and to practise sustainable farming. This means that growers in Niue might be able to have visiting volunteers provide some labour on bush gardens, including vegetable plots. The visiting volunteers, which could include returning Niueans as well as WWOOFers, would have the opportunity to experience the traditional organic methods of growing produce in Niue.

The lack of finance among growers to invest in expanding their bush gardens in order to meet tourism's demand for local produce is another factor that critically constrains the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue. The lack of flexible loans, financial support and incentives available for growers to provide for the tourism industry means that if visitor numbers were to grow rapidly in the future then the agriculture sector will greatly struggle to meet tourism demand. However, considering the direction that tourism is developing towards, i.e. a small-scale industry that continues to incrementally increase its linkages to agriculture over time, it is likely that if the growers persist, then they would be able to improve the supply of local produce to the tourist industry. As one grower noted:

*As long as the tourism industry remains small and tourist numbers do not go rapidly from what it is now then I feel that given the support from the Government, we, the growers, can work hard to supply some local produce to the tourism industry. If the number of tourists rose dramatically then it will be quite impossible for us to cater.*

The lack of formal contracts between growers and SMTE operators on the supply of a fixed quantity of local produce further constrains the development of long-term linkages between tourism and agriculture. This means that growers may lack the

incentive to grow for the tourism industry due to the lack of a guaranteed market for their produce. The lack of communication between the growers and SMTE operators on the types of fruit and vegetables required by the tourism industry means they work separately with no interaction between them. In other words, all the growers may plant similar varieties that they are familiar with but which are not the fruit or vegetables preferred by the tourists. This will result in a glut of surplus produce at the market, while the café and restaurant operators are still having to rely heavily on imported fruit and vegetables for use in meal preparations for tourists. Considering the small size of the private sector in Niue and the lack of networking skills among the growers, the onus will be on the agriculture and tourism departments to assist in facilitating collaboration between the growers and the SMTE operators. Seeing that tourism in Niue is developing into the direction of being a small-scale industry that is incrementally improving its linkages to local agriculture over time, then it is realistic to expect that collaborative efforts between the stakeholders from both the sectors could continue to evolve and be nurtured.

Limited facilities for growing local produce, especially shade houses for raising seedlings, may lead to a lack of consistent supply of fruit and vegetables as growers will struggle to increase their production capacity. This would be especially so if the tourist numbers were to increase dramatically, although that is unlikely to happen given the current focus of the tourism industry. It is important to note, therefore, some of the key initiatives by both the governments of Niue and New Zealand to support and build the capacity of the local agriculture sector so that it can incrementally improve its linkages to the tourism industry in the long term – a number of village-funded projects coming out of these initiatives have been highlighted in chapters 4 and 5.

With assistance from New Zealand, the Niuean government is helping growers to build small chicken and pig pens in order to increase local meat and egg production. As a result of this government initiative, at least two growers have started to breed pigs in order to sell the weaners to others who want to raise them. Another grower has started to provide fresh local eggs to cafés and restaurants located in the Alofi town centre.

The grower said:

*I am excited that I am the only egg and chicken supplier in Niue ... the café and restaurant operators are always eager to see me with fresh eggs every week. The demand for fresh eggs and chicken is way greater than what I am able to supply.*

In an attempt to boost local agriculture production, the governments of Niue and New Zealand have constructed a shade house for propagating native plants and crops and raising seedlings. Consequently the officials from the agriculture department are encouraging growers to use the seedlings to set up small fruit and vegetable plots in their backyard. It is hoped that these plots will nurture a healthy lifestyle as well as provide surpluses that can be sold to the tourism industry. In order to assist growers to sell their surplus produce, the governments of Niue and New Zealand continue to provide funding and building materials to maintain the current marketplace facility located in the town centre. The growers are starting to show motivation by using the facility to sell local produce and food twice a week. Such small-scale initiatives by the government to improve the facilities for growing and selling local agricultural products in Niue provides a glimmer of hope that the linkages between tourism and agriculture is being nurtured incrementally over time.

#### **6.1.1 The Way Forward for Consistent Supply of Local Produce**

All SMTE operators see a potential for growers to meet up to 50% of the demand for locally grown fruit and vegetables if they diversify their bush gardens. Tourism operators feel that growers need to better coordinate the growing of a range of produce among themselves instead of everyone growing the same few vegetables and competing for sales in an already small market economy:

*I think each grower should grow only one crop, like one person grows tomatoes and supplies it to the entire tourism sector as it helps the grower as they have a reliable outlet and no competition. It's better for that grower to focus on growing tomatoes throughout the year only and let the others focus on growing something else for selling. This gives employment to the growers.*

This suggestion may not seem very realistic but perhaps one could argue that if the agriculture department starts to create awareness and facilitate coordination among the growers, then the possibility of growing a range of produce without competing for

sales may not seem too unrealistic. The option for growing a wide range of local produce for tourism would be further achievable if the agriculture department starts to also network with the tourism department and SMTE operators, communicating with them about the types and amounts of fruit and vegetables they require, especially during the peak tourism season.

Tour operators feel that the supply of and demand for agricultural products and services will grow slowly over time, and this will result in the creation of networks between the tourism and agriculture sectors through entrepreneurial activities. One tour operator noted:

*I think it will happen via entrepreneurship and the market and networks will evolve gradually. Not until Niue starts to turn into a service provider — supply and demand out of necessity. Necessity is the mother of invention.*

The shop operators stated that over the years they have increased their range of products such as imported meat, fruits, vegetables and groceries; however, they are eager to purchase more local produce in the future because of increasing freight costs. All of the café and restaurant operators interviewed wanted to increase the use of local produce and to link that with continuous improvement of food quality, creation of new recipes, and coordination with locals to provide entertainment such as island music. A restaurant operator said:

*I'd like to learn how I can incorporate more local produce in meal preparations. I want to learn about traditional Niuean recipes and cooking styles so that I can incorporate them in my menus as I want to expand my restaurant in the future.*

A senior government official said that currently the promotion and profile of and demand for local produce is limited on Niue. Berno and Oliver's (2010) South Pacific recipe book *Me' a Kai* provides a good example of how the profile and demand of locally grown produce can contribute to gradually improving the linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors. Although Niue is not included in *Me' a Kai*, there was some interest expressed by the growers, SMTE operators and the government officials in the concept of gathering and presenting local recipes – perhaps Niue will feature in such books or other publications in the future. This interest in Niuean cuisine was the stimulus behind the Facebook page 'Niuean traditional foods and medicines'. Recently set up by a group of Niueans living overseas, the page is an attempt to share stories,

recipes and information about local Niuean food, especially between Niueans living in Niue and those living overseas. Although the Facebook page lacks detailed information on local food and recipes, it is at least a clear indication that the Niuean community is making an attempt to promote the cultural significance of Niue's cuisine and increase the profile of and demand for locally grown produce.

One SMTE operator commented that café and restaurant operators can use more locally grown produce in meal preparations in order to enhance its profile and provide tourists an opportunity to taste local dishes. The operator added that cafés and restaurants need to enhance their methods of local food presentation, such as the presentation of taro in different ways or dishes:

*We also need to be more creative with what we have and present — like potato comes in chips and mash and so we need to present taro in 100 different ways.*

Some of the SMTE operators interviewed were more radical (and unrealistic) in their suggestions. One operator feels that government officials could consider stopping the importation of vegetables during the growing season so that local production is given a boost and locals will have an incentive to grow.

Most (10 of the 12) government officials interviewed feel that the agriculture sector has the potential to increase its productive capacity to meet the needs of the tourism sector. This expansion, however, is dependent on the interest levels of individual growers; for example, full-time growers will have a greater interest in increasing production than will government workers who have bush gardens mainly for subsistence:

*Depends on the individual farmers of how much interest they show. If you are a full-time farmer, then only you look at it seriously and see how much money you can get from it but if you're working for the government and doing it part-time then you just grow for the family basically.*

One grower noted that in order for agriculture to meet the future demand of the tourism sector, growers need to explore sustainable growing methods such as multiple-, cover- and alley-cropping and crop rotation in conjunction with the most commonly used fallow-cropping practices.

Linkage creation between tourism and agriculture also depends on human skills and training (Keller, 2005). Government officials feel that they need to consider

methods and skills suitable for enhancing agricultural production so that the tourism sector can be reliably supplied with local produce. They feel that the effective use of a cropping calendar, technical and professional advice, good growing practices and experience will minimise the problems of seasonality of local produce:

*Seasonality — if people have a cropping calendar, follow good advice and good farming practices and have experience in farming then they can overcome the problem of seasonality and have most of the local food throughout the year.*

In order to provide ongoing agriculture-related training to growers and the local community, one government official from the agriculture department suggested that they can involve the New Zealand tourism and agriculture departments for technical assistance. The official noted:

*I feel that in the future the Niue government will seek help from the New Zealand agriculture and tourism departments especially for technical advice and training and capacity building ... this will be very useful to us to meet the needs of the tourism industry and boost our agriculture sector.*

The growers stated that they are often neglected by government officials when it comes to assistance in increasing production, improving sales and marketing of local products. A grower noted:

*They can input more funds into the agricultural sector, producing more fact sheet for produce, helping the growers with problems of soil fertility, pests and diseases and running workshops for management of vegetables and crop physiology. There is an extension service at the moment but they are doing only limited as due to lack of funds as they are not able to go out extensively to the growers and assist them with technical expertise.*

Although growers already have rich traditional agricultural knowledge, they lack the capacity to package this into tourism products and conduct related activities for tourists. All of the growers said that they need relevant advice and assistance from the government in order to start providing agriculture-related activities.

Keller (2005) stated the government needs to provide motivation and accessibility to major inputs, especially capital, in order to enable the agriculture sector to meet the demand for local produce and activities. All of the growers interviewed in Niue feel that the government needs to increase subsidies in order to reduce high agricultural production costs for seedlings and gardening materials:

*The government should be a catalyst to providing the right tools for people to use like machinery for mulching and breaking rocks so that the land can be easily mowed rather than slashing grass with hand. Provide garden hose and garden accessories like spades to help in gardening.*

SMTE operators and growers feel that the government officials need to assist growers in accessing soft loans and funds to increase their production. For example, government officials can help growers to understand and meet the complex bank policies and requirements needed to access funds for development. A grower said:

*Access to investment capital — at the moment there is still a lot of bureaucratic conditions we have to comply with — the bank has a million dollars for investment but you have to have many hard requirements to get a loan such as you need to have a certain amount of deposit. And that's the biggest stumbling block for all and I hope there is a review done on this.*

The growers feel that the future of the agriculture sector on Niue will be largely subsistence-based with surplus being sold locally. Most (20 out of the 29) growers anticipate that in the future they would like to diversify, grow a wider range of local produce and increase production, especially of fruits and vegetables, for sale to the tourism industry:

*Maybe I need to look at planting other vegetables, like cabbages instead of just taro and bananas. I think there is a demand for vegetables here. When you look around the market you hardly see any, so I think I will go into planting them and making some money. These are also very expensive at the shops and if I sell them here, it will be cheaper — because the ones in the shops are imported from overseas.*

For a successful future tourism sector, the operators and growers feel that the government needs to encourage local investments and provide entrepreneurial incentives for returning Niueans. The governments of Niue and New Zealand have already facilitated some key initiatives on the island that are targeted to nurture tourism's linkages to the local community including the agriculture sector. A key initiative includes the encouragement of organic farming, initiated by Niue Island Organic Farmers Association (NIOFA) and BioGrow NZ, to assist in the production of local produce. Growers have started becoming organically certified and are eager to supply organically grown vegetables to the tourism sector. Tourists' interests to see traditional and organic farming techniques and eat organic produce – borne out of the discussions with tourists on the island – imply that this initiative is timely.

Officials from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) feel that with the growth of tourism, young people will be able to see a value in growing produce and so will revive their interest in supplying the industry. The government can collaborate with other intergovernmental agencies to promote agriculture and enable the younger generation to earn a living from the sector. One official from the department of agriculture said:

*At present young people are discouraged and lack confidence to invest in the agriculture sector because they feel that they cannot earn a living from growing.*

Tourism can play a role in boosting the conservation of culture and traditional skills by providing the younger generation with an opportunity to earn a livelihood from the industry. The growers showed optimism and will continue to encourage the younger generation to show interest in the agriculture sector, and to return and become involved in the development of the island:

*I want all my grandchildren to improve the plantation. I want to build a greenhouse to prevent bugs. I hope my grandchildren will help me as they are already helping me and have their own little plantations, too. My grandchildren will continue growing when I no longer can. My grandchildren watch me grow and they will be able to continue as at the moment they help me plant.*

A willingness and desire to meet the demand for local food and agriculture-related experiences and to earn additional income from semi-commercial agriculture implies that the growers are an important stakeholder in nurturing the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue. For example, the initiatives made by one grower to create small-scale links to tourism by making jam from local fruits and trialling its sale to tourists at two shops located in the town centre should be noted; another example is the group of growers working with experts from Samoa to make locally pressed coconut oil and coconut-oil products for tourists in the near future. These examples of growers attempting to set up small cottage industries for tourism show that they are willing to work on nurturing the linkages between the two sectors.

## 6.2 The Supply of Tourism Experiences

The SMTE operators feel that tourists are eager to experience authentic Niuean food and culture, something that is borne out by the visitor survey conducted by the researcher. While this research has shown that there is considerable demand for food-related visitor experiences, the current paucity of tours and activities available to tourists prevents this latent demand from being met.

The limited number of tourism experiences available in Niue is the result of a number of constraining factors (see Table 6.2). A significant constraint is the reliance on MIRAB structures that has decreased the interest of local communities to make a livelihood and earn additional income from tourism. Many locals are seen to be somewhat complacent about their current lifestyle; they do not see a need for additional sources of income. Some SMTE operators (12 out of 34) and government officials (4 out of 12) interviewed feel that the island has become aid- and remittance-dependent, and the locals are not too eager to work in the tourism and agriculture sectors to earn a living. One official from the agriculture department said:

*The locals in Niue are happy with their lifestyle because they get remittances from their family members working in New Zealand or Australia. Many households have a few family members working for the government and their wages is sufficient for the household's daily expenses. Also all families have bush gardens to supply them with food crops.*

Morris-Tafatu et al. (2002, p.53), in a study of human resource development in Niue, used words such as “aid-dependence” and “desire for spoon-feeding” when describing the attitude of the local community towards earning additional income. The negative attitude of the locals, says Morris-Tafatu et al. (2002, p. 22), is due to their overreliance on MIRAB structures such as the salaries and wages of public sector workers paid for by the New Zealand government. These arguments are also borne from the interviews with growers, business owners and village councillors. A grower pointed out that the locals are pretty much satisfied with their current lifestyle and are not desperate to earn an income from selling local produce to the tourism industry:

*The people here are very happy with their everyday village life and everyone has food and money as you don't see anyone begging for money. So why should we be bothered to get involved in tourism and earn money?*

**Table 6. 2 Constraints that Hinder the Supply of Local Experiences for Tourism**

<b>What are these constraints?</b>	<b>How will they limit the linkages between tourism and agriculture, especially for relatively small numbers of community-based tourists (direction that the industry is developing towards)</b>
Lack of local participation due to dependence on aid and remittances	There will be a lack of local entrepreneurs, i.e. fewer local activities and experiences will be available for potential tourists
Lack of information on village show days and events	Visitors will miss out on local culture and village-related experiences. Villages will miss out on economic benefits of tourism
Lack of signposts and promotional materials on the island	Visitors will face difficulty in orienting themselves and becoming aware of what experiences are available on the island
Lack of local cuisine/meals at cafés and restaurants	Limited use of local produce in meal preparation. Growers will earn little from sales to the tourism industry
Irregular opening times of cafés and restaurants	Operators will miss out on sales. Meals available for tourists will be limited
Lack of maintenance of sea tracks and scenic and historic areas	Tourists will not be able to gain access to these areas and experience the local environment, lifestyle and culture.
Small private sector	Fewer tourism-related businesses and entrepreneurs will exist on the island
Lack of credit-card facility or eftpos machine	Tourists will not be able to easily get access to their money and therefore spend less on the island
Lack of village-based accommodation	Tourists will miss out on village-related experiences and villages will miss out on economic benefits from tourism
Lack of agriculture-, village-, cultural and food-related experiences	Tourism industry will not be closely linked to local economy, agriculture, food systems and communities – tourism benefits will not flow to locals
Fluctuating tourist numbers throughout the year	Businesses on the island will not be feasible or profitable to maintain all-year round
Lack of entrepreneurial skills	Fewer businesses will exist or remain successful in the future
Lack of training for setting up agri-tourism businesses, developing creative recipes and value-adding of agricultural produce	No agriculture- and food-related experiences will exist on the island
Lack of young population/shortage of skilled labour/population decline	Limited number of operators will be available on the island to provide tourism-related services for tourists
Lack of flexible loans, financial support, funds and incentives for investment	Fewer locals will have the financial capacity to set up tourism businesses

One-third (9) of the growers said that they were not eager to increase sales and promote their products to the tourism sector; they are content with their current income and do not see a need to increase their earnings:

*Niue is a place where people are pretty comfortable with their lifestyle as you don't see people sitting on the roadsides desperately wanting to see to tourists. People here are not too much hungry for money as everyone has access to land, own homes and grow their own food and really there is no urgency as everyone is well accommodated.*

The lack of entrepreneurial skills and capital for investment may mean the local community in Niue will be unable to meet the supply of tourism experiences in the future. If tourist numbers continue to fluctuate throughout the year, then the local community may continue to not participate in the industry due to the lack of economic viability of entrepreneurial activities. The already small size of the private sector will face challenges in providing tourism experiences in the future if Niue fails to retain its young population – the island needs to be able to provide its youth with opportunities to earn a living so that they don't have to migrate overseas in search of employment. Approximately one-half (10 out of 19) of the accommodation operators anticipate that they will maintain their current facility in the future, while an almost equal number (9 out of 19) plan to expand, i.e. build additional rooms, or increase their value by improving and/or adding more services. This means that there is potential for limited tourism growth and consequently the industry will remain small-scale in the future.

Another key constraint to growth is the air service. It is important to note that an airline will continue to service the island because the New Zealand government underwrites a weekly air link to Niue – but it is also highly unlikely that extra air services would be funded by New Zealand tax-payer money. This is yet another reason that a low/slow growth scenario is most likely for tourism in Niue.

Local experiences for tourists are also constrained by the very limited supply of village-based accommodation and formal village and agriculture-related experiences offered by the STEs on the island. If the opportunities to experience village, food and agriculture-related experiences, including show days, remain limited, then visitors will miss out on getting a 'sense of place' while in Niue and, also, the villages will miss out on the economic benefits of tourism. This means that the linkages between tourism and agriculture might remain weak in the future. However, it is important to note that this constraint is being addressed by recent initiatives of two village councils, with funding assistance from the New Zealand government and returning Niueans, to provide village-based accommodation and agriculture-related experiences for tourists. In 2011 one village (Lakepa) completed the renovation of an old school building and reopened it as a village-based accommodation for tourists, including returning Niueans, while a neighbouring village (Mutalau) started providing agriculture-related experiences through an 'island night' every Saturday'; the evening runs from 4 p.m. to

8 p.m. and visitors get an opportunity to experience Niuean cuisine, cultural stories and entertainment. It is clear that the villagers see the potential to make small-scale improvements in nurturing tourism's linkage to local agriculture. (For more details on these initiatives, see chapters 4 and 5.)

### **6.2.1 The Way Forward for the Supply of Tourism Experiences**

Local participation is important for developing small-scale indigenous tourism experiences and ensuring that development programmes for improving linkages with the agriculture sector are more likely to succeed (Timur and Getz, 2009; WTO, 2006; Key and Pillai, 2006; Mitchell and Hall, 2005, pp. 5–6; Kreag, 2001). Some operators stated that the locals lack entrepreneurial vision and the willingness to be innovative and to experiment with new business ideas. A foreign expatriate operator commented:

*There is no one here to seriously want to make a living out of tourism or agriculture as they just want to feed their families at the moment.*

Some operators feel that locals need to change their attitude from a comfortable 'spoon-fed' existence to earning their own living. For example:

*Huge potential but we tend not to think about it because we are very complacent but if we think of a bigger picture of how we can develop then that link has huge potential to develop. But our mentality is to think of ourselves and not what the others are doing. Like the Niue National Council of Women are most of time play bingo and the Tourism Office can't tell tourists exactly what time to go and see the crafts and they are not open regularly and when they do they play bingo.*

Nevertheless there are an increasing number of success stories, especially recent attempts made by returning Niueans to engage in small-scale tourism entrepreneurial activities – evidence that not everyone in Niue desires to be solely dependent on aid, remittances and public sector employment. According to these Niueans engaging in small-scale tourism entrepreneurship, they feel appreciated and a sense of value when they see that tourists are interested in their lifestyle, and this is borne out in the interviews (see section 5.2.3).

Many stakeholders felt that government should provide investment incentives to help to develop the tourism industry. The policies for business loans and funds need to be flexible for private sector development. A senior commercial bank official said that in the future they intend to standardise their interest rates to that of overseas

banks, encourage small personal loans, and have flexible criteria for locals applying for small loans. One problem faced by the bank is that since there is no insurance on the island for assets owned by individuals, the bank has to focus on profitable cash flows of SMTEs prior to loan approval.

The growers stated that both the tourism and agriculture sectors can be better linked and create more local benefits if the government initiates more community-based approaches for development. For example, the development of village-based tourism experiences will ensure that the economic benefits of the industry can be spread widely to local communities. Due to the small tourist numbers, the villages can network with each other and identify one activity per night for tourists on the island.

The interaction of tourists with local communities through village-based small-scale tourism experiences stimulates the agriculture sector and develops an appreciation of rural areas and their culture (Wearing and Neil, 2009, p. 125; Burnett, 2007; Mason and Milne, 2006). Thus village-based activities such as show days, Mutalau's fishing day and weekly 'island nights' play a critical role in stimulating the agriculture sector and allowing growers and villagers to earn additional income. Such village activities provide tourists, including returning Niueans, with the opportunity to taste local cuisine, see the types of local produce grown, listen to stories that shed light on the traditional methods of planting and maintaining bush gardens, and experience other facets of village lifestyle. Tourists who participate in these village-based experiences develop an understanding and appreciation of their surroundings and this, in turn, leads to increased visitor spending. As one visitor commented:

*The experience for me at the village show day was something that I had never had before ... I got to see the diversity of local food and handicrafts ... I even bought some food and handicrafts ... it was wonderful to speak to the locals and hear their stories of gathering food from the bush. This experience has made me realise the joy of local lifestyle and it has made me understand the way of life of Niueans ... have come to respect their way of life.*

One accommodation operator is eager to coordinate with other tourism businesses and locals in order to organise tourist packages for village-related activities:

*The future plan is to make this place more exclusive, don't want to get bigger but make it like a nice little tropical paradise. If tourists say that they like a pineapple they can just go down to the garden and pick one — it's a*

*dream. We are growing more fruits and vegetables — pineapples, bananas, passionfruits, avocado, mangoes, pawpaw and salad vegetables like tomatoes, cucumbers and capsicums. We are planning on having a bigger vegetable garden for tourists so that we can supply them as at the moment we can't really buy them all the time as the supply is not really good so we decided on producing them ourselves.*

A senior Hakupu villager said that by offering cultural, food and agriculture-based experiences for tourists, the young generation will become aware and appreciate local food; currently they prefer imported options. The senior Hakupu villager said:

*Agriculture is very important and it's about food and I think this is the problem because the people here love imported food and products and we have problems with health. If we go back to traditional food and try and give that to the tourists, locals would begin to understand that imported food is not the only way that we can have sustained life. So what are we going to show the tourists? — I think for us it is important that we have a natural product that we do not put [on] an act or try to pretend but show tourists, that our waste, food and ways of life are natural — go back to our original recipes and how we plant them without destroying our elements of the soil and that the traditional way is a better way of trying to keep the food wholesome because you don't destroy the land as it's our bank account.*

One restaurant operator successfully provides a local food buffet every Tuesday night. The restaurant operator uses mostly locally grown produce to prepare local dishes for tourists. The tourists who have gone to buffet evening are positive about the experience. Other examples of local experiences include round-the-island and bush-walk tours that allow tourists to appreciate Niuean culture as well as get a 'sense of place' (see chapter 5). Although there is still a lot to be done to foster the linkages between tourism and agriculture, these small-scale initiatives taken by the Niueans is a positive step in the right direction.

In order to meet the latent tourist demand for local village, food and agriculture-related experiences, the governments of Niuean and New Zealand are attempting to cooperate with growers, villages and SMTEs and show their commitment to developing a tourism industry that is closely linked to the local economy; they are doing this by initiating a number of projects that attempt to build the capacity of the two sectors. (See chapters 4 and 5 for a description of the initiatives that have either already started or are due to start in the near future.) For example, the New Zealand government has assisted villagers to preserve a large forest area and

initiatives are underway to develop small-scale tourist activities that are eco-friendly and related to village and agriculture-based experiences. A small step towards developing small-scale agriculture-related activities for tourists is the maintenance of basic infrastructure around the village, and to this extent the villagers have started to use New Zealand government funds to maintain sea tracks, scenic areas and historical sites which tourists can access. In order to build the capacity of the villagers to develop agriculture-related experiences for tourists, the Niuean government, with funding from New Zealand, has started working with the villagers to create awareness of the importance of managing land sustainably. The 'sustainable land management project' will in the near future provide locals, and especially youths, with the opportunity to practise and learn the traditional methods of farming and to develop technical agricultural skills. Such small-scale village projects show the enthusiasm of villages and the governments of Niue and New Zealand to incrementally build the capacity and raise the profile of agriculture so that the sector can have a chance to gradually improve its linkages to tourism (see also section 5.3.4).

### **6.3 Marketing of Agriculture- and Village-based Experiences**

The lack of linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue is further constrained by the lack of marketing focus, i.e. supply is not targeted to potential tourist demand. The constraints that hinder the relevant marketing of tourism include limited data on visitor demand and lack of up-to-date information on the major websites that promote tourism in Niue.

A critical constraint to the development of linkages between tourism and agriculture is the lack of understanding of the different types of visitors who visit Niue. In other words, visitors to Niue comprise those who are interested in food and agriculture-related activities and also those who may have little to no interest in these local experiences. This research has attempted to shed some light on understanding the characteristics and profile of visitors to Niue.

Conversations with tourists who identified themselves as of Niuean origin highlighted that their main purpose of travel to Niue was to visit friends and relatives (VFR); this meant that they would be eating a lot of local food and participating in village-related experiences including family reunions and feasts. In contrast, visitors

who identified themselves as non-Niuean had travelled to the island mainly for a holiday. The findings from the online survey show that about 13% of the visitors had identified themselves as of Niuean origin or heritage. This statistic is much lower than the 28% of the VFR segment reported by Statistics Niue in 2008 (Statistics Niue, 2010), but the lower percentage of Niueans is probably because the Pacific Island Forum was being held in Niue at the time of the survey, and this would have boosted the percentage of non-Niuean visitors travelling to the island.

The online survey shows that about 70% of the tourists to Niue said that they would have preferred to eat more local food; the other respondents said that eating more local food did not matter to them. In order to explore the potential for future visitor demand for village and agriculture-related experiences, the visitors were asked to rank their interest in undertaking a list of activities using a scale of 1 to 6 (where 1 is 'not at all interested' up to 6 being 'extremely interested'). It is interesting to note that the mean scores indicate that the visitors were 'interested' to 'very interested' in participating in a local village feast and in local food preparation activities in the future. The mean scores also revealed that the visitors had 'some interest' in undertaking farm visits. This means that the visitors who are not of Niuean origin are also interested in participating in local food and agriculture-related experiences during their stay in Niue (see chapters 4 and 5 for quotes from the interviews and survey).

Clear information on the different segments of visitors is helpful in understanding tourist demand and consequently identifying a relevant marketing focus, i.e. where supply is targeted to potential demand. For Niue, although there is a clear segment of visitors who are very interested in local agriculture-related experiences, there are others who may have little interest in these experiences. This is yet another reason why the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue will remain limited.

The current marketing by major websites that provide tourism information in Niue is not focused on demand. This means that tourism promotion and marketing will remain untargeted to tourist demand for local agriculture-related experiences. Tourists will not have a thorough knowledge on what activities are available on the island and how much money to bring with them, and this will lead to low yield per visitor. An official from the agriculture department noted that the major websites that provide

for tourist need to emphasis the cultural significance of food and the value locals place on village lifestyle, and to provide information on how tourists can experience this culture through agriculture-related tours.

### **6.3.1 The Way Forward for the Promotion of Local Experiences**

The government can focus on promotion in order to attract a regular flow of visitors throughout the year for sustainable tourism development. However, Niue has limited resources and therefore needs to invest carefully on a relevant marketing strategy appropriate for the small-scale tourism industry. The findings of this study suggest that marketing initiatives need to reach a niche market, i.e. those visitors, including returning Niueans, who have some interest in experiencing local village and agriculture-related activities. It can be argued that a way to try and counteract the seasonality of tourism to Niue is by focusing on a niche marketing strategy for the island, namely the development of local food, agriculture and culture/village-related experiences that appeal to visitors, including Niueans overseas. This could mean that even in the off-peak tourism season, there would be a reasonable number of visitors coming to Niue in order to participate in these local activities. For this marketing strategy to be successful, the internet would be the critical tool in reaching the ‘elusive tourist’ – someone who is interested in what Niue has to offer. This research reinforces that the Tourism Office website needs to be at the forefront of marketing local products. As one tour operator expressed:

*We are not promoting the industry well — we need a vibrant team in the Tourism Office as the Tourism Association should also be active as at the moment I think it is just a one-man band.*

The understanding of tourists’ behaviour, motivations, decision making and demands is a key to incrementally increasing the linkages between tourism and agriculture. The potential to influence tourists’ decision making is important in tourism planning, promotion and marketing because it has strong economic implications for the industry (Shaw and Williams, 2002, pp. 85–86). Research on tourists’ preferences is an integral part of a tourism strategic-planning process because knowing visitor needs and desires will enable destinations to better judge whether they can meet such expectations and how to blend consumer wishes with commercial objectives (Brown, 2009; Huang and Lee, 2009, p. 356; Ho et al., 2006). Unfortunately there is little such research on

understanding the characteristics of tourists, especially their food consumption and preferences (Henderson, 2009; Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007; Torres and Momsen, 2004) – something that is also prevalent in Pacific SIDS (Milne 2009a).

Websites (such as <http://www.niueisland.com>, <http://www.gov.nu> and <http://www.spto.org/spto/cms/destinations/niue/>) play a vital role in providing essential information about local food, agriculture and village-based experiences for tourists prior to travel. Therefore the administrators of these websites need to provide thorough, up-to-date tourist information such as the opportunities currently available for experiencing a wide range of local activities and interactions with local communities. Tourists need to be thoroughly informed of what the island has to offer so that they bring enough money and spend more during their visit to Niue. One accommodation owner suggested that the Tourism Office website can also have an online newsletter for current happenings on the island and be linked to sites of SMTE operators.

A lack of information negatively impacts on the ability of visitors to plan time and finances for engaging in village-based and agriculture-related experiences during their stay on the island (see, for example, Milne, 2009a, p. 28). Operators in Niue feel that a niche marketing strategy will maintain tourist numbers at a reasonable level throughout the year in order to maximise economic and social benefits.

An example of a small island in the Pacific that is involved in an online marketing strategy that is focused on enhancing tourism linkages to the surrounding economy is 'Eua, Tonga. Its website, [www.eua-island-tonga.com](http://www.eua-island-tonga.com), has been driven by the Ecotourism Association on the island of 'Eua and has benefitted from local technical expertise and an industry that can clearly see the vital need to enhance not just the tourist experience of their visit but also the local community experience of tourism (Milne 2009a).

[www.eua-island-tonga.com](http://www.eua-island-tonga.com) provides a good example of a locally focused and developed website which is rich in information on culture, environment and people, and which can stimulate demand for the linkages between tourism, food, handicrafts and broader village and cultural experiences. The website features pictures, video clips, stories and robust information on local experiences that tourists can participate in during their stay in 'Eua. The web pages can be shared on social networking sites

including Facebook and Twitter. [www.eua-island-tonga.com](http://www.eua-island-tonga.com) is also web-linked to the accommodation facilities available on the island. This case highlights the need for more local and regional web-based information that can dovetail with other sources of online information. Milne (2009a, p. 28) points out that the website is an important resource for potential visitors, especially those who are interested to learn about local culture:

*While there is still work to be done in developing more information on cultural activities on the site it is clear from my discussions with visitors that this was an important resource for them. The site developer has confirmed that the number one page in terms of hits (after the home page) is Tongan Culture.*

As noted earlier, the major tourism website in Niue (<http://www.niueisland.com>) was upgraded in 2011. It can be argued that the report prepared for the Government of Niue by NZTRI in 2009 has fuelled this attempt to provide more information on local experiences (NZTRI, 2009). Although there is still a lot of work to be done in developing more information on agriculture and village-related activities, the Niue Island Tourism Office has at least made an attempt to include more information, pictures and videos on the types of local experiences available on the island. The website has even provided tourists the opportunity to write blogs on their experiences in Niue (see Figure 6.1).

Nearly half ( $n = 16$ ) of the SMTE operators noted that in the future they would like to have their own website to promote tourism products and services, although another 14 SMTE operators said that they preferred to use the Niue Tourism website. Approximately half ( $n = 14$ ) of the growers noted that they would like to learn how to use ICT to gather information, promote and market their produce and activities to the tourism sector. The growers pointed out that the government should focus on teaching ICT skills to the young generation.

Recently primary and high school students in Niue have been given laptops as part of the 'one laptop per child programme' organised by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). The stakeholders feel that the exposure of students to ICT can pave the way forward for enhanced learning and give them the technical knowledge and skills required to assist development of the tourism sector. The school children are

given the opportunity to learn about ICT as a learning tool that can be very useful to setting up tourism-related businesses in the future. One senior education official said:

*We have approximately 500 kids at the primary and high school. For tourism — if there is accommodation set up in the village tourists can be booked and checked online and the families already have the machinery at home — have a laptop at home and it will be great for the kids to help the family — draw in the attention of their children to go into private sector for tourism development for Niue. Great learning experience for kids — via a family business they can offer assistance and they can set up their business plan. This is a learning tool but I see a whole host of usefulness of this laptop in the community and family. The laptops were given out in July 2008 for high schools kids and Aug 2008 for primary school kids. We had capacity building for teachers before laptops were given out to upskill the teachers and support staff.*

**Figure 6. 1 The Upgraded <http://www.niueisland.com> Web Page**



SMTE operators, growers and government officials noted that currently the potential of ICT cannot be fully maximised due to the lack of access and limitations in the technical knowledge of the stakeholders involved in the tourism and agriculture sectors, especially local communities and growers. Improved ICT education for tourism operators, including learning from their own children, was seen as important step in

gaining the technical knowledge and skills required to promote tourism products online and communicate with tourists.

Growers and government officials feel that growers should promote themselves more by selling at the market regularly, participating in village show days, advertising by word of mouth, and by maintaining a range of quality products for sale. One grower said that they should enhance their promotion by constructing signposts along the roadside in order to inform the tourism sector about their products and services. Government officials said that growers need to become involved in tourism and maximise their benefits by both providing for the industry and actively promoting themselves. Both growers and government officials felt there was value in engaging in internet promotions of their products and services through village-based websites but at this stage it is less of a priority than those approaches listed above.

Stakeholders can support each other by working together to gain synergies (Mitchell and Hall, 2005, p. 5). The SMTE operators said that the stakeholders of the two sectors need to promote each other; for example, accommodation operators can refer interested tourists to growers for bush-garden tours. Café and restaurant operators said that they can play an important role in the promotion of local products to tourists if they are given accurate information of the opportunities available, such as market days. One café operator said:

*I would love to promote the local experiences provided by growers and villages if I have information about these experiences. I can promote local experiences via word of mouth when I interact with tourists. I can also put up posters in my café about these experiences if only I have accurate information about them.*

Similarly one accommodation operator commented:

*If I have accurate information about the local experiences that growers and villages provide then I will gladly tell the tourists at my accommodation about them. I am happy to even put leaflets in tourists' rooms and also encourage them verbally about the local experiences.*

All the SMTE operators feel that the government needs to create more awareness and linkages among all the stakeholders of both sectors so that as the demand for local products and services increases, the stakeholders will be motivated to provide a consistent supply. One official from the agriculture department pointed out that the

accommodation operators should have an information pack for tourists on the types of local products and services available because this would help to link tourists to local communities:

*We need to create more awareness among all of us. If one opens a restaurant, then others have to provide supply. If we grow more taros then how will we use it — we can use it in a fiafia night. So we need to explain to the government and local communities of the benefits of tourism. We also need to have capacity building — to teach the locals how to make these local food for the visitors — can't be just one taro on a plate. We need to tell more stories about our food.*

#### **6.4 Lack of a Strategic Focus**

Some degree of government intervention is essential to develop the tourism industry in any nation (Hall, 2008, p. 164; Milne, 2009a; Shaw and Williams, 2004, p. 36). Active government involvement should be a manifestation of an organised, sustained and flexible approach to tourism planning that aims to achieve optimum social and economic benefits from the industry. The government should play a key role in developing a comprehensive and systematic plan of action for sustainable tourism development and for increasing its backward linkages with the agriculture sector (Aref et al., 2010; Milne, 2009a; Monypenny, 2008, p. 155; Government of Niue, 2008b; UNESCAP, 1999; Jenkins and Henry, 1982).

All the SMTE operators and growers pointed out the current lack of government intervention in stimulating collaboration and links between agriculture and tourism is due to the government officials' limited awareness of the linkage concept and also because there is no overarching strategy for the two sectors (see Table 6.3). One grower noted:

*I do not think that the government officials are really aware of the symbiotic relationship between tourism and agriculture. Or they are not sure how to create the linkages.*

An SMTE operator added:

*Government officials from both tourism and agriculture need to work together on projects and draw up a plan of action for growing the links between the two sectors.*

Prasad and Roy (2008, p. 170) pointed out that poor governance and corruption has seriously affected tourism, economic growth and foreign investment in Pacific SIDS. Morris-Tafatu et al. (2002, p. 53) highlighted that the Niuean government was prone to corruption, nepotism and favouritism practices in the past when New Zealand was more lenient and flexible with releasing funds allocated for the island. The lack of involvement of locals in the planning process prior to the start of government-initiated projects has meant that these projects failed to be sustainable in the long term and so failed to bring sustainable benefits to the community.

**Table 6. 3 Constraints that Hinder the Development of a Strategic Focus**

<b>Constraints</b>	<b>How they limit the linkages between tourism and agriculture,</b>
Lack of awareness of the government officials on how tourism and agriculture can benefit from each other	Agriculture sector will not know what products are demanded by the tourism sector and how they can participate in the industry and meet its demand. Tourism sector will not know what the agriculture sector can provide and if there is any help the agriculture sector needs to meet tourism demand
Lack of plan or policy framework for enhancing the links between tourism and agriculture	Agriculture and tourism government departments will operate separately with no mutual projects and synergies
Lack of collaboration and communication among stakeholders	Tourism and agriculture sectors will have minimal linkages and mutual benefits
Not maintaining basic tourism infrastructure – airline service and accommodation	Flow of tourists will be inconsistent throughout the year and local communities will not able to earn a regular income from tourism
Corruption in government	Nepotism, unfair distribution of project benefits and funds. Local communities may not be consulted in the planning and development phase of government-initiated projects and this will lead to their lack of sustainability in the future
Donor's red tape – stringent policies and criteria	Niue may encounter a longer time frame or not have the capacity to get funds approved for government-initiated projects
Legal land titling process	The lengthy process may lead to delays in setting up village-based accommodation for tourists

One grower mentioned:

*In the past government-initiated projects such as growing passionfruit and lime have failed because government did not thoroughly consult the local people at the start of the project. They chose their favourite locals when allocating resources and when the funding ended the project was no longer sustainable.*

One SMTE operator said the type of support they need from the government in order to achieve their future business goals includes good governance, fairness and no

favouritism or nepotism. SMTE owners feel that sometimes only a few people benefit from assistance given by the government because of unfair practices. One SMTE operator said:

*Just to be fair when government put tenders out. For example, when they bought the solar heaters and stoves they just gave it to one business and they didn't put tenders out — no advertisement. We didn't know about it until it was here. Lots of things happen behind back doors. We can voice it out but it gets too late or may be they think that we are too small anyway.*

The dominant feeling to emerge from these discussions in interviews with growers and SMTE operators is that the government needs to practise fairness and provide equal opportunities to all locals to participate in the development of the both sectors; for example, there should be no preference given to family members when distributing funds for setting up small-scale tourism enterprises or backyard gardens. An operator said:

*A number of agriculture projects only last as long as the funds last as when you come to the end of the project the investment in the project should have developed some form of sustenance but what I have seen is that with many projects just last as long as the donor funding lasts. So if the money runs out then that's it. The idea of these projects is to make them sustainable but this doesn't happen. The problem is poor management and lack of capacity of managers to manage properly and the people who are trained overseas don't return here and so we are left with semi-skilled and unskilled people trying to fill in the gap.*

One tourism official pointed out that the stringent policies and criteria enforced by donors before releasing funds for tourism or agriculture-based initiatives is often a deterrent to completing the project within a reasonable time frame. For example, the donors often release the funds in phases and this means that before more funds can be released for the next phase of the project, the Government of Niue is required to provide a detailed report on the project's progress and account for how the money has been utilised. Afterwards a representative from the donor agency may travel to Niue and verify the progress of the project. The tourism official added that sometimes the next phase of the projects is delayed because they spend a lot of time preparing the detailed report before submitting it to the donor. The lack of skills and suitably qualified people to carefully monitor the project phase and provide detailed feedback to the donor impedes the progress of the project. The tourism official commented:

*The donors should reduce this red tape so that the projects get completed quickly ... otherwise we waste so much time in the formalities and the project normally takes much longer to complete.*

Another impediment for tourism and agriculture development in Niue is the legal land-titling process. This is often time consuming because it requires permission from all family members – and in most cases while some are on the island, others are overseas. One official from the agriculture department highlighted that the legal land-titling process is a recent initiative by the Government of Niue; in the past land was customary/family-owned. The official added that sometimes the lengthy process of legal land-titling cause delays among families to set up small-scale entrepreneurial activities such as renovating vacant homes for tourist accommodation – another reason why tourism growth will remain slow and its linkages to local agriculture will be limited in the long term.

#### **6.4.1 The Way Forward for a Strategic Focus on Nurturing the Linkages between Tourism and Agriculture**

Collaboration between stakeholders of the tourism and agriculture sectors is critical in increasing linkages between them. SMTE operators feel that close networking of all the stakeholders will enhance support for each other and boost local production:

*Invite all of the stakeholders in a meeting and discuss how we can support each other and encourage the locals to increase production; for example, handicrafts which will be of great interest to the tourists. The business association like the Chamber of Commerce and fisheries and Growers Association should pull together and discuss how they can link among themselves.*

If the government were to focus on coordinating and blending its agriculture and tourism strategies, then this could result in more local products and experiences being developed to meet potential demands of tourists and so improve linkages between the two sectors. Senior officials said that currently the government is focusing on building tourist accommodation, while minimal attention is given to developing the support systems, including the agriculture sector, needed to sustainably develop future tourism activities:

*Need for better coordination between the two sectors. Right now government priority is building tourism sector by providing more*

*accommodation, tours and packages as it's just purely focusing on the physical characteristics of the place and they haven't looked at agriculture at all — the supporting systems that would support tourism if it was to increase.*

One government official said that the private sector and the government need to collaborate and develop tourist packages that include flights, accommodation, meals and a diversity of activities such as cultural, village-, agriculture- and nature-based activities; currently package deals consist only of flights and accommodation, with possible add-ons such as phone, insurance, airport transfers and car rentals:

*At the moment a tourism package is your air fares and accommodation. In future — may be a tour or meal here and there but another way could be airfare, accommodation, tours, and agricultural products — especially to cater for tourists that like to go out and cook — we can do things to suit tourist needs. Part of the package tour could be a tour to the agricultural farm — expand our experiences and activities. E.g. tours to research farm, vanilla farm, noni farm and plantations — you see how produce is grown, how it is processed, taste it and then buy it. Thrilling experience for tourists because they will remember it because they actually participated in the activity — how food is grown and processed and not just see the final product.*

Greater coordination between the stakeholders is also needed to ensure that tourism is sustainably developed, i.e. natural resources are sustained for present and future generations, benefits are distributed equally, and decision making is approached holistically and includes the local communities (Hall, 2008, p. 165; Page, 2000, p. 133; Jamal and Getz, 2000, pp. 159–160; Haywood, 2000, p. 168). The growers and tourism operators feel that the Tourism Office could form a working group from the stakeholder groups, i.e. with officials from DAFF and the Chamber of Commerce, SMTEs' and growers' associations, and village councils, to network, plan and implement stronger communication and understanding between the stakeholders. One SMTE operator suggested:

*The working group would meet regularly to discuss how the stakeholders can benefit from each other and strengthen the tourism industry's linkages to local communities. Both the sectors should be made aware that a symbiotic relationship exists between them, where one cannot function properly without the other.*

Participation of stakeholders in tourism planning will create awareness of the impact of the industry on the local community. In turn, increased awareness will contribute to creating fairer policies for democratic decision making and empowerment of locals. The involvement of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of sustainable tourism will ensure that they do not feel alienated and harbour opposition to its development (Tourism Alliance, 2007; Bramwell and Lane, 2000, p. 4).

Officials from DAFF said that the Tourism Office and SMTE operators need to communicate with them on the types of local products and activities demanded by the tourism sector so that both can negotiate with local growers to meet supply. These officials believe that DAFF can organise the growers into groups where each group supplies a specific produce to the tourism sector in order to minimise the competition that comes from Niue having a small customer base. One group of growers could concentrate on growing tomatoes and lettuces and another on taro and pawpaw to supply the tourism sector consistently throughout the year. Later, when the linkages between the SMTEs and growers are strong, DAFF can hand over the organisation to the growers' association or the private sector. An official said:

*It's just trying to facilitate and coordinate between SMTEs and growers. I see our direct support to growers with growing and our job is help bring the two together and practically we can go and see the tourism department or food outlets to see what quantities of local produce they want — to really avoid the growers trying to negotiate on their own as they may not have the capacity to do so. We can work as a group rather than having the growers compete with each other. We can pull out at a time when the links are established.*

Officials from DAFF also claimed that they can organise a group of growers to supply specific agriculture-related activities to meet the demand of the tourism sector. One official said the profile and awareness of growers needs to be raised so that the SMTE operators can develop linkages with them and the growers, in return, can have confidence that the tourism sector will purchase their products on a regular basis:

*The tourism sector needs to show that they want help from the growers — growers need to be confident that the tourism sector will buy their produce and the tourism sector needs to be confident that they will get their supply. Right now everyone is doing their own things separately but there needs to be a joint effort and we are here to help facilitate these types of meetings and association but first the tourism sector needs to come to the agriculture department as we are the channel to the growers.*

Economic development is a priority for the governments of Niue and New Zealand, and tourism is considered to play a central role in reducing the island nation's sole reliance on aid (NZAID, 2011). Therefore NZAID is aiming to boost the economic independence of Niue by supporting the development of sustainable tourism on the island:

*New Zealand is pleased to be contributing both expertise and infrastructure to support growth in this sector. Tourism benefits not just airlines and accommodation providers. There is real value and potential for the local community both in terms of employment and associated commercial opportunities in tourism services.*

(Government of New Zealand, 2011, p.1)

In 2006 the Government of New Zealand, in partnership with Australia, established an international trust fund for Niue; it is currently valued at more than NZ\$36 million (NZAID, 2009b). The purpose of this fund is to lessen Niue's dependence on external assistance to meet the demands of its core budget. Revenue from the fund is not expected to be drawn before 2014 and until then, contributions will be made from time to time by New Zealand and Australia to continue building the fund's resources (NZAID, 2009b). It can be argued that although currently there is no specific allocation of this fund, the past focus on small-scale community-based tourism development that is linked to the local economy suggests that this will continue to be emphasised in the future.

In 2010 New Zealand appointed a senior tourism development manager to manage the Niue Tourism Office and assist the island nation to identify opportunities for sustainable economic development. Some of the responsibilities of the newly established role involve enhancing the arrival and departure experiences of visitors at the Niue airport terminal building, which is currently being upgraded, expanding the island's resort, and developing local activities for tourists (PINA, 17 June 2010). A news article on the Niue Tourism Office website posted on 6 July 2011 provides information on how local communities are taking the initiative to provide cultural experiences through dance and music to arriving and departing visitors at the airport lounge on the island (<http://www.niueisland.com/content/song-and-dance-niue-airport>). The governments of Niue and New Zealand feel that the island's plentiful cultural talent is an integral element in developing local activities and experiences for tourists:

*There is a real sense of wanting to experience something different and Kiwis have always had a close affinity with nature and natural wonders, especially the family market who can combine an exceptional natural learning experience with a remarkable tropical island holiday.*

(PINA, 17 June 2010)

In 2011 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade reiterated New Zealand's commitment to working closely with the Niuean government, private sector and local community to help realise the island's potential for tourism (Government of New Zealand, 2011). The Government of New Zealand will invest more than NZ\$15 million over the next three years to strengthen economic development, particularly in tourism via the development of a tourism strategy designed to equip Niue with the essential infrastructure and management systems for a sustainable industry:

*Our support for tourism in Niue has already contributed to a new visitor's centre and the redevelopment of the Matavai Resort, assistance for private sector tourism operators, and support for reliable international air services.*

(Government of NZ, 2011)

The Government of New Zealand argues that their strong support for the development of small-scale tourism has resulted in a regular and economically important flow of visitors and revenue, with an estimated NZ\$1 million incremental increase into the local economy from the June 2010 to July 2011 period (Event Polynesia, 27 July, 2011).

In order to sustain the economic benefits of tourism in the long term, one tourism official stated that the public sector needs to ensure that locals are involved at the start of community-related projects and are included in decision-making processes because currently they are often only included in the final phases and then the project often fails. For example, all officials said the government needs to ensure that all development projects initiated in the future have an element of sustainability in them so that the projects continue without disruptions and the intended benefits do get to trickle down to the villages.

In recent years, New Zealand has become stricter with the monitoring of donor funding. The New Zealand government has put in place stringent policies and criteria for managing development projects on the island. Before the commencement of any government-funded project, the New Zealand government has to be thoroughly consulted by the Niuean government. The Niuean government has to submit a detailed

project proposal and follow-up reports that are carefully monitored by New Zealand, and funds are released in phases. New Zealand's primary support to Niue is in the form of budget support paid to the Niue government upon an agreed recurrent budget. The aid money given to the island nation is closely monitored by the Special Relations Unit, a combined team of NZAID development specialists and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade policy staff within the New Zealand government; Niue's financial records are also audited by Audit NZ (NZAID, 2007). The New Zealand government will continue to play a strong role in assisting Niue to increase its long-term viability:

*New Zealand is also the home to some 20,000 Niueans who retain a strong cultural connection with the island. Niue could fail as a viable community unless New Zealand continues to take an active role there. This would mean the loss forever of a unique culture and language. But in a sense a dependent state is not alive. Therefore it is important to focus on growth.*

(Government of New Zealand, 2004)

Government officials feel the public sector needs to formulate a plan or policy framework to incrementally improve the linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors (see, for example, Milne, 2009a; UNESCAP, 1999); this policy could encourage DAFF and the Tourism Office to work together on development projects.

One grower pointed out that the government should stipulate policies for sustainable tourism and agriculture development, i.e. how and what growth is appropriate for the island. Some government officials from the agriculture department feel that they should prepare a specific plan to encourage growers to meet the demands from the tourism sector for local produce, crafts and activities. The officials feel that they are the only ones with the manpower and resources to enforce policies aimed at increasing linkages between the two sectors:

*In terms of trade, government needs to develop policies that are conducive to increasing local production. The government should enforce policies that encourage the purchase of more local products rather than imported, like increasing duty on some imported things that can be produced here — just policies that makes local produce more attractive as we are still importing too much.*

Government officials, growers and SMTE operators feel the government must continue to ensure a reliable airline service and maintain tourism infrastructure in order to have a regular flow of tourists throughout the year. To this end, the government needs to

ensure that essential services such as water, power, roads and the airport are in working condition and that an acceptable quality is maintained in the tourism products and services, such as standards for rentals, tours and accommodation.

The government could determine the maximum number of tourists the island can cater for annually and enforce appropriate policies for sustainable development so that there is minimum pressure on the environment and on the culture of local communities. A grower commented:

*If there is more advertisement then more tourists will come in and production levels will increase as growers will want to produce for the local market and also the preference of the tourists like they don't want to eat apples when they come here but eat passionfruits and pawpaw.*

Growers feel the government needs to ensure that tourists respect the local culture and environment so that villages will support tourism development initiatives. Currently the South Pacific Travel website ([www.spto.org](http://www.spto.org)) has a responsible tourism code of behaviour for the region and Niue can adopt and emphasise it to potential tourists. A grower said:

*I think we need to increase the tourists numbers to a certain level but policies should be in place so that they respect the local culture, land, people and environment.*

Government officials, SMTE operators and growers feel that feedback from tourists will help to improve the products and services currently provided and ensure sustainable development of the tourism sector. The web survey is important for gathering feedback from tourists on their time spent on the island. The Tourism Office needs to ensure continuity of the online survey by informing tourists of the importance of their feedback for sustainable tourism development. Officials from the Tourism Office can network with SMTEs and villages to disseminate information about the survey to tourists via word of mouth and flyers. Tourists can also be made aware of the survey by airport and tourism officials as they depart from Niue. The ongoing survey should continue to be linked to the Tourism Office website and further promoted by other main tourism websites such as South Pacific Travel, the Government of Niue and SMTEs' sites. The tourist survey is also critical for lobbying government to assist with future research and development of the tourism industry. Thorough, up-to-date data on the profile of tourists over time will provide important information for future

planning of the industry – something that is critical for identifying how government funding can be utilised in the long term in order to build a yield-based tourism activity in Niue.

## **6.5 Overall Implications for Key Stakeholders**

The key stakeholders (SMTE operators, growers, government officials and village councils) have a major role to play if they are serious about nurturing and supporting the links between agriculture and tourism in Niue. The stakeholders are aware that there are constraints that limit the extent to which linkages can be developed between the tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue, and that both sectors will continue to be small scale even in the long term. However, they do not see this as a problem: they are willing to maintain the small-scale nature of tourism and agriculture, and are eager to cooperate with each other and nurture and support the two sectors in order to achieve further linkages between them. Nurturing and supporting any small emerging or possible linkages between tourism and agriculture will mean that Niue will be able to reduce its overwhelming dependence on foreign aid, welfare benefits, remittances and public sector employment. Perhaps, more importantly, it will also start to wean some people off the ‘handout mentality’ that has been observed by previous researchers (Morris-Tafatu et al., 2002, p. 22) and from the findings of this study.

Overall, the findings of this study show that tourism in Niue will continue to exist as a small-scale activity. Tourism will continue to revolve around a small-scale community-based activity which is continually nurturing and supporting, wherever possible, its links to the local economy, including the agriculture sector. Nurturing and supporting tourism’s links to the local economy means that the industry will be a little more closely embedded in the community and locals can increase their additional income from the industry, even if the increase is from a small initial base. The tourism industry can also give locals a reason and a mechanism to preserve their culture and traditional skills and feel a ‘sense of worth’. This is an important issue especially for Niueans who have returned to Niue after studying or working overseas, and this study has shown there is an increasing number of them engaging in small-scale tourism entrepreneurial activities. These Niueans are proud of their culture and identity and

they also are eager to lead a 'balanced life', i.e. engaging in both economic as well as everyday village lifestyle that involves participating in cultural activities.

According to Hall (2005b, p. 182), the strategies of some SMTEs may well be aimed as much towards maintaining the desired lifestyles of the owners as they are towards profit maximisation or growth-oriented strategies. Indeed, one returning Niuean commented that the economic activity that they desire to engage in is something that revolves around their everyday lifestyle and culture because this gives them flexibility to incorporate both business/work and daily village life:

*If I take tourists out on a small tour that showcases an aspect of my culture, e.g. taking them out to catch kalahimu (small crabs), then I will have the flexibility to determine the timing of this activity because these crabs come out at certain times of the evening or night. I always go out catching kalahimu with my children and I don't mind taking a few tourists with me ... as this way I can earn some money from the tourist tour as well as be able to catch kalahimu for my family. Since this is not a 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. job like I used to have in New Zealand, I have a greater flexibility to do what I want and when I want ... and I find it very exciting to be able to do this.*

The pride that these returning Niueans feel for their culture could be due to the fact that while they were away overseas they have come to realise the value and appreciation of their cultural heritage. As one returning Niuean expressed:

*I was away from Niue for 10 years as I was working in New Zealand. During this time I realised how much I missed my own people and lifestyle ... here in Niue it's so laid back and relaxing and stress free ... when I was in New Zealand was stressed out everyday going to work and making ends meet ... Niue for me is bliss.*

The researcher feels that the phenomenon of emerging cases of Niueans showing a desire to participate in tourism is a positive small-scale indication of the pathway that tourism is developing towards in the future and the potential for local participation in the industry. Although there is still a lot of work to be done in developing small-scale tourism products, it is clear that at least Niueans are beginning to show an eagerness to participate in the development of their tourist industry and nurture its linkages to their local lifestyle, which revolves very much around agriculture.

The opportunities for earning additional income from a small-scale tourism industry and stimulating the subsistence and semi-commercial agriculture sector are emergent in other smaller island nations in the Pacific. To this extent the small

backyard gardens are becoming increasingly important in the growing and supplying of some local fruit and vegetables to cafés and restaurants in smaller Pacific SIDS. The small existing and newly emerging links between tourism and local agriculture are making incremental improvements in the quality of people's lives in island nations (Taiwan Review, 2009). Examples of emerging success stories from the smaller Pacific SIDS include the 'home garden project' in Tuvalu and Kiribati and even Nauru. The 'home garden project' set up by the Taiwanese government as part of their active promotion of cooperative programmes with diplomatic allies in the Pacific has yielded mutual benefits (Taiwan Review, 2009).

In Tuvalu, the Taiwanese technical team has set up a 1.5-hectare demonstration farm that contains more than 30 different kinds of vegetables. The Taiwanese team has also taught locals how to cultivate arable crops to become self-sufficient and by 2009, 175 households had their own gardens (Taiwan Review, 2009). According to Milne (2010c), local schools are also beginning to cultivate their own gardens in an attempt to raise awareness and knowledge among the younger generation. About 50 people participate in annual competitions to see who can grow the biggest and best produce (Milne, 2010c). The Taiwanese technical team, in partnership with the agriculture department in Tuvalu, also run intensive training courses for locals on using locally grown fruit and vegetables in meal preparations. A greater opportunity has come from the 'home garden' initiative – to create links to tourism (Taiwan Review, 2009). No local food was used by tourism a few years ago but presently the use of locally grown produce by the industry has substantially increased. Milne (2010c) states:

*The supply of local produce has always been a critical problem for the Tuvalu tourism industry but in recent years there has been a considerable step forward courtesy of the Taiwanese-funded Home Garden Project.*

The local communities and the main project farm now produce a surplus which is then sold to the tourism accommodation operators and restaurants. Local produce is generally sold on Friday mornings but the surplus is often sufficient to also allow sales on other days of the week. The manager of the major tourism accommodation facility in Tuvalu (quoted in Milne, 2010c) pointed out that the home garden project is having a positive impact on stimulating local agriculture production:

*The home garden project has made a big difference to the hotel's ability to provide local produce for visitors. Local food now accounts for one-third of the food bill for the hotel—an increase from past years.*

The manager of the major tourism accommodation facility (quoted in Milne, 2010c) further states that the supply of locally grown fruit and vegetables has increased the satisfaction of visitors with the quality of local meals

*Guests like to have fresh fruit in the mornings and to be able to have local greens with their other meals. Sometimes the cost may be quite high for local produce, but it is worth it because we end up with more satisfied guests.*

Due to the emerging success of the home garden project, one of the key recommendations in the recent Tuvalu Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (Milne, 2010c) is to support linkages between tourism and agriculture. Clearly, the Government of Tuvalu feels that the home gardens have potential to create links between agriculture and tourism and is eager to continue to build on the significant progress made by the project.

On the island of Tarawa in Kiribati, the home garden project initiated by the Taiwanese technical team has gained similar success. Most importantly, due to the success of the home gardens the Government of Kiribati, in partnership with the Taiwanese technical team, is eager to expand the project to another island – Christmas Island –where tourism links to locally grown produce is very limited (Milne, 2010b).

Similarly, in Nauru the Taiwanese technicians have taught locals how to raise pigs and chickens, as previously most pork and chicken meat was imported. The technical team estimates that by 2013, the quantity of eggs produced by farmers in Nauru will satisfy local demand, which will also improve nutrition and reduce foreign-exchange outflows (Taiwan Review, 2009).

## **6.6 Summary and Theoretical Reflections**

The findings of this research show that the governments of Niue and New Zealand support development approaches that place a strategic focus on more sustainable forms of tourism and stress the need for greater community participation. To this extent, both the Niuean and New Zealand governments are committed to foster a

small-scale tourism industry with a high visitor yield through government-initiated projects targeted to help build the capacity of locals in Niue.

The Niuean government and New Zealand are eager to ensure the success of tourism development by providing relevant resources for small-scale activities such as village accommodation and experiences that are closely linked to the local economy and food system. However, the level of continued commitment and effort of all the stakeholders and the extent to which they will be able to minimise the constraints will determine the future sustainability of tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue.

### **6.6.1 Reflecting on MIRAB Structures**

Niue has a long history of family members leaving to work overseas and as a result remittances have become a vital component of the economy. Niue also receives one of the highest levels of per capita budgetary aid in the world (NZ AID, 2007; AUSAID, 2006; Milne, 1997, p. 298). Although often intended to bring about self-sufficiency, such aid in effect subsidises local living standards and is therefore more accurately described as rent income. Much of the aid given to Niue goes towards maintaining a large public sector workforce – with the island nation relying heavily on the bureaucracy for formal sector employment (AUSAID, 2006; Milne, 1997, p. 298).

Pacific SIDS may be able to sustain themselves on MIRAB structures, and often tend to treat tourism as an ‘economic bonus’ (WTO, 2006; Rao, 2002; Milne, 1992). In Niue, however, tourism is more than just an ‘economic bonus’: it is an important element of the local economy and it contributes to generating foreign exchange, jobs and additional income.

The findings of this research show that the heavy reliance of some locals in Niue on MIRAB structures has diminished interest in earning additional income from tourism. The loss of population, especially the youth and skilled labour force, through migration compound the barriers to the future sustainability of MIRAB structures in Niue (Brown and Connell, 2006, p. 17). As families reunite overseas and as migrants integrate into host communities, their ability and willingness to remit are expected to decline over time (Lee, 2006; Prasad, 2003). The amount of future aid flows from international donors such as from New Zealand to Niue is also predicted to be less

reliable (Ratha et al., 2008, p. 1; Shaw and Eversole, 2006, p. 1; Brown and Connell, 2006, p. 17; Milne, 2005).

The findings suggest that although MIRAB structures are critical for the survival of Niue, they also have the adverse effect of limiting some locals' efforts to earn a living, invest in entrepreneurial activities, and engage in savings and capital investments. Therefore the government's focus on attempting to stimulate the development of local economies such as agriculture and tourism to relieve Niue's sole dependence on foreign aid, public sector employment and remittances seems timely.

While there appears to be little reason to question Bertram and Watters' (1985) assertion that MIRAB will remain in place for some time to come, there is also limited evidence to show that island governments such as Niue are willing to accept the model as a prescription for future (in)action. Anxious to avoid such a dependent mind-set, Niue has turned to tourism as a source of foreign exchange and much-needed jobs.

Niueans who have returned to Niue after studying or working overseas play an important role in setting up small-scale tourism entrepreneurial activities – an emerging phenomenon evidenced by several success stories on the island. Indeed remittances play a role in allowing locals to invest in setting up small-scale tourism enterprises in Niue. One SMTE operator stated:

*My family members in New Zealand used to send me money often. I did not have much personal expenses so I managed to do some savings over time. Recently one of my relatives returned to the island and we then managed to set up my tourism enterprise.*

The MIRAB model struggles to come to terms with the returning locals who show signs of wanting to be less reliant on handouts and consequently attempt to earn additional income. Many Niueans who have returned to Niue after living overseas are eager to set up a small-scale entrepreneurial activity because they have been exposed to other cultures and ideologies. These returning Niueans have the enthusiasm and savings to start a business that can earn them a living without relying solely on MIRAB structures.

An important phenomenon among the Niueans who have returned to Niue is that they are not just focused on making money but also wish to foster an entrepreneurial activity that can revolve around their everyday lifestyle and improve

their well-being. Returning Niueans are eager to have a balanced life where they can engage in an economic activity while still leading a typical village lifestyle which involves participating in cultural and community activities such as show days and ear-piercing and hair-cutting ceremonies. Returning Niueans who have spent their time in New Zealand and Australia have an awareness of the types of experiences that tourists to Niue are eager to participate in during their stay on the island. One returning Niuean who has set up a small tourism enterprise stated:

*I was once a visitor in New Zealand and Australia and I had many friends there. I know what types of experiences people who come to Niue for a holiday want.*

Another interesting MIRAB-related dimension that has been overlooked in terms of tourism and economic-linkage development is the role of Niueans returning for holidays and family visits. When Niuean families living in New Zealand travel to the island for a holiday, they are eager to rediscover their family roots and cultural heritage and experience the village lifestyle, which includes to a large extent food and agriculture-related activities. Returning Niueans benefit from social networks with local residents and receive information about village events and family activities that they then use to plan when to travel to the island. Returning Niueans who travel to Niue for a holiday play a role in stimulating tourism activity and the industry's links to the local economy – a sign that migration is intimately intertwined with tourism and its future development on the island. Therefore, it can be argued that the migration dimension of MIRAB somewhat fails to consider the economic contribution of migrants returning for holidays and supporting local activities. This study has shown that migrants *do* assist in the sustainable development of the island's economies – something that is critical in nurturing tourism's linkage to agriculture.

### **6.6.2 Reflecting on the Regulatory Role of the Government**

Without active government intervention in Niue, tourism development will lack the cohesion and direction necessary to sustain itself over the long term and the industry on its own will not be able to coordinate with other economic sectors and national planning objectives (Connell, 2007; Telfer, 2005, p. 196; Brohman, 1996).

This research shows the important role played by the government as a key facilitator of initiating sustainable tourism development and nurturing its linkages to

local agriculture in Niue. The various small-scale village projects initiated by both the governments of Niue and New Zealand show their support and commitment to build the capacity of Niueans to nurture the linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors on the island. However, the critical role of government in tourism and agriculture development is not always being appreciated, and corruption and nepotism in the government can pose a potential barrier to successful development of the two sectors. As Britton (1987, p.130; 1981) has highlighted, corruption practices in the government can perhaps encourage the dominant ruling class of people in the centre to benefit over their periphery counterparts and give rise to dependent development. Alleged practices of nepotism when distributing farming materials and donor-funded benefits means would mean that not all locals have an equal chance to benefit from government initiatives. The local communities have continued to emphasise that prior to commencing any government projects, they need to be thoroughly consulted and effectively involved in the planning and decision-making process. Past cases of corruption in the government means that some of the local communities, especially the older villagers and growers, are no longer confident that the Niuean government will be fair and distribute donor-funded benefits equally.

In recent years New Zealand has put in place stringent policies when distributing, managing and monitoring development projects on the island. New Zealand continues to push the Government of Niue to alleviate corruption and is providing relevant resources to help Niue develop a small-scale sustainable tourism industry on the island that is linked to the local community and economy. The success of New Zealand's initiative to alleviate corruption in Niue will be one key factor in determining the success of future donor-funded projects and the sustainability of tourism in Niue. Although Niue will continue to depend on New Zealand aid and its subsidy of an airline service to the island, the additional income earned from tourism is anticipated to incrementally grow over time and make the island a little less dependent on New Zealand and other donors.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusions**

This chapter presents a synthesis of the findings of this study followed by the contributions of the research. The chapter reflects on the study findings and implications for Niue and other small islands elsewhere. Then the chapter stresses the methodological and theoretical contributions of this research. The chapter concludes with a research agenda and argues that research is needed to probe deeper into the intricacies that influence the development of linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue and other Pacific SIDS.

### **7.1 Summary of the Research Rationale and Key Objectives**

South Pacific SIDS including Niue face an immediate problem of creating employment opportunities, generating income and sustaining livelihoods (Prasad and Roy, 2008, p. 165; AUSAID, 2006). The tourism industry is considered by governments and donor agencies to be a key force in creating future economic development (Government of Niue, 2008a; Connell, 2007). The industry is seen as an attractive development option in part because, if well managed, it has the potential to generate income while also sustaining the cultural and natural resources of these small nations (Government of NZ, 2011; WTO, 2006; Milne, 2005, 1992).

The Government of Niue has turned to the tourism industry as a source of sustainable economic development (Government of Niue, 2008a, 2008b, 2007b; Brown and Connell, 2006, p. 17; Connell and Brown, 2005). The challenge for the government is how to manage the development of the tourism industry in such a way that it can be a lasting source of livelihood and not degrade the quality of life and natural and cultural resources upon which it depends (Government of New Zealand, 2011; AUSAID, 2006; Government of Niue, 2005).

One way to build the economic development potential of tourism is to link it more effectively to other sectors of the economy (Milne, 2010c, 2009a; Sims, 2009; Meyer, 2007; WTO, 2006). Research into the linkages between tourism and agriculture is imperative if we are to improve the distribution of tourism's benefits to both rural and urban populations, and to strengthen local food systems (Milne, 2010a; Torres and Momsen, 2004; Telfer and Wall, 1996).

**The key research question of this thesis is:**

What is the potential within Niue to create linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors?

**The supporting questions of the research specifically within Niue are:**

- What are the characteristics (i.e. size and structure) of the agriculture and tourism sectors?
- What are the existing linkages between tourism and agriculture?
- What are the constraints and facilitators for creating linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors?

The research also:

- Demonstrates the value of adopting a mixed-methods approach and involving multiple stakeholder perspectives in understanding the complex inter-connectedness between tourism and agriculture.
- Contributes to the literature on the linkages between tourism and agriculture, and on the economic development of SIDS, particularly in MIRAB economies.

This research uses the case of Niue to gain a deeper understanding of the current linkages between tourism and agriculture. The findings highlight themes and issues of relevance to other Pacific SIDS, especially in smaller island nations with MIRAB economies. Consequently the study contributes to the literature on tourism and agriculture and their role in improving economic growth. This study also provides methods that can be replicated for conducting tourism- and agriculture-related research in Pacific SIDS. The research tools used in this research provide an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of agriculture and tourism sectors in Niue.

## **7.2 Thesis Contributions: Niue**

The agriculture sector in Niue operates mainly at the subsistence level, and exports are relatively limited with a focus on taro and coconuts exported to New Zealand on an ad hoc basis. The majority of households grow root crops such as taro, yams, cassava and kumara and local greens including *polo*, *liku* and *sinapi* in their bush gardens. The food is grown for family consumption with the occasional sale of surplus to generate a small income. Pigs have an important cultural significance as they are kept for special feasts

and ceremonies, and most households keep a few pigs which are fed food scraps and coconuts. Currently the government is trying to encourage locals to grow more fruit and vegetables as part of a healthy diet and as a way of earning supplementary income. Producing surplus for sale will minimise imports and meet the demand for locally grown produce from the tourism sector.

The tourism sector is described by stakeholders as “small”. The industry is dominated by donor-assisted government investment in the island’s only resort hotel and a few small-scale operations run by locals. The online visitor survey and government statistics (Statistics Niue, 2007) show that New Zealanders make up the majority (72%) of arrivals to Niue. Visitors from outside New Zealand are mostly from Australia and other Pacific Islands. Approximately 13% of the visitors surveyed during the research period are of Niuean background. The majority of the visitors to Niue have a tertiary qualification and are high-income earners. The findings from the online survey and discussions with visitors show that a latent demand exists for local and unique experiences in Niue. In particular, returning Niueans are eager to show their children their roots and culture and visit extended family on the island. This research shows that the average expenditure per visitor per night is NZ\$92 and this is due in part to the limited availability of products and services for tourists to purchase or participate in. Currently the ability to experience local food and connect to village life and really begin to understand Niue is relatively limited for most visitors.

The most influential factors leading visitors to travel to Niue (in order of declining importance) are the island’s natural scenery, nature-based or marine-related activities, people, its climate, local culture, local food and cuisine, value for money and travel time. Tourists to Niue are generally eager to escape their hectic daily lifestyle and experience a slower pace of life while participating in nature-based activities. The elements of the visit providing the greatest satisfaction to tourists are the friendliness of locals, ability to experience the environment, sightseeing and watching nature, snorkelling and interactions with local people. Tourists’ evident interest in gaining a greater sense of Niue and its people is paralleled by their limited satisfaction with the range of and ability to access village and agricultural activities and local food. Slightly more than half of the visitors brought some canned food with them to Niue. The reasons for bringing canned food to Niue are the irregular opening times of the

relatively few cafés, restaurants and shops located around the island and the high cost of imported groceries. It is also important to note that for some visitors eating local food does not matter to them as they may want to eat only a bit of Niuean cuisine while relying mostly on their usual food from their country of residence – the findings from the online survey highlighted that about 30% of visitors said that eating more local food did not matter to them.

Nearly all the meals offered at cafés and restaurants are made from imported produce and largely consist of western-style fast-food dishes such as burgers, fish and chips, paninis and wraps; the visitors in Niue have little opportunity to experience local food during their stay on the island. The only opportunity for many is a weekly island buffet night provided by one restaurant operator. Nearly all of the visitors who had the opportunity to taste Niuean food stated that they enjoyed eating local cuisine and would have liked to eat more of it.

Similarly, agriculture-related, village, or food-based experiences are very rarely offered and are dependent on special requests made by tourists. It is important to note that visitors showed a strong interest in participating in village feasts, local food preparation and farm visits, if they were available.

It is clear that tourists have a positive and unique experience when visiting Niue. The average Niuean visitor is highly educated, relatively wealthy and very much interested in interactive experiences and in getting a real ‘sense of place’ while in Niue. This is the ideal visitor around which to build a yield-based sustainable tourism strategy – however, the potential opportunity to generate additional income and stimulate local economies is not necessarily exploited. The challenge is to ensure that the experiences and products on offer in Niue can meet these visitors’ desire for something unique and ‘local’ (NZTRI, 2009).

The research shows that visitors would be willing to spend more but they find it difficult to access products and experiences that they can purchase or participate in. Visitors stated that they would like to experience local culture and agriculture-related activities during their return holiday on the island. While there is potential to package and present the physical landscape to the visitor, what is missing at the moment is the cultural dimension and the related stories and local knowledge that provide a true

'sense of place' – these would encourage tourists to stay longer and spend more money.

The majority of the stakeholders from the tourism and agriculture sectors said that the linkages between the two sectors are minimal. Currently the main avenue for visitors to access local produce is through the market; however, due to its limited supply, the produce is normally all sold by 9 a.m. – when tourists are usually just arriving. The purchase of imported food by café and restaurant operators represents more than 90% of their total food costs. The most commonly used imported foods include meat, dairy products, fruits and vegetables. The SMTE operators prefer to purchase local produce, if available, due to its freshness and, generally, lower costs. And even during the off-season when locally grown produce can be more expensive than the imported products, many SMTE operators feel that they have a social responsibility to support local agriculture. The types of local produce that café and restaurant operators usually bought from growers include tomato, lettuce, cabbage, cucumber, capsicum, taro, banana, pawpaw, passionfruit and drinking coconut for use in meal preparations for tourists. The café and restaurant operators mentioned that when they visit the local marketplace they usually buy whatever local produce is available and then use it in meals so that visitors can taste local cuisine.

There are a few cases of emerging success stories of local food and agriculture-related experiences by SMTEs on Niue. These range from weekly food buffet nights and bush-walk tours, to village lifestyle and agriculture-related experiences. Returning Niueans are usually at the forefront of setting up small-scale tourism enterprises on the island, using their savings and the skills that they have gained from overseas. These returning Niueans display their desire to get back to their roots by setting up small enterprises that provide local experiences for tourists but that still allow the operators to spend time with extended family and participate in village activities – something that underpins their eagerness for a 'balanced Niuean life'.

Small-scale tourism developments such as well-managed village-based experiences create linkages to the local economy and increase local participation in the industry (Weaver, 2006, p. 43; Gladstone, 2005, p. 196; Scheyvens, 2002, p. 11). Recently initiatives have been made by villages to offer cultural experiences for tourists, including village-based accommodation. One village (Lakepa) has completed

the renovation of an old school building at the end of 2010 in order to provide village-based accommodation for tourists. The village-based accommodation will mainly be for returning Niueans who would like to spend their holiday in the village and participate in cultural activities. Villagers are also looking at providing village-based activities when the renovation and construction of the accommodation is complete. In particular, there will be a focus on providing local produce cooked in traditional ways.

While new and existing products can offer the opportunity to create linkages between tourism and agriculture and food in Niue, such developments cannot occur without effective dissemination of information to visitors. The surveyed tourists said they mainly relied on the internet and word of mouth for information when planning their trip to Niue. Other sources of information such as prior personal knowledge, travel books and guides, travel agents and television were less commonly used. More than two-thirds of visitors surveyed went to the [niueisland.com](http://niueisland.com) website prior to their travel. This site is the main source of tourism information about the island used on the web. Most of the visitors noted that the website is easy to find, a good source of information, and a useful tool for trip planning.

An audit in 2009 of the major websites that promote tourism in Niue ([www.niueisland.com](http://www.niueisland.com), [www.gov.nu](http://www.gov.nu) and [www.spto.org/spto/cms/destinations/niue/](http://www.spto.org/spto/cms/destinations/niue/)) showed that they contained very little information about local food and cuisine, or about village- or agriculture-based activities and experiences available for tourists. The lack of information about local activities and experiences on the major tourism websites that promote Niue means that key information is not imparted to the visitor prior to their arrival – something found in other destinations as well (Milne, 2009a; NZTRI, 2009).

Increased accessibility of ICT, especially the internet, enables SMTEs and local communities to communicate directly with potential tourists at relatively low cost, and this trend will only grow over time (Levinson and Milne, 2004; Soteriades et al., 2004; Milne et al., 2004, p. 185). Unfortunately, as with the three major websites, very few of the local Niuean business websites feature or discuss local food and related cultural experiences available for the visitor during their stay in Niue. In 2011 the major tourism website in Niue ([www.niueisland.com](http://www.niueisland.com)) was upgraded, possibly as a result of the 2009 NZTRI report prepared for the Government of Niue. While the site does now

provide more thorough and up-to-date tourist information than it did previously, there is still more work to be done in developing tourist information on local village and agriculture-related experiences in Niue.

Tourism products are most commonly promoted to visitors after their arrival on the island by word of mouth. In 2007 the local SMTEs started to produce a weekly newsletter to inform tourists on the activities available on the island that week. This newsletter still has potential to present more information about local food, village and agricultural activities. It is important to note that Berno and Oliver's (2010) South Pacific recipe book *Me' a Kai* is an exemplar of increasing awareness of the overall South Pacific cuisine in the marketplace and books like this nurture the linkages between tourism and agriculture in island nations. Although Niue is not featured in *Me' a Kai*, the stakeholders on the island are eager to gather and present local recipes in future publications. All the stakeholders in Niue are enthusiastic about also documenting stories related to local food and culture through podcasts in the future.

Several visitors highlighted the limited availability of suitable signage and brochures on the island as a critical issue. Information connects potential visitors with a tourism site via promotional and informational media; it also helps orient visitors to new sites and assists them in creating their own tourism experiences (Miyakuni and Stoep, 2006).

Researchers (Berno and Oliver, 2010, pp. 14–16; Sims, 2009; Milne and Mason, 2000; Telfer and Wall, 1996) have highlighted that the failure of a country's agriculture sector to consistently supply the tourism industry results in reduced multiplier effects and greater leakages. The most critical constraints that limit tourism's linkage to agriculture in Niue are the inconsistent supply and limited promotion of local produce and tourist products, and the non-existence of an overarching strategy for tourism and agriculture linkages. Currently agricultural produce is highly seasonal, the supply is irregular throughout the year, and no formal arrangements exist between the growers and SMTEs for the sale or purchase of local produce. Considering that the peak tourism seasons (June to September and December to January) coincide with the peak growing season for fruit and vegetables, then the agriculture sector could at least meet some of the demand for local produce. Furthermore, these linkages between tourism and agriculture can incrementally improve over time.

Local residents can increase the potential for greater involvement in the tourism industry by providing cultural and agriculture-related experiences for tourists (Weaver, 2006, p. 43). However, SMTE operators in Niue feel that locals lack interest in earning additional income from the tourism sector due to their dependence on “government handouts”. Niue is categorised by low levels of community involvement in tourism planning and development. Poor community understanding of tourism and limited mechanisms to engage local people in the tourism development process can lead to conflict at a later date (Milne, 2008a). The way forward for Niue is to encourage locals, especially returning Niueans, to set up small tourism enterprises in order to improve their participation in the industry.

The population decline and consequent small numbers of young people on the island further threaten the future sustainability of tourism and agriculture sectors. This means that fewer people will remain in Niue to either engage in semi-commercial agriculture or entrepreneurial activities for the tourism industry. The challenge is to find ways to encourage the broader population (including youth) to engage in backyard gardening or small-scale tourism entrepreneurial activities and consequently build skills and passion among the young generation. If the tourism industry continues in the direction that it is currently developing towards, that is to remain small-scale, then given the small tourist numbers, local communities in Niue will be able to at least meet part of the demand for local experiences and continue to nurture the linkages between tourism and agriculture.

The absence of a national strategic focus on nurturing the linkages between tourism and agriculture further constrains the development of linkages between the two sectors. Meyer (2007) and Bricker (2001, p. 248) feel that national tourism development plans need to be drawn up based on the assumption that the economic benefits of tourism will stimulate other sectors of the economy, in particular agriculture. The government is seen to be at the forefront of developing a strategy and policy framework for sustainable development of the tourism industry, including a focus on its linkages to the local agriculture sector (NZTRI, 2009; UNESCAP, 1999; Jenkins and Henry, 1982). For example, the government can develop a policy that enables the tourism and agriculture departments to work together on development

projects; such cooperation will, in turn, be more attractive to donors and potentially enhance their technical and financial assistance.

Chakravarty (2008, pp. 200–201) suggests the government needs to play a leadership role in assisting communities to develop local experiences and products for the tourism sector. The government and private sector in Niue are faced with a challenging task to develop sustainable tourism products and services. The government's goal is to attract a regular flow of visitors throughout the year and not just during the two peak tourism seasons; this will ensure a viable industry on the island that will provide incentives for local investment. In Niue, the government can assist and encourage growers to provide local produce and agriculture-related activities for the tourism industry. The department of agriculture is already encouraging growers to grow vegetables in small backyard gardens and plots by creating awareness of the benefits of incorporating vegetables in meal preparations and also of selling surpluses to the tourism industry. Agriculture officials often conduct workshops and provide technical advice and training on growing vegetables and sometimes distribute seedlings to growers to start their own gardens. Small-scale entrepreneurial activities such as backyard or bush gardens are important in supplying local produce to cafés and restaurants in an island nation with a small tourism industry.

Coordination and networking between stakeholders of the tourism and agriculture sectors will increase the chances that linkages between the two sectors are sustainably developed (Page, 2000, p. 133; Jamal and Getz, 2000, pp. 159–160; Haywood, 2000, p. 168). The dominant feeling to emerge from the interviews with growers and SMTE operators is that the government needs to facilitate communication and networking among the stakeholders of the two sectors. The Niue Tourism Office is seen as having a key role to play in initiating collaboration between the tourism and agriculture sectors. The government is the only body that can provide long-term planning, policy frameworks and management of local resources.

However, the government needs to avoid nepotism when distributing farming materials and donor-funded benefits to the locals. Poor governance and corruption has seriously affected tourism and economic development and investment in Pacific SIDS (Prasad and Roy, 2008, p. 170). Prior to commencing any government projects,

the local communities need to be thoroughly consulted and effectively involved in the planning and decision-making process (Telfer and Wall, 2000). The findings from this study suggest that there is no doubt that the Niuean government has an important role to play in improving collaboration among the stakeholders in tourism and agriculture and in nurturing the linkages between the two sectors. However, corrupt practices by officials in the past have led some growers and SMTE operators to doubt whether the government can effectively carry out its role in fostering a tourism industry that is linked to local agriculture.

In theory, having a regular airline service and the opportunity to develop new tourist experiences that can be carefully developed and managed, such as village- and agriculture-related activities, can potentially lay the foundation for a more economically beneficial and sustainable industry. In practice, though, it is the level of commitment and initiatives and the ability of the government and the local communities to overcome the constraints that limit tourism's linkage to the agriculture sector that will determine the future sustainability of the two sectors in Niue.

Connell (2007) and Milne (1992) noted that while tourism will continue to be an important source of additional income and employment for Niue, the nation will remain dependent on public sector employment and international aid flows for the foreseeable future. While this situation is unlikely to change, this thesis shows that tourism remains the single most important economic sector and source of employment after the public sector, and tourism will continue to be a key element in economic development and donor-aid policy.

The research presented in this thesis shows that currently the small-scale tourism industry in Niue has minimal links to the local economy, including the subsistence-focused agriculture sector. This study suggests that in the future tourism will continue to exist as a small-scale activity and its linkages to the local economy including agriculture will be limited due to its inability to completely overcome the given constraints. The future fluctuation in tourist numbers and the sole reliance on international aid flows, remittances and public sector employment, combined with the high migration rates and alleged practices of corruption in the government, will further challenge the development of linkages between tourism and agriculture.

However, in spite of these challenges, the way forward for tourism and agriculture in Niue is to focus on incrementally improving the linkages between the two sectors over time. The increasing levels of local participation in tourism through the cases of emerging success stories of tourism enterprises and the commitment of New Zealand to build the capacity of Niueans through various village-based projects suggest a way forward for nurturing the linkages between tourism and agriculture. The NZTRI report prepared for the Government of Niue in 2009 challenged the administrators of the Niue Tourism Office website to improve the online information on agriculture- and village-related experiences, and it is clear that the stakeholders are making an effort to develop tourist experiences that are linked to the local economy. Given that there is a latent tourist demand for local food and for village- and agriculture-related experiences, this is positive progress for the goal of enhancing linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue. It is accepted that in the future Niue's tourism sector will continue to revolve around small-scale community-based activities, and the key stakeholders, especially the Niuean government with push from New Zealand, will endeavour to nurture and support tourism's linkages to the local economy, especially the agriculture sector, in order to gradually increase the sector's yield.

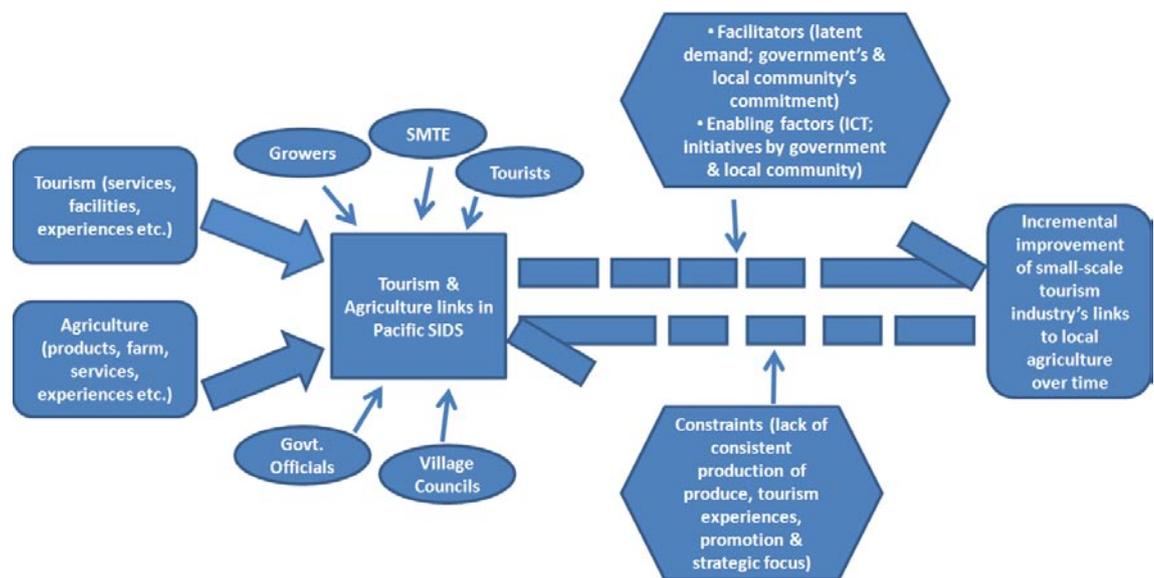
### **7.3 Contributions beyond Niue**

The lessons learned from the case of Niue have broader reverberations to all the nations in the South Pacific region. Pacific SIDS are struggling to nurture the linkages between tourism and agriculture and while context and resources bases differ, all are looking to find ways to better understand the links between the two sectors and how they might be nurtured – even if only in incremental steps. The case of Niue highlights critical issues that are of relevance to SIDS everywhere, and especially to the MIRAB-focused nations in the South Pacific.

A key lesson for other island nations in the region is that collaboration between the tourism and agriculture sectors is essential in order to nurture and support sustainable linkages between them (Hall, 2008, p. 166; Meyer, 2007; WTO, 2002, p. 37). In chapter 1 of this thesis the researcher proposed a conceptual framework for this study (see Figure 1.2). This research has attempted to explore the ways in which

each of the stakeholder groups mentioned in the conceptual framework interact with each other and their perspectives on the issues and factors surrounding the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue. As the field-work phase progressed and the researcher started to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in the linkage process between tourism and agriculture, the conceptual framework evolved to reflect the realities of tourism development in Niue (see Figure 7.1). The passion and initiative of key stakeholders are critical for facilitating tourism development and its links to the local economy.

**Figure 7. 1 ‘Evolved’ Conceptual Framework**



The evolved conceptual framework depicted here brings into focus the importance of communication and networking between stakeholders from both tourism and agriculture, as this facilitate the development of linkages between the two sectors. The evolved framework attempts to reflect the influence of stakeholders as the main facilitators of linkages between the two sectors through their commitment and initiatives.

An important factor in facilitating the linkage process is the latent tourist demand for local experiences relating to food, agriculture and village lifestyle. The research has also highlighted the importance of the internet in promoting and marketing tourism experiences in Niue. Without the commitment and initiative of the stakeholders from the tourism and agriculture sectors who are attempting to meet the potential demand, it is difficult to see how the linkages between the two sectors can

incrementally improve over time. The role of the governments of both Niue and New Zealand is critical in building the capacity of the local community in Niue to meet the latent demand and in maintaining tourism infrastructure on the island. The participation of local community in Niue, including growers, SMTE operators and village councils, in providing tourist activities that revolve around village and agriculture-related experiences is also important in facilitating the linkages between the two sectors.

Figure 7.1 also brings into focus the constraining factors that limit the development of linkages between tourism and agriculture. Constraints on the development of tourism and agriculture linkages include the inconsistent production of local produce and the limited supply of tourism experiences, especially village, food and agriculture-related activities. The lack of a marketing focus and an overarching strategy for nurturing the links between tourism and agriculture further compound the barriers to the linkage process.

The thesis has shown that the linkages between the two sectors will be limited. Key stakeholders will continue to focus on nurturing a small-scale tourism industry that is linked to local agriculture. To this extent this thesis suggests over time incremental improvements can be made in the linkages between tourism and the agriculture sector. This thesis has shown that tourism and agriculture linkages could be nurtured and supported in the long term, but only if all stakeholders – including the government, village councils, growers and SMTEs – cooperate in the endeavour and share a common interest in sustainability (see Figure 7.1).

The visitor survey supports the notion that agriculture should be seen as being more than simply a source of food: it has the potential to contribute positively to more general tourism experiences through landscapes, rural activities and general village life (Fleischer and Pizam, 1997; Telfer and Wall, 1996). Local food products are a particularly effective means of creating a sense (or an image) of a place because they can be linked to the kind of ‘traditional’ landscape and farming methods that tourists will ‘gaze’ upon during their holiday (Sims, 2009; Skuras et al., 2006; Canoves et al., 2004).

This research shows that local food appeals to tourists on a number of levels, from the simple demand for ‘typical’ food which can be purchased and consumed

occasionally as a symbol of place through to the complex and deep-seated quest for a more authentic sense of self. Therefore, visitors who are worried about the environmental consequences of modern agricultural practices or who are disillusioned with what they perceive to be the 'inauthentic' nature of modern life can choose to engage with 'local' food while on holiday as a way of restoring a more meaningful sense of connection between themselves as consumers and the people and places that produce their food (Sims, 2009). For these tourists, the fact that local products are equated with economically and socially sustainable behaviour acts as further attraction because it enables them to cast themselves in the role of the 'good' and 'responsible' tourists who care about the destinations they are visiting. The visitor research conducted as part of this thesis supports the literature that says it is the meaning behind food that many tourists are seeking and by harnessing this meaning through local produce on offer at particular destinations, sustainable initiatives can have a better chance of success (Sims, 2009; Canoves et al., 2004).

The thesis has stressed that it is critical that Niue and other SIDS looks for ways that this cultural dimension of its product can be strengthened, even if only in small ways. In so doing, there is real potential that linkages between tourism and the local economy will be nurtured and supported – with food and cultural experiences potentially connecting resident Niueans to the tourism industry in new and productive ways. The government is spending money on building tourist accommodation and infrastructure to attract a regular flow of visitors throughout the year for a viable industry. Any significant investment like this carries risk, but this risk can be minimised through the adoption of a marketing philosophy which emphasizes products related to the needs and interests of visitors (Cooper et al., 1998, p. 228) – products such as the agriculture-related and village-based experiences highlighted in this study.

Like Niue, MIRAB economies elsewhere in the Pacific will remain dependent on overseas aid, remittances and public sector employment for the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, tourism will also remain an important economic sector and source of additional income for these nations, and hence will continue to be a key element in their economic development, though the challenges to success will increase. The development of locally owned, small-scale agriculture-related experiences for tourists (Slee et al., 1997; Brohman, 1996), such as tours and samplings from backyard gardens

or broader village-based accommodation and experiences, has great potential to support and nurture the linkages between tourism and local agriculture (Telfer, 2000; Slee et al., 1997). This thesis supports the approach taken by the Government of Niue (2007b) in 'The Tourism Sustainable Development Strategy 2010' which anticipates developing village-based tours and activities for tourists in order to help create linkages between the industry and the local economy.

Gursoy et al. (2010), Milne (2010a), Scheyvens and Momsen (2008a; 2008b), WTO, (2006); Harrison, (2004); UNESCAP (2000) and Brohman (1996) point out that the development of small-scale locally owned enterprises also requires greater community participation in tourism planning and more attention to the cultural and environmental sustainability of tourism projects. Che et al. (2005) argue that small-scale growers who supply the tourism industry with local produce or agriculture-related activities and tours for tourists do not always see each other as competitors, and that they often practise collaboration and service-driven good will by referring tourists to other businesses that can satisfy their needs and purchasing items from their peers that they do not produce themselves.

The study supports the notion that when SMTEs use small-scale growers and suppliers, they are afforded an element of flexibility (NZTRI, 2009; Telfer and Wall, 2000). Small-scale growers are often willing to handle smaller and irregular orders from an SMTE. In other words, growers who plant vegetables such as tomatoes and lettuce in their small backyard gardens prefer to supply cafés and restaurants on an irregular basis – their supply being dependent on whether there are any surpluses. This means that the café and restaurant operators have to use a number of small-scale growers who sell fruit and vegetables at the local marketplace or make use of imported produce sold at the local shops located around the island. Small entrepreneurial activities such as backyard or bush gardens in an island nation with a small tourism industry are important in providing the farm-to-table experience for tourists, something that the visitor survey showed would appeal to visitors.

### **7.3.1 Contributions to Research Methodology**

This thesis illustrates that the adoption of a post-positivist paradigm can provide a holistic insight into the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue. Post-

positivism is valuable in an explorative study that requires intuition and participation and collaboration with key stakeholders to develop research tools that are culturally sensitive and meet the needs of Niueans. The model highlights the value of a bottom-up inductive approach to thoroughly explore the research objectives.

This research makes a distinct contribution in demonstrating the value of adopting a mixed-methods approach to better understand the linkages between tourism and agriculture. The complexities of inter-sectoral analysis and lack of prior data necessitates the use of a mixed-methods approach (Veal, 2006, p. 40; Greene et al., 2005, p. 274; Allan, 2002, p. 177). Such an approach enables the researcher to explore and build a 'picture' of the situation, rather than test a hypothesis (Ivankova and Creswell, 2009, p. 137; Creswell and Clark, 2007, p. 10; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2006, p. 39). The issues involved in the linkages between tourism and agriculture needed to be defined inductively and not by the researcher in advance.

This study has shown the feasibility and value of adopting a web survey to conduct visitor departure research in SIDS. A web survey is both cost-effective and enables data to be collected after the visitor has returned home, i.e. the visitor is not under pressure to fill out a survey in a departure lounge while waiting for their early-morning flight (NZTRI, 2009; Lewin, 2005, p. 219). The research has demonstrated that tourists are willing to share their email addresses in order to participate in the survey – in fact, visitors are interested in having their voice heard. It is important to note that thorough and up-to-date information on the profile of visitors who visit Pacific SIDS, including Niue, is essential if a successful strategy is to be developed for fostering the linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors.

This thesis has illustrated that the good response rate and the cost-effective nature of the web survey means that similar surveys could be conducted in the future to gain a better understanding of seasonal variations in tourist demand in island nations such as Niue. In a sense, a cost-effective 'barometer' can be created to study the evolving nature of the linkages in Pacific SIDS. The importance of the researcher's personal interaction with the tourists on the island, maximising their awareness of the research and how it would be used, should also be noted.

This research has demonstrated the value of using semi-structured interviews to conduct tourism-related research in Pacific SIDS. Such an approach enabled the

researcher to choose key issues to probe and discuss in detail with the stakeholders from the tourism and agriculture sectors, and so capture a rich depth of information on the complexities involved in the linkages between the two sectors (Richards, 2009, pp. 185–186; Luo and Wildemuth, 2009, p. 233). Conducting semi-structured interviews with multiple stakeholders allowed the researcher to explore various meaningful perspectives on the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue. The in-depth information gathered from the semi-structured interviews means that a similar approach could be used in the future to gain a deeper understanding of tourism and agriculture development in Pacific SIDS. The importance of carefully explaining the purpose of the study to the research participants, getting constant support from government officials and senior Niueans, and having a strong awareness of cultural intricacies when conducting research in the region should be noted. These attributes are important in overcoming the barriers related to the researcher's age and gender and the background of respondents.

Overall, this research has attempted to illustrate the value of ensuring that all the stakeholders in both the sectors participate in an in-depth study, either through semi-structured interviews or by online survey, in order to highlight the potential common ground between them. It is through the collaboration of multiple stakeholders in this study that the researcher managed to gain a meaningful insight into the complexities of inter-sectoral analysis, especially given the lack of data on the tourism and agriculture sectors and their linkage process in Pacific SIDS. Perhaps the most important contribution of this thesis is that it has highlighted that timely and robust research is essential if Niue is to truly measure and enhance tourism's ability to achieve the strategic objectives set for the sector and for the island's economy.

#### **7.4 Theoretical Contributions**

This research contributes to our theoretical understanding of the linkages that exist between tourism and agriculture in Pacific SIDS and how these linkages may be nurtured in situations where small-scale tourism is likely to continue to be the model followed and where resource constraints reduce any chance of rapid growth or development of the industry. The reviews of the three frameworks identified as being relevant to achieving this deeper understanding show that no one body of theory

could adequately explain the processes that have been observed. The MIRAB model, dependency theory and regulation theory can all be applied to the Niuean setting – but only with limited success in isolation. However, by combining some of their strengths and acknowledging some of their limitations, it is possible to gain new insights and understanding of tourism and agriculture linkages – something that is important as there has been a lack of theory about the linkage process.

#### **7.4.1 Reflections on the MIRAB Model**

Bertram and Watters (1985) clearly identified the MIRAB structures that are so vital to the survival of Niue and many other island nations in the region. Because Pacific SIDS' economies can largely sustain themselves on MIRAB structures, they often treat tourism as an 'economic bonus'. Yet tourism is already a vital additional component of many MIRAB economies and therefore must be incorporated into these dimensions. The study has shown the importance of aid in shaping tourism and the role of the local bureaucracy in facilitating – and hindering – the development of the tourist industry in Niue. MIRAB structures also appear to reduce passion for entrepreneurial activities and so may, to some degree, be stunting private sector development in Niue. Some locals, for example, are so comfortable in their lifestyle that they do not see a need to earn a living or invest in entrepreneurial activities.

This research suggests that although some elements of MIRAB-focused economic structures constrain tourism development, other elements have a positive effect. For example, the return of Niueans, either as migrants or tourists, is something that is enabling tourism development in Niue. Many new culturally focused activities come from returning Niueans eager to get back in touch with their roots: Niueans returning for holidays seek out food, culture and village or agriculture-related experiences and these then create opportunities for non-Niuean visitors in Niue. For example, the non-Niuean visitors also have an opportunity to participate in these local experiences through village activities such as show days, fishing days, traditional feasts including ear-piercing and hair-cutting ceremonies, and *fiafia* nights, which are mainly targeted for those Niueans returning for a holiday.

Returning Niuean visitors benefit from the social networks between local residents and Niueans living overseas. These village and church-focused networks are

alive with information about village events and activities, which are often tied to family. Niueans living overseas travel to Niue to rediscover their family roots and cultural heritage and experience the village lifestyle, which includes, to a large extent, food and agriculture-related activities. It can be argued that returning Niueans play a critical role in stimulating tourism activity and the industry's links to the local economy – a sign that migration is intimately intertwined with tourism and its future development on the island. The findings of this study, therefore, emphasise the importance of remittances and migration to tourism development on the island.

The focus of the governments of Niue and New Zealand is to stimulate the development of a high-yielding small tourist industry that is linked to the local economy, especially agriculture. This brings into perspective the critical role of both governments as an important enabling mechanism to assist in nurturing the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue. While there is continued uncertainty over what the future holds for Niue, this research suggests that the island nation has some ability to branch away from the path of sole dependence on unstable MIRAB structures by nurturing a small-scale tourist industry that revolves around local products – an industry that is itself nurtured by many of the MIRAB structures. All stakeholders are not willing to accept the MIRAB model as a prescription for future (in)action.

#### **7.4.2 Reflections on the Dependency Theory**

The dependency-related structures that have dictated Niue's links to the New Zealand economy are not predicted to change in the foreseeable future. But although Niue will continue to maintain some degree of dependency on New Zealand, this research shows that there are small ways that the situation can be changed. Success stories are emerging of locals setting up small tourism entrepreneurial activities on the island – signs of community participation in the industry and the locals' unwillingness to rely solely on MIRAB structures.

This study highlights some opportunities to break away from Britton's (1987, p. 130) prediction that tourism development in Pacific SIDS can only be achieved at the expense of environmental degradation and loss of culture. The broader applicability of many features of the dependency model to reflect the realities of tourism development in smaller Pacific SIDS such as Niue could be placed in doubt (Milne,

2006; Harrison, 2004). The findings of this research have shown that Niue has the potential to develop niche products that will contribute to sustainable development of the tourism industry and other sectors, including local agriculture, the environment and culture. An important aspect of developing niche tourism products is demand – and this research has highlighted that visitors to Niue are very keen to experience local activities and experiences. It is important to note that tourism development in Niue should remain at a scale that will not deplete resources – a development that is not an automatic movement to mass tourism but focuses on limited growth of the industry from the small number of tourists who visit the island. Fortunately both the governments of Niue and New Zealand and local communities on the island are eager to foster a small-scale tourism industry that provides a high visitor yield in the long-term. Contrary to the arguments of the dependency models, which are often obsessed with the dominance of multinational corporations and large-scale mass tourism, the tourist industry in Niue is likely to be sustained in a small-scale manner by MIRAB-type structures and also by the development of small-scale locally owned enterprises.

Another limitation of the dependency theory is the framework's obsession with the global system and its unwillingness to grapple with the local factors that influence development outcomes. This thesis has highlighted the importance of local control and the participation of communities in the development of their own economies. A bottom-up approach to the sustainable development of sectors such as tourism and agriculture on Niue, and other island nations in the region, will maximise economic benefits in the long term. The tourism industry provides an opportunity for the stakeholders on Niue to develop local products and services such as locally grown produce and cuisine and agriculture-related and village-based experiences in order to sustain their income, instead of relying solely on foreign capital and investment and overseas imports.

The work of Britton (1987, p. 130) provides important insights into the distribution of tourism benefits within Pacific SIDS and the way in which tourist demand is shaped by global marketing campaigns and limited distribution chains. The advent of the internet has removed some of the distribution-channel constraints highlighted by NZTRI (2007) and Levinson and Milne (2004), but this research has shown that the potential of the internet to link tourism more effectively to local

economic development is not always being realised. The Government of Niue and the donor agencies that support it have adopted development approaches that place a strategic focus on more sustainable forms of tourism. Policy-makers are embracing concepts of ecotourism, pro-poor tourism and 'green' tourism, with the emphasis on creating a tourism industry that brings more benefit to communities, sustains the environment and indigenous culture, and does not degrade local quality of life (Milne, 2010a).

#### **7.4.3 Reflections on the Regulation Theory and the Emergence of New Tourism**

The thesis shows that regulation theory and its application to tourism (Poon, 1993, p. 121) provides important insights into the linkages between tourism and economic development in Niue. However, regulation theory struggles to come to terms with the small size, isolation and the rather unusual structure of Pacific SIDS economies.

This research shows a latent tourist demand for local agriculture- and village-related experiences that are currently limited in supply. It can be argued that the strong interest in cultural experiences, including agriculture- and village-based activities, reflect the rise of the post-Fordist or 'new' tourists. The growing fragmentation of demand and the increasing desire for niche tourism experiences, combined with the rise of internet-based marketing platforms, opens up new opportunities for small islands in the region to tap into tourism.

Mowforth and Munt (2009, p. 26), Soteriades et al. (2004), Williams (2004, p. 69) and Poon (1993, p. 121) have all suggested that the shift from mass to alternative tourism means tourists are becoming more involved in the trip-planning process. This study supports Milne's (2009a) and Poon's (1993, p. 121) argument that local entrepreneurs need to use ICT to create awareness and market their alternative tourism products in order to disseminate appropriate information to potential tourists. A strategic marketing approach involving the adoption of ICT and the provision of regularly updated information on local activities and experiences on the websites of local entrepreneurs will enable Niue to target potential visitors.

Although the internet has removed some of the distribution-channel barriers associated with remoteness, this research has shown that ICT can be a double-edged sword and consequently the challenges of dependent development are not completely

dissipated. Indeed it is not easy for small nations in the Pacific such as Niue to reach the potential tourist. Limited marketing budgets, a wide array of competitors, and an increasingly experienced and 'picky' consumer make it difficult to create and sustain a profitable industry (Levinson and Milne, 2004). Even if Niue is successful in catching the attention of the potential tourist, the challenge that remains for the island nation is that of increasing the economic spend and yield associated with the industry. According to Britton (1987, p. 130; 1981), Milne (2009a) and Levinson and Milne (2004), tourist behaviour and attitudes are shaped by marketing campaigns, branding and the almost osmotic process of receiving information from the media and the broader world. Traditionally, visitors have been steered towards operations with large marketing budgets and the ability to link into global package structures. Consequently, many small local businesses are excluded from core areas of the tourism industry.

According to Levinson and Milne (2004), there is only so much that can be done to minimise the difficulties associated with the small size, isolation and limited budgets characteristic of island nations in the region. While the internet can and will enhance the ability of small destinations that do not have large foreign operations to catch the attention of the browsing tourist, it is not yet apparent whether the technology will improve Niue's access to the potential visitor. This study shows that there is still a lot of ICT presence that does not support tourism and agriculture linkage formation; instead it reinforces the status quo. ICT can potentially reinforce the types of dependency structures highlighted by Britton (1981), especially when there is a lack of local websites providing thorough, up-to-date tourist information that link potential visitors to the surrounding economy. However, this research also shows a concrete example of how tourism's linkage to the local economy, including the agriculture sector, can be built through the innovative use of ICT.

An audit of major tourist websites showed that the tourism sector on Niue is constrained by the current marketing focus and content: niche products related to cultural, village-based and agriculture-related experiences are virtually non-existent. This study highlights the importance of reviewing the online content that provides information to tourists prior to their travel to Niue. ICT is an enabler for nurturing and supporting linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors: by providing more information to visitors about what local food and agriculture-related experiences are

available on Niue, there is an opportunity to enhance the visitors' experience, their 'sense of place' and also increase their expenditure. Clearly, Niue faces the critical challenge of fine-tuning tourism products and marketing strategies to meet the changing needs of the 'new' tourists' while at the same time fostering a sustainable tourist industry.

Regulation theory also focuses our attention on the need to understand the regulatory environment within which stakeholders operate. The governments of both Niue and New Zealand are showing their commitment to support and nurture a high-yielding small-scale tourist industry through various government-initiated projects aimed at building the capacity of local communities on the island. Due to past experiences of corruption in Niue, the Government of New Zealand continues to push Niue to alleviate corruption and it has become stricter with distributing and monitoring donor-funded initiatives. The degree to which the governments of Niue and New Zealand will be able to facilitate the small existing and newly emerging links between tourism and the local economy, including agriculture, will determine the level of linkage between the two sectors.

This study shows the importance of collaboration and networking between the stakeholders if they are to nurture the small-scale linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors in the long term. It is especially important for the small tourism and agriculture government departments in Niue to collaborate with each other on community-based projects in order to foster linkages between the two sectors. Regulation theory also focuses our attention on the need to emphasise the importance of networking and collaboration between SMTEs in Niue to ensure competitiveness. However, currently the websites of SMTE operators mainly focus on providing information on their product and have few web links to other SMTEs and the main tourist websites in Niue. It is critical for the SMTEs in Niue to network with each other and create web links to each other's sites in order to incrementally improve the overall competitiveness of the small-scale tourism industry over time.

## **7.5 Research Agenda**

Further research is needed to probe deeper into the issues that facilitate and constrain the development of linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue. There

are a number of areas that could not be addressed in this thesis due to time and other constraints. The researcher will now attempt to highlight some issues that can be explored in future research.

It is important to note the absence of a gender component in the studies that have attempted to comprehend the linkage process (Singh et al., 2011; Brohman, 1996). There are women producers, retailers and entrepreneurs, and although this study has not addressed the role of women in the linkage process, it is an area for future development of the data. The researcher suggests that a gender perspective needs to be integrated into future studies on tourism and agriculture linkages in Pacific SIDS. A greater recognition of women's role in the linkage process will contribute to the overall value of the tourist experience, with a considerable impact on profitability and quality across all aspects of the industry (Singh et al., 2011). With women comprising 41% of the growers on Niue (12 of the 29 growers interviewed), their role in the linkage process cannot be overlooked. Research can be more gender specific in terms of exploring the role of women in the linkages between the two sectors in island nations. If there is to be a revitalisation of domestic agriculture then women must be explicitly included in the process.

Detailed research is needed to analyse tourism–agriculture linkage forms and their elasticity and potential in order to determine how strongly the links between them can be forged. An increased awareness of the role that growers play in the tourism experience flows from an understanding of the interconnected relationship between agriculture and tourism and from the commercial relationships that emerge in the economy (Knowd, 2006). Future research could focus on the business-development needs of SMTEs.

Detailed research is required to identify a programme for human resource development that meets the training needs of the local population. Appropriate training of local communities so they can meet the demand for agriculture-related activities and experiences for potential tourists will assist in improving the linkages between the two sectors. Further research can look at examining the current school curriculum in Niue in terms of how to attract the young generation to participate in the tourism industry and meet potential demand for agriculture-related experiences. Building the capacity of the young generation to meet the demands of the tourism

industry will in turn boost the profile of the agriculture sector because the young people will be motivated to provide agriculture-related experiences for tourists and earn a significant income. Further research is also needed to assess the capacity of local growers to meet the demands of the tourism industry, such as their potential to supply locally grown produce and offer agriculture-related experiences.

One way to improve the benefits of tourism is to expand economic linkages by increasing the amount of local food used in the industry (Berno and Oliver, 2010, p. 16; Berno as cited in Veit, 2009, p. 23; Berno as cited in Young and Vinning, 2007, pp. 41, 43). Understanding tourist consumption patterns is critical to the analysis of tourism and agriculture linkages. Research is required to identify and develop creative methods for incorporating local produce into the meals offered to tourists. Detailed interviews are required with the relevant stakeholders to develop these niche products and ensure their viability in the tourism sector. Research is important in identifying how tourism can help local communities value and appreciate their culture, history, environment and traditions, and ensure that these are preserved and passed on to the next generation. The researcher feels that although the findings of this study show the economic opportunities provided by the 'new tourist', more research is required to better understand the nature and potential impacts of alternative tourism development in Niue and other island nations in the region.

The research has also highlighted the importance of tourism industry involvement in publicising the online surveys and collecting email addresses from guests. A challenge now is to ensure that effective ways are found to 'harvest' emails and to keep the profile of the survey high when needed. Constant support from the government and local community leaders can maximise tourists' participation and pave the way for stakeholders to share their knowledge. The difficulties of applying a mixed-methods approach can be further minimised through the researcher's strong personal experience and awareness of social and cultural intricacies when conducting research in that particular community.

In exploring the potential to create links between tourism and agriculture in Niue, this research has examined the complexities involved in the linkage process. The study brings into focus the struggles faced by a variety of stakeholders in nurturing the linkages between the two sectors. It is important to note that in spite of the struggles,

the stakeholders are showing increasing levels of commitment and initiatives to facilitate the linkage processes that will foster a yield-based tourism industry as well as boost the sustainability of the agriculture sector. Due to the lack of research on the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Pacific SIDS, the researcher attempted to integrate relevant theoretical approaches to gain an understanding of the realities of the industry's development in Niue – something that has been a challenging achievement. This research has also provided a methodological approach that is relevant to conduct research on an island in the Pacific, especially in gaining a deeper understanding of the intricacies involved in sustaining their macro-economies. Perhaps the most important contribution of this thesis is that it has highlighted that timely and robust research is critical for Niue and other Pacific SIDS if these nations are serious about measuring and enhancing tourism's ability to achieve the strategic objectives set for the sector.

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## **Appendix 1: SMTE Semi-Structured Interview Guide**

### ***Owner's/manager's background***

#### **Question 1**

Please tell me about yourself (experience, prior employment)

#### **Question 2**

What is your role/position in the business?

#### **Question 3**

What financial or industry advice did you received prior to setting up your business?

#### **Question 4**

What level of education and tourism related training have you received?

### ***Business background***

#### **Question 5**

How would you describe the characteristics of your business (type of business, size, age, ownership and management, etc.)?

#### **Question 6**

Please tell me how you make decisions concerning your business?

#### **Question 7**

Please tell me the characteristics of your workers (full & part time workers, role, etc) and the role of your family members with business activities?

#### **Question 8**

What licences and approvals and industry involvement did you have to get before you could start your business?

#### **Question 9**

To help understand the impact of your business on the local economy, please tell me the business's approximate annual gross revenue and what percentage is used for salaries/wages and the running of the business (rent, rent, power, water, etc. excluding food purchases).

### ***Market Characteristics***

#### **Question 10**

Please tell me the approximate number of tourists you feel your business has provided service for in the last week/month/year?

**Question 11**

What market research did you do before setting up your business and how it evolved over time?

**Question 12**

Please describe the tourism products and experiences that you currently provide for tourists (specific market, tours, food, accommodation, activities, etc.). What makes you provide these services?

**Question 13**

Please describe any agriculture-related tourist activity provided by your business.

**Question 14**

What, if any, agricultural produce do you use in your business?

**Question 15**

What are your thoughts on the costs and quality of tourism products and services you currently provide for tourists (buyer characteristics, selling price, quality, etc.)?

**Question 16**

Is your tourism operation seasonal? Please describe the high and low periods of your tourism products and services throughout the year (peak, off peak demand, etc.).

***Agricultural purchases*****Question 17**

What are your major sources of food supply (number of suppliers and types - wholesalers, small local suppliers, middlemen, supermarkets, farmers, local market, etc.)?

**Question 18**

Please describe the high and low periods of purchasing local/imported produce throughout the year. (tourist numbers vs. expenditure on local & imported produce).

**Question 19**

What local agricultural produce do you purchase (types, approx. quantity, cost, % of total expenses, etc.)?

**Question 20**

Please describe the reasons why you purchase local food/produce.

**Question 21**

What are the imported foods that you purchase (types, approx. quantity, cost, % of total expenses, etc)?

**Question 22**

Please describe the reasons why you purchase imported food/produce.

**Question 23**

What do you feel are the present constraints preventing you from purchasing local agricultural produce?

**Question 24**

Please describe what local agriculture produce you would like to purchase.

**Question 25**

Please describe any food safety concerns you may have for the local produce that you purchase.

**Question 26**

What do you feel is the difference in the cost for purchasing local vs. imported produce (meat, seafood, fruits, vegetables, etc)?

**Question 27**

Does your business promote the consumption of locally grown and processed foods? How?

**Question 28**

What agricultural produce do you feel has the potential to be better linked to the tourism sector? Why?

***Marketing and Medium of Communication*****Question 29**

Please describe what ICT, if any, you have adopted to promote your services, gather information and communicate with tourists and farmers/local produce suppliers.

**Question 30**

Please describe, if any, what type of information you have for tourists and farmers/local produce suppliers on your website.

**Question 31**

What ICT you would prefer to use to promote your services to tourists and communicate with farmers/local produce suppliers (internet, email, phone, agriculture shows etc.)? Why?

**Question 32**

Please describe, if any, the type of assistance given by tourism/agriculture industry officials in promoting and marketing your services to tourists.

**Question 33**

Please describe how industry officials have helped you in communicating with farmers and local produce suppliers.

**Question 34**

What constraints do you face/foresee in using the internet?

***Agri-tourism*****Question 35**

How would you define the current linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue?

**Question 36**

What do you feel is the potential for building closer links between tourism and agriculture in Niue?

**Question 37**

What do you think are the constraints that hinder the development of linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue?

**Question 38**

What role do you feel the following key stakeholders can play in enhancing the linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue?

Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises (SMTE)?

Farmers?

Government/policy makers?

Tourists?

**Question 39**

How can increased communication and understanding between the above stakeholders in Niue be enhanced?

**Question 40**

What role do you feel ICT can play in increasing communication and understanding between the above stakeholders in Niue?

**Question 41**

Please describe how you feel climate change will affect the future outlook of the tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue.

Future development and sustainability

**Question 42**

Please describe how your business has changed over the years and what your future plans are (growth, quality, market, etc.).

**Question 43**

Please describe how you are going to achieve your future business plans.

**Question 44**

What constraints you foresee in achieving your future business goals?

**Question 45**

Please describe the type of support you need from the government/industry officials in order to achieve your future business goals?

**Question 46**

Any other comments:

## **Appendix 2: Grower Semi-Structured Interview Guide**

### ***Grower's background***

#### **Question 1**

Please tell me about yourself (experience, motivation, employment prior to farming).

#### **Question 2**

Please tell me what sources of income you currently get from agriculture and tourism sectors.

#### **Question 3**

Please describe, if any, the financial or agricultural advice you had received from the government prior to setting up your farm.

#### **Question 4**

What level and type of education (including agriculture related training) have you received?

### ***Farm background***

#### **Question 5**

How would you describe the characteristics of your farm (size, ownership, farming practice, chemical usage, expenditure and income, etc.)?

#### **Question 6**

Please describe how your farm production has changed over the years.

#### **Question 7**

Please tell me how you make decisions concerning your farm?

#### **Question 8**

Please tell me the number and roles of your farm workers - including the role of your family members on the farm?

### ***Market Characteristics***

#### **Question 9**

How would you describe your farm produce (types, quality, quantity, home consumption vs. commercial purpose etc.)?

#### **Question 10**

What are your thoughts on the costs and quality of your farm produce (place of sale, buyers, selling price and arrangement etc.)?

**Question 11**

Please describe your post-harvest handling process, storage and transportation of your produce from the farm to the buyers?

**Question 12**

What are the post-harvest handling, storage and transportation problems you encounter in selling the produce to your buyers?

**Question 13**

Please describe the supply characteristics of your produce throughout the year (peak, off peak supply, etc.).

**Question 14**

Do you sell your farm produce to the tourism sector (hotels, restaurants, tour operators, tourists, etc.)?

**Question 15**

Do you want to increase links/sales with the tourism sector?

**Question 16**

What problems do you encounter in selling your produce to the tourism sector?

**Question 17**

What agriculture produce do you feel has the potential to best link with the tourism sector? Discuss

**Question 18**

Please describe any tourism products and experiences that you currently provide for tourists (farm stays, agricultural activities, educational tours, etc.). Why do you provide these services?

***Marketing and Medium of Communication*****Question 19**

Please describe what ICT you have adopted to communicate with your buyers, gather information and promote your produce (internet, email, phone, agriculture shows etc.). Why?

**Question 20**

Do you want to promote your produce to the tourism sector? Why?

**Question 21**

What ICT would you prefer to use to promote your produce to the tourism sector (internet, email, phone, agriculture shows etc.)? Why?

**Question 22**

Please describe how the government has helped you in promoting and marketing your produce to the tourism sector?

**Question 23**

What constraints you foresee in using the internet to promote and market your produce to the tourism sector? Why?

**Question 24**

Do you want to learn about the use of ICT in gathering information, promotion and marketing of your produce/agricultural activities for the tourism sector? Why?

**Question 25**

How do you measure your buyer satisfaction?

***Agri-tourism*****Question 26**

How would you define the current linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue?

**Question 27**

What do you feel is the potential for building closer links between the tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue?

**Question 28**

How do you think the tourism sector can benefit from agriculture and vice versa?

**Question 29**

What constraints hinder the agriculture sector from linking more closely with the tourism sector in Niue?

**Question 30**

What role do you feel the following key stakeholders can play in enhancing the linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue?

Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises (SMTE)?

Farmers?

Govt. /policy makers?

Tourists?

**Question 31**

What role do you think ICT and other tools can play in increasing communication and understanding between the above stakeholders in Niue?

**Question 32**

What types of agriculture-related activities you think you can provide for tourists?

**Question 33**

Do you feel that the present agriculture and tourism developments in Niue are sustainable? Why?

**Question 34**

How do you think future agriculture and tourism developments in Niue can be made sustainable?

**Question 35**

What do you think is the potential for future agri-tourism opportunities in Niue?

**Question 36**

What do you feel is the future outlook of the agriculture and tourism sector in Niue?

***Future development and sustainability*****Question 37**

Please tell me what your future farming plans are (production capacity, quality, market, etc.).

**Question 38**

Please describe how you are going to achieve your future farming plans.

**Question 39**

What constraints do you foresee to achieving your future farm goals?

**Question 40**

Please describe the type of support you feel you need from the government in order to achieve your future farm goals.

**Question 41**

Any other comments:

## **Appendix 3: Government Officials & Policy-makers Semi-Structured Interview Guide**

### **Question 1**

Please tell me about yourself and your background.

### **Question 2**

What is your position and role?

### **Question 3**

Please describe the fundamental characteristics of the sector (tourism/agriculture/other) you are responsible for.

### **Question 4**

How would you define the current linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue?

### **Question 5**

What do you feel is the potential for building closer links between tourism and agriculture in Niue?

### **Question 6**

What do you feel are the most effective ways to enhance the links between tourism and agriculture in Niue?

### **Question 7**

Do you feel that the local agricultural production capacity is sufficient to meet the demand of the tourism sector? Why?

### **Question 8**

What do you feel is the potential of the agriculture sector to increase its productive capacity in order to meet the needs of the tourism sector in Niue?

### **Question 9**

What agriculture produce, if any, do you feel has the potential to be better linked to the tourism sector? Why?

### **Question 10**

What do you think are the constraints that hinder the development of linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue?

**Question 11**

What role do you feel the following key stakeholders can play in enhancing the linkages between tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue?

Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises (SMTE)?

Farmers?

Government/policy makers?

Tourists?

**Question 12**

How can communication and understanding between the above stakeholders in Niue be enhanced?

**Question 13**

What role can Information and Communication Technology (ICT) play in increasing communication and understanding between the above stakeholders in Niue?

**Question 14**

What impact may global warming/climate change have on the future outlook of the tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue?

**Question 15**

How do you think Government can enhance the linkages between tourism and agriculture and provide sustainable 'agriculture-related experience and products' for future tourists in Niue?

**Question 16**

What do you feel is the future outlook of the sector you are responsible for?

**Question 17**

Any other comments

## Appendix 4: Information Sheet for SMTE

### Participant Information Sheet



#### **Date Information Sheet Produced:**

25 January 2008

**Project Title:** Enhancing the Links between Tourism & Agriculture in South Pacific SIDS:  
the case of Niue

Faka alofa lahi atu! Fakaauae Lahi!

#### **An Invitation**

As a key individual in Niue's tourism sector, you are a very important part of her economy. You are invited to participate in this research on enhancing the links between tourism and agriculture in Niue.

#### **What is the purpose of this research?**

This research aims to gain a better understanding of the potential that exists, in Niue, for the creation and development of linkages between tourism and agriculture. The project will examine how key stakeholders, (farmers, Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises - SMTE, government industry officials and tourists) view the existing links between tourism and agriculture and how they might be strengthened.

This research is being conducted as part of my Doctor of Philosophy at AUT University. Results will also be used in journal and conference publications.

#### **How was I chosen for this invitation?**

You have been identified and randomly selected from an inventory of SMTE in Niue, recommended by my contacts at the Ministry of Tourism, and are invited to contribute to this research. Participation is entirely voluntary.

#### **What will happen in this research?**

The study will focus on enhancing the links between tourism and agriculture in South Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The first part of the study will survey experts on their perceptions with regard to the links between tourism and agriculture

in Pacific SIDS. The second part will revolve around a mixture of semi-structured interviews and self-administered survey in Niue with farmers, tourism and agriculture industry officials, SMTE and tourists. I will also conduct a final semi-structured interview with experts.

I would like to ask you a series of questions relating to the second part of this research through a semi-structured interview. Questions will focus on the general information on your SMTE, sources of food suppliers, type, volume and cost of buying local and imported produce, preference on local vs. imported food, monthly tourist numbers and its effect on food purchases and issues in buying local produce.

The interview will be conducted with your permission through the signing of a consent form. You can participate in this research through an interview and your responses will be recorded through note taking. Your contribution to this study is valuable as it will help put together the research as a whole, incorporating all the different stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism and agriculture development in Niue.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

The interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes of your time. You are giving your valuable time and information to help with this research and I can assure you that I have considered your well-being and your business. You may be concerned that I will 'leak' confidential or sensitive information to others. You may also be concerned about the use of your time - a valuable resource.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

All questions are optional, and you may choose not to answer some questions. However, the interview is designed to gain an understanding of how tourism and agriculture can be better linked in Niue, so there are no right or wrong answers. Any information you provide will be interesting. I am strictly bound by my Universities ethics procedures and processes and will not pass on any information to others. Participation and answers to any questions will be voluntary.

**What are the benefits?**

This research will result in a better understanding of the potential that exists, in Niue, for the creation of linkages between tourism and agriculture. This part of the study will offer valuable insights on the contributions SMTE can make in sustainably enhancing the links between the agriculture and tourism sectors in Niue.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

All answers are confidential and in no way will be linked to your personal or business details. Your details will be confidential and not distributed to anyone other than the research team. The results will be presented in aggregate and no individuals or businesses will be identifiable in the research thesis or outcomes.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The only cost to participate will be your time – approximately 30-60 minutes. To thank you for your participation, I offer to send a brief summary of what I have found (a synopsis of my thesis) to the Ministry of Tourism in Niue, and you will be able to obtain a copy of this from them.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

A meeting time will be set up 1 week before the conduction of the interview. You can consider your participation during this time. I will contact you to see if you would like to participate in this research, and if so, to make an appointment to visit you at your home/work at a time that suits you. The meeting will involve an interview and discussion on tourism and agriculture issues that will be recorded through note taking but only with your written consent.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

To participate in this research, simply confirm an appointment time when I contact you, via in person or telephone. I will also ask you to sign a Consent form (copy attached) that gives me your written consent to participate in the interview.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

The findings of this research may be used in presentations and publications with an academic context. The results of this research will also be available on our website [www.tri.org.nz](http://www.tri.org.nz) in 2010.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Simon Milne: email [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz), phone 09 9219245.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda: email [madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz](mailto:madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz), phone 921 9999 ext 8044.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Researcher Contact Details: Evangeline Singh, email: [evangeline.singh@aut.ac.nz](mailto:evangeline.singh@aut.ac.nz) ,  
phone 09 921 9999 ext 6410.

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Simon Milne: email [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz), phone  
09 9219245.

Local contact in Niue: Frank Sioneholo

Acting Head, Invest Niue/EPDS, Premiers Department, Government of Niue.

P.O.Box 95, Alofi, Niue. Ph: (683) 4148 Fax: (683) 4232, 4010.

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> March  
2008, AUTEK Reference number 07/224.***

## Appendix 5: Information Sheet for Growers

### *Participant Information Sheet*



### ***Date Information Sheet Produced:***

25 January 2008

*Project Title:* Enhancing the Links between Tourism & Agriculture in South Pacific SIDS: the case of Niue

Faka alofa lahi atu! Fakaauae Lahi!

### **An Invitation**

As a key individual in Niue's agriculture sector, you are a very important part of her economy. You are invited to participate in this research on enhancing the links between tourism and agriculture in Niue.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

This research aims to gain a better understanding of the potential that exists, in Niue, for the creation and development of linkages between tourism and agriculture. The project will examine how key stakeholders, (farmers, Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises - SMTE, government industry officials and tourists) view the existing links between tourism and agriculture and how they might be strengthened.

This research is being conducted as part of my Doctor of Philosophy at AUT University. Results will also be used in journal and conference publications.

### **How was I chosen for this invitation?**

You have been identified and randomly selected from an inventory of farmers in Niue, recommended by my contacts at the Ministry of Agriculture, and are invited to contribute to this research. Participation is entirely voluntary.

### **What will happen in this research?**

The study will focus on enhancing the links between tourism and agriculture in South Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The first part of the study will survey

experts on their perceptions with regard to the links between tourism and agriculture in Pacific SIDS. The second part will revolve around a mixture of semi-structured interviews and self-administered survey in Niue with farmers, tourism and agriculture industry officials, SMTE and tourists. I will also conduct a final semi-structured interview with experts.

I would like to ask you a series of questions relating to the second part of this research through a semi-structured interview. The main themes that will be covered in this interview will include, general information of your farm, type and quantity of produce, selling arrangements, marketing channels and distribution, seasonality and glut, and post-harvest handling techniques. The interview will be conducted with your permission through the signing of a consent form and your answers will be recorded through note taking.

Your contribution to this study is valuable as it will help put together the research as a whole, incorporating all the different stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism and agriculture development in Niue.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

The interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes of your time. You are giving your valuable time and information to help with this research and I can assure you that I have considered your well-being. You may be concerned that I will 'leak' confidential or sensitive information to others. You may also be concerned about the use of your time - a valuable resource.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

All questions are optional, and you may choose not to answer some questions. However, the interview is designed to gain an understanding of how tourism and agriculture can be better linked in Niue, so there are no right or wrong answers. Any information you provide will be interesting. I am strictly bound by my Universities ethics procedures and processes and will not pass on any information to others. Participation and answers to any questions will be voluntary.

**What are the benefits?**

This research will result in a better understanding of the potential that exists, in Niue, for the creation of linkages between tourism and agriculture. This part of the study will

offer valuable insights on the contributions farmers can make in sustainably enhancing the links between the agriculture and tourism sectors in Niue.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

All answers are confidential and in no way will be linked to your personal details. Your details will be confidential and not distributed to anyone other than the research team. The results will be presented in aggregate and no individuals will be identifiable in the research thesis or outcomes.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The only cost to participate will be your time – approximately 30-60 minutes. To thank you for your participation, I offer to send a brief summary of what I have found (a synopsis of my thesis) to the Ministry of Agriculture in Niue, and you will be able to obtain a copy of this from them.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

The interview will be set up 1 week before it will be conducted. You can consider your participation during this time. I will contact you to see if you would like to be interviewed, and if so, to make an appointment to visit you at your home/work at a time that suits you. The answers will be recorded through note taking but only with your written consent.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

To participate in this research, simply confirm an appointment time when I contact you, via in person or telephone. I will also ask you to sign a Consent form (copy attached) that gives me your written consent to participate in the interview.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

The findings of this research may be used in presentations and publications with an academic context. The results of this research will also be available on our website [www.tri.org.nz](http://www.tri.org.nz) in 2010.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

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Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda: email *madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz*, phone 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details: Evangeline Singh, email: *evangeline.singh@aut.ac.nz* , phone 09 921 9999 ext 6410.

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Simon Milne: email *simon.milne@aut.ac.nz*, phone 09 9219245.

Local contact in Niue: Frank Sioneholo

Acting Head, Invest Niue/EPDS, Premiers Department, Government of Niue.

P.O.Box 95, Alofi, Niue. Ph: (683) 4148 Fax: (683) 4232, 4010.

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, AUTEK Reference number 07/224.***

## Appendix 6: Information Sheet Government Officials & Policy-makers

### *Participant Information Sheet*



### ***Date Information Sheet Produced:***

25 January 2008

***Project Title:*** Enhancing the Links between Tourism & Agriculture in South Pacific SIDS: the case of Niue

Faka alofa lahi atu! Fakaauae Lahi!

### **An Invitation**

As a key individual in the Ministry of Tourism or Agriculture in Niue, you are a very important of her economy. You are invited to participate in this research on enhancing the links between tourism and agriculture in Niue.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

This research aims to gain a better understanding of the potential that exists, in Niue, for the creation and development of linkages between tourism and agriculture. The project will examine how key stakeholders, (farmers, Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises - SMTE, government industry officials and tourists) view the existing links between tourism and agriculture and how they might be strengthened.

This research is being conducted as part of my Doctor of Philosophy at AUT University. Results will also be used in journal and conference publications.

### **How was I chosen for this invitation?**

You have been identified as a key individual or leader in tourism and agriculture in Niue and are invited to contribute to this research. You have been recommended by my contacts at your industry or are well known for your contribution to tourism and agriculture development in Niue. Participation is entirely voluntary.

### **What will happen in this research?**

The study will focus on enhancing the links between tourism and agriculture in South Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The first part of the study will survey experts on their perceptions with regard to the links between tourism and agriculture in Pacific SIDS. The second part will revolve around a mixture of semi-structured interviews and self-administered survey in Niue with farmers, tourism and agriculture industry officials, SMTE and tourists. I will also conduct a final semi-structured interview with experts.

I would like to ask you a series of questions relating to the second part of this research through a semi-structured interview. The main themes that will be covered in this interview will include, existing and potential links between tourism and agriculture sectors, constraints in enhancing these linkages, importation and local food production levels, promotion and marketing issues and favourable policies for building stronger bonds between the two sectors in Niue.

The interview will be conducted with your permission through the signing of a consent form and your answers will be recorded through note taking. Your contribution to this study is valuable as it will help put together the research as a whole, incorporating all the different stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism and agriculture development in Niue.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

The interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes of your time. You are giving your valuable time and information to help with this research and I can assure you that I have considered your well-being and that of your industry. You may be concerned that I will 'leak' confidential or sensitive information to others. You may also be concerned about the use of your time - a valuable resource.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

All questions are optional, and you may choose not to answer some questions. However, the interview is designed to gain an understanding of how tourism and agriculture can be better linked in Niue, so there are no right or wrong answers. Any information you provide will be interesting. I am strictly bound by my Universities ethics procedures and processes and will not pass on any information to others. This information is confidential and no individuals will be identified in the research report. Participation and answers to any questions will be voluntary.

**What are the benefits?**

This research will result in a better understanding of the potential that exists, in Niue, for the creation of linkages between tourism and agriculture. This part of the study will offer valuable insights on contributions the tourism and agriculture government ministries can make in sustainably enhancing the links between the two sectors in Niue.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

All answers are confidential and in no way will be linked to your personal or industry's details. Your details will be confidential and not distributed to anyone other than the research team. The results will be presented in aggregate and no individuals will be identifiable in the research thesis or outcomes.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The only cost to participate will be your time – approximately 30-60 minutes. To thank you for your participation, I offer to send you a brief summary of what I have found (a synopsis of my thesis).

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

The interview will be set up 1 week before it will be conducted. You can consider your participation during this time. I will contact you to see if you would like to be interviewed, and if so, to make an appointment to visit you at your home/work at a time that suits you. The answers will be recorded through note taking but only with your written consent.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

To participate in this research, simply confirm an appointment time when I contact you, via in person or telephone. I will also ask you to sign a Consent form (copy attached) that gives me your written consent to participate in the interview.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

The findings of this research may be used in presentations and publications with an academic context. The results of this research will also be available on our website [www.tri.org.nz](http://www.tri.org.nz) in 2010.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Simon Milne: email [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz), phone 09 9219245.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda: email [madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz](mailto:madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz), phone 921 9999 ext 8044.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Researcher Contact Details: Evangeline Singh, email: [evangeline.singh@aut.ac.nz](mailto:evangeline.singh@aut.ac.nz) , phone 09 921 9999 ext 6410.

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Simon Milne: email [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz), phone 09 9219245.

Local contact in Niue: Frank Sioneholo

Acting Head, Invest Niue/EPDS, Premiers Department, Government of Niue.

P.O.Box 95, Alofi, Niue. Ph: (683) 4148 Fax: (683) 4232, 4010.

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, AUTEK Reference number 07/224.***

## Appendix 7: Consent Form

Consent Form



**Project title:** Enhancing the Links between Tourism & Agriculture in South Pacific  
SIDS: the case of Niue

**Project Supervisor:** Simon Milne, PhD

**Researcher:** Evangeline Singh

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 03 October 2007.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes   
No

Participant's signature:

.....

Participant's

name:

.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

Date:

**Local contact in Niue:** Frank Sioneholo

Acting Head, Invest Niue/EPDS, Premiers Department, Government of Niue.

P.O.Box 95, Alofi, Niue. Ph: (683) 4148 Fax: (683) 4232, 4010.

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, AUTEK Reference number 07/224.**

# Appendix 8: Online Tourist Survey



## Niue Visitor Departure Survey

### Information for participants



The Niue Government has commissioned a survey to learn about who is coming to Niue, why, and what they spend. This research is being conducted by the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. This survey will offer valuable insights on the contributions tourists can make in sustainably enhancing the links between the tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue.

In this survey, we would like to know about your last visit to Niue. Upon completing the survey you will be given the option to enter a draw to **WIN \$100 NZD**. We would ask you to complete the survey within two weeks from the date of your last trip. As a recent visitor, we'd appreciate you taking a few minutes to fill in this survey. This information gathered will help plan the development of tourism opportunities, as well as understand the linkages between tourism and agriculture in Niue.

The survey is voluntary and completely anonymous. It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. To participate simply click on the Take the survey button below.



The survey will be ongoing but please complete it within a few weeks of returning home from your holiday.

By completing this survey you are giving consent to participate in this research.

[Take the survey](#)



The results of this research will be used in academic publications and presentations in the future. Thank you for your participation.

#### For further information about this research contact:

Project Coordinator: Carolyn Nodder: email [carolyn.nodder@aut.ac.nz](mailto:carolyn.nodder@aut.ac.nz), phone [+64 9 921 9999](tel:+6499219999) ext 8892  
Research Supervisor: Simon Milne: [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz), phone [+64 9 921 9245](tel:+6499219245)

#### What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Research Supervisor, Simon Milne: [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz), phone [+64 9 921 9245](tel:+6499219245).

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, [madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz](mailto:madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz) [+64 9 921 9999](tel:+6499219999) ext 8044.

**Local contact in Niue:** Frank Sioneholo  
Acting Head, Invest Niue/EPDS, Premier's Department, Government of Niue.  
P.O.Box 95, Alofi, Niue. Ph: (683) 4148 Fax: (683) 4232, 4010.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on **31/03/08**, AUTEK Reference number **07/224**

Progress

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Niue Visitor Departure Survey

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**Question 1:**  
How many nights was your stay in Niue:

---

Total number of nights:

---

**Question 2:**  
What was the main purpose of your visit?

---

Holiday  
 Business  
 Visiting friends and/or relatives  
 Family commitments (funeral, birthdays, hair-cuttings, land courts etc)  
 Group activity (e.g. sports team)  
 Stopover  
 Other (please specify):

---

**Question 3:**  
Who did you travel with on this visit to Niue? (Tick as many as apply)

- On my own
- With partner/spouse
- With children
- With friends
- With other family members
- Team/group
- Work colleague
- Other (please specify):

How many people accompanied you?

▼

**Question 4:**  
**How many nights did you spend in the following accommodation during your visit?**

Type:	No. of nights	Name of accommodation:
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel/resort	<input type="text" value="[select]"/> ▼	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Rental home	<input type="text" value="[select]"/> ▼	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Hostel/backpackers	<input type="text" value="[select]"/> ▼	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Staying with family	<input type="text" value="[select]"/> ▼	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Motel	<input type="text" value="[select]"/> ▼	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>

<input type="checkbox"/> Guesthouse	<input type="text" value="[select]"/> ▼	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Community halls	<input type="text" value="[select]"/> ▼	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="text" value="[select]"/> ▼	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>

**Question 5:**  
**On a scale from 1 to 6, please indicate how important each of the following factors were in influencing your decision to travel to Niue?**

	Not important at all					Extremely important
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Local culture	<input type="radio"/>					
Natural scenery	<input type="radio"/>					
Sampling local food and cuisine	<input type="radio"/>					
Nature-based or marine-related activities	<input type="radio"/>					
Travel time	<input type="radio"/>					
Climate	<input type="radio"/>					
Value for money	<input type="radio"/>					
People	<input type="radio"/>					
Other, please specify: <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>					

**Question 6:**  
**On a scale from 1 to 6, how important are the following sources of information in planning your trip?**

	Not important at all					Extremely important
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Prior personal knowledge	<input type="radio"/>					
Internet	<input type="radio"/>					
Travel books/guides	<input type="radio"/>					
Travel agent	<input type="radio"/>					
Word of mouth	<input type="radio"/>					
Television	<input type="radio"/>					
Auckland's Pasifika Festival	<input type="radio"/>					
Other, please specify: <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>					

**Question 7:**  
**Did you visit [www.niueisland.com](http://www.niueisland.com) while planning your trip to Niue?**

Yes  No

If Yes - How would you rate the following aspects of [www.niueisland.com](http://www.niueisland.com) on a scale of 1 to 6?

	Not useful at all					Extremely useful	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Ease of finding the site	<input type="radio"/>						
A useful source of information	<input type="radio"/>						
A useful tool for trip planning	<input type="radio"/>						
Overall	<input type="radio"/>						

Please identify any other websites you found useful when planning your trip to Niue:

**Question 8:**  
When you first thought about taking this trip, did you consider other South Pacific island destinations as well?

Yes  No

If you selected 'Yes' - please identify the destinations you considered:

**Question 9:**  
Before you arrived in Niue, how did you make the following reservations/bookings?

	Booking method
Package deal - please specify: <input type="text"/>	[ select ]
Flights	[ select ]
Accommodation	[ select ]
Guided tours	[ select ]
Rental car	[ select ]
Other - please specify: <input type="text"/>	[ select ]

Overall how satisfied are you with the availability of information about Niue:

	Not satisfied at all					Extremely satisfied	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Before arriving in Niue	<input type="radio"/>						
While staying in Niue	<input type="radio"/>						

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### Expenditure

Information on how much money you spent during your visit helps the planning and development of the Niue economy. We would appreciate it if you could fill this section out as accurately as possible.

**Question 10:**  
How many people are you including in these expenditure estimates?

Adults  
 Children (0-18 years old)

**Question 11:**  
Did you travel on a package?

Yes  
 No - Go to Question 12.

If 'yes', what was the total cost of the package?

NZ\$  - If you provide the cost in a currency different to NZD, please specify:

What did the package include?

- Flights
- Accommodation - Rooms only
- Accommodation - Breakfast included
- Vehicle rental
- Other (please specify)

**Question 12:**  
Please estimate your total spend in Niue using the following categories. Please include any pre-paid bookings you made directly in NZ\$ where possible, if using another currency please specify.

	Cost in NZ\$
Accommodation - Rooms	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>
Accommodation - Meals and Drinks	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>
Restaurants, cafes & bars	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>
Vehicle rental	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>
Petrol	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>
Shopping - groceries	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>
Shopping - handicrafts/souvenirs	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>
Activities (water sports, sightseeing etc)	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>
Guided tours	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>

Other (please specify) <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>
<b>Total</b>	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>

**Satisfaction**

**Question 13:**  
On a scale from 1 to 6, please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following elements of your holiday experience:

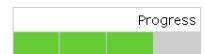
	Not satisfied at all					Extremely satisfied		N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
<i>Tourism Products</i>								
Cost of accommodation	<input type="radio"/>							
Quality of accommodation	<input type="radio"/>							
Availability of food and beverages	<input type="radio"/>							
Cost of food and beverages	<input type="radio"/>							
Quality of food and beverages	<input type="radio"/>							
Availability of handicrafts	<input type="radio"/>							
Cost of handicrafts	<input type="radio"/>							
Quality of handicrafts	<input type="radio"/>							
Rental transport	<input type="radio"/>							
Availability of Tours	<input type="radio"/>							
Rental transport	<input type="radio"/>							
Availability of Tours	<input type="radio"/>							
Cost of Tours	<input type="radio"/>							
Quality of Tours	<input type="radio"/>							
	Not satisfied at all					Extremely satisfied		N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
<i>Activities &amp; Environment</i>								
Diving	<input type="radio"/>							
Snorkelling	<input type="radio"/>							
Game fishing	<input type="radio"/>							
Cultural activities	<input type="radio"/>							
Village activities (Fiafia night, village days, haircutting, ear piercing etc)	<input type="radio"/>							
Conservation area excursions	<input type="radio"/>							
Sightseeing & watching nature	<input type="radio"/>							
Environment quality & cleanliness	<input type="radio"/>							
Your ability to experience the environment in Niue	<input type="radio"/>							
	Not satisfied at all					Extremely satisfied		N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
<i>People</i>								
Opportunities to interact with local people	<input type="radio"/>							
Friendliness of the local people	<input type="radio"/>							
Level of service from people working in tourism	<input type="radio"/>							

Your ability to experience Niuean culture	<input type="radio"/>						
	Not satisfied at all					Extremely satisfied	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Overall experience	<input type="radio"/>						

**Question 14:**  
What did you find most attractive or appealing about Niue on your recent visit?

**Question 15:**  
What did you find least attractive or appealing about Niue on your recent visit?

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**Food & Agriculture**

**Question 16:**  
Did you bring any food with you to Niue?

Yes  No

Please specify:

**Question 17:**  
Did you eat any local Niuean food during your visit?

Yes  No

**Question 18:**  
If you had a choice would you have preferred to eat more local Niuean produce during your visit?

Yes  
 No

Yes  
 No  
 Doesn't matter

**Question 19:**  
Did you see local food being grown or gathered during your visit?

Yes as part of a guided tour  
 Yes independently  
 No

**Question 20:**  
Did you see local food/cuisine (umu or earth oven) being prepared during your visit?

Yes  
 No

**Question 21:**  
Did you see how local handicrafts are being made?

Yes  
 No

**Question 22:**  
On a scale of 1-6, please indicate your level of interest in undertaking the following activities if they were available to you in Niue:

	Not interested at all					Extremely interested
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Farm visit	<input type="radio"/>					
Local food preparation	<input type="radio"/>					
Local village feast	<input type="radio"/>					
Seeing local handicrafts	<input type="radio"/>					
Others, please specify: <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>					

**Question 23:**  
What local food produced in Niue did you consume during your visit?

- Ota (marinated fish)
- Polo (fish/meat cooked in coconut cream)
- Uga (coconut crab)
- Takihi (slices of taro and pawpaw baked in coconut cream)
- Other (please specify):

Progress

General

**Question 24:**  
Are you of Niue heritage/origin?

- Yes
- No

**Question 25:**  
How many times have you visited Niue?

**Question 26:**  
Your age group

**Question 27:**  
Your gender

- Male
- Female

**Question 28:**  
What is your highest qualification?

If you selected Other - please specify:

**Question 29:**  
What is your approximate annual household income?

NZD	Other Currency
<input type="text" value="[select]"/>	Currency Name: <input type="text"/>
	Amount: <input type="text"/>

**Question 30:**  
**What is your employment status?**

[select] ▼

If you selected Other - please specify:

**Question 31:**  
**Where do you live? (Please select the closest answer)**

New Zealand - [select] ▼

Other - [select] ▼

**Question 32:**  
**Would you visit Niue again?**

- Yes
- No
- Probably

Why?

**Question 33:**  
**Would you recommend Niue to others as a place to visit?**

- Yes
- No
- Probably

Why?

**Question 34:**  
**Any other comments?**

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[Complete the survey](#)

## Appendix 9: Letter of Consent from Jasons Travel Media

It's out there. Go find it. **Jasons.co.nz**

To whom it may concern

This is a letting confirming that Jasons Media Travel are the owners of the Niue Maps ( Niue-Map\_2011) (alofi2) provided and that we are happy for Evangeline Singh to include these in her thesis.

Sincerely  
Tim Park



Design Team Leader  
Jasons Travel Media  
Twitter: [http://twitter.com/jasons\\_travel](http://twitter.com/jasons_travel)  
Facebook: <http://facebook.com/JasonsTravel>  
First Floor, 2 Ngaire Avenue, Newmarket, Auckland 1051