



TUVALU



KEY FACTS

POPULATION (2014 estimate):

11,206

AREA (UN 2006):

26 sq km

CAPITAL: Funafuti**CURRENCY:**

Tuvaluan dollar (TV\$)

HEAD OF STATE:

HM Queen Elizabeth II

GOVERNOR-GENERAL:

Iakoba Italeli

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:

Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga

FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

constitutional monarchy

PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM:

unicameral

STATE STRUCTURE:

unitary

LANGUAGES:

Tuvaluan (official), English

NATIONAL ELECTIONS:

Last: March 2015, turnout: na; next: 2019

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT (2015):

6.7%

LOCAL ELECTIONS:

Last: 15 Sept 2011, turnout: na; next: 2019

WOMEN COUNCILLORS (2011):

4.2%

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE as a percentage of total government expenditure 2016:

0.2%

SUMMARY

Tuvalu is a unitary constitutional monarchy with two spheres of government: national and local. The legal basis for Tuvalu local government is the Falekaupule Act 1997 and there is only one level, which is the kaupule (island council). The Department of Rural Development within the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is responsible for local government. Following the 2011 local elections 4.2% of councillors were women and in 2016 local government expenditure was 0.2% of total government expenditure. A quarterly assembly is held by each kaupule where the annual budget and development plans prepared by the island council are assessed by the people. The common services that all island councils provide include land transport, lagoon travelling services, mechanical and joinery maintenance services, provision and maintenance of roads and public facilities such as meeting halls, recreation facilities (playing fields, multi-purpose courts), transport facilities, beach ramps and land title records. Services provided by national government in partnership with the island councils include health, education, agriculture and fisheries.

1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Tuvalu is a unitary constitutional monarchy with a unicameral parliamentary democracy. Parliament is vested with law-making powers and is composed of 15 members (known as MPs): two from each of the eight electoral constituencies, with the exception of Nukulaelae, which returns just one. Both the speaker, who oversees the administration and management of parliamentary affairs, and the prime minister, who heads the executive, are elected by MPs from amongst themselves. Following the 2015 national election, 6.7% of MPs were women.^{3,1b} There are eight cabinet ministers, all of whom are appointed by the governor-general on the advice of the prime minister. The cabinet is collectively responsible to parliament for the discharge of the executive functions of the state. There are no political parties, although the members who do not side with the executive are often called the opposition. The head of state is HM Queen Elizabeth II, who is represented in Tuvalu by a governor-general.

2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.1 Constitutional provisions

There is no constitutional provision for local government.^{4,8,2a}

2.2 Main legislative texts

The main legislative text is the Falekaupule Act 1997^{4,8,2b}, which came into force in 1999. The Act, also known as the Local Government Act, empowers the implementation of a national strategy that envisions the development of the outer islands through the devolution and decentralisation of governmental functions to local government. At independence, Tuvalu inherited a local government system governed by the Local Government Ordinance 1966. This piece of legislation, as amended, provided the legal framework for local governance in the period between 1978 and 1999, when it was repealed. Further amendments to the Falekaupule Act 1997 were made in March 2013 and to Section 14 of the Act in 2016.

Table 48.1a Distribution of councils and population

Island	Kaupule (island council)	Population (2012 Census)	Population (2017 est.)	% rural (2014)
Nanumea	1	556	na	100
Nanumaga	1	481	na	100
Niutao	1	606	na	100
Nui	1	541	na	100
Vaitupu	1	1,565	na	100
Nukufetau	1	540	na	100
Funafuti	1	6,194	na	100
Nukulaelae	1	324	na	100
Niulakita	-	30	na	100
TOTAL	8	10,800	11,206	100

Source: 2012 Census preliminary report^{4,8,3a}



2.3 Proposed legislative changes

The Government of Tuvalu, through the Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development has launch a major review of the Falekaupule Act 1997 (Local Government Act).

2.4 National urban policy

Tuvalu does not have an urban policy.

3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Local government within the state

Local government in Tuvalu has only one level, which is a kaupule (island council) for each of the eight main inhabited islands. The ninth island, Niulakita, is under the administration of Niutao Kaupule. With this exception, each island council's jurisdiction is limited to the island itself.

3.2 Ministerial oversight

The ministry responsible for Tuvalu local government is the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which includes the Department of Rural Development, which covers local government. The MHA's roles are: overseeing the activities of each department in its portfolio in order to achieve national goals and objectives set out in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development ('Te Kakeega III'); and reviewing any policy the Department of Rural Development wishes to implement before such policy is submitted to cabinet for legislation.

3.3 Council types

3.3.1 Kaupule (island councils)

Each kaupule has six members elected for a maximum of two four-year terms. The pule o kaupule (council president) is indirectly elected by a simple majority from among the councillors, and appoints a tokolua pule o kaupule (deputy council president) from among the council members.

The council can appoint as many committees as it feels it needs, and must include standing committees for health, agriculture and fisheries, education, communication, transportation and infrastructure, and budget and appropriations. Committees can make decisions by a simple majority and report their decision back to the kaupule.

3.4 Traditional leadership

Each island has a traditional assembly of elders called a falekaupule or 'te sina o fenua' (literally, 'grey-hairs of the land'), and the Falekaupule Act 1997 brings together the traditional responsibilities of the falekaupule and the elected kaupule.

4. ELECTIONS

4.1 Recent local elections

The last local elections were held on 15 September 2015 and the next were due in 2019.

4.2 Voting system

There are no political parties. Voters make their choice based on the individual candidates. The voting system used is the single non-transferable vote within the first-past-the-post system, and there is universal suffrage at age 18 and over.

4.3 Elected representatives

No information is available on elected representatives.

4.4 Women's representation^{48.4}

Following the 2015 kaupule elections, 10.4% of councillors were women, up from 4.2% (2/48) following the 2011 elections. Also following 2015 kaupule elections 25.0% (2/8) pule o kaupule (council presidents) were women, up from none (0/8) following the 2011 elections.

5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

5.1 Legal requirement

The mechanism for the involvement and participation of citizens in local governance is the falekaupule assembly, which is held quarterly for each island. At present however there are no guidelines to actually facilitate and carry out these assemblies. During the March assembly each year, the budget and development plans prepared by the island council are assessed by the community and approved by the falekaupule. At the same time, the island council reports on the progress and finances of current development projects.

5.2 Implementation

Another avenue for community participation, including that of minority groups, is representation on the various established standing committees for major sectors such as health, education and development. These committees are made up of representatives of various community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations and private sector organisations. The committees have been established to provide technical advice to the kaupule.

5.3 ICT use in citizen engagement

No information is available.

6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

There is currently no representative organisation for local government.

7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

As the executive arm of the falekaupule, the kaupule carries out all the functions and powers conferred by the Falekaupule Act 1997. The national government, through the Minister for Home Affairs, exercises general supervision over local governments to ensure that their actions are within the scope of their prescribed powers and functions and that statutory services for constituents are adequately delivered. In the exercise of this authority, the Act makes provision for consultations, either regular or as deemed necessary, between the minister and the falekaupule.

Table 48.1b Women councillors and presidents following the last three local elections

Election	2007		2011		2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Councillors						
Female councillors	na	na	2	4.2	5	10.4
Male councillors	na	na	46	95.8	43	89.6
Total councillors	na	100.0	48	100.0	48	100.0
Chairpersons						
Female council presidents	na	na	0	0.0	2	25.0
Male council presidents	na	na	8	100.0	6	75.0
Total council presidents	na	100.0	8	100.0	8	100.0

Source: Department of Rural Development correspondence with CLGF

National authorities are mandated to cooperate with local government according to their respective responsibilities, as follows:

- attorney general on the review of by-laws to determine whether they are in accord with national laws and policies
- auditor general on the audit of kaupules' accounts to ensure the safety and rational allocation of local funds
- the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, through local budget reviews undertaken by its planning and budget division, in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs, on local taxation and allied concerns
- the Aid Coordination Division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, in consultation with each kaupule, through the Ministry of Home Affairs provides technical assistance on local planning, project development and management of external programme funding and assistance.

Other agencies engaged in specific functions and programmes of work on the islands will also coordinate with and provide technical advice to the falekaupule and kaupule on matters relating to their work within the area of the falekaupule. This can include assisting with the improvement of governance and developing the capacities of local authorities and their staff.

8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

The existing monitoring mechanisms to scrutinise local government comprise the auditing processes required by the Falekaupule Act 1997, and the Public Accounts Committee, which reports to parliament. The Minister of Home Affairs exercises supervisory authority over local government directly through the issuance of orders, guidelines, notices, regulations or directives to ensure that the provisions of the Act and other existing statutes and policies relating to councils' duties and functions are properly implemented, and that basic services are adequately and efficiently delivered.

9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

9.1 Local government expenditure

Total local government transfers from national government represented 0.21% of total government expenditure in 2017, up from 0.19% in 2016 and 0.16% in 2015. See table 48.2b

9.2 Locally raised revenue

Various user rates, licences and other taxes such as a head tax and land tax are imposed and collected by kaupules. A kaupule, with the approval of the falekaupule obtained in the falekaupule assembly, may by resolution make and levy for each financial year general rates based on one or more of the following systems:

- a rate, to be referred to as the community development tax, at a uniform or graduated amount per capita on all residents of the falekaupule area or those above the age of 18 years
- a rate, to be referred to as the property tax, at a uniform amount per dollar on the assessed value of immovable property situated within the falekaupule area
- a rate, to be referred to as the possessions tax, on the assessed value of the possessions or any category of possessions of residents in the falekaupule area.

In addition, a kaupule may, subject to the approval of the Minister of Home Affairs and to any existing regulations of the Falekaupule Act, and with the approval of the falekaupule, make and levy other types of rates.

9.3 Transfers

The level of national government transfers to island councils is determined on the advice of the Minister of Home Affairs. Of the total annual grant, 63% is conditional and 37% unconditional. There are three types of annual grants: block grant, tied grant and Falekaupule Act grant, the latter of which is ring-

fenced to pay for emoluments of the five key staff of island councils on each island. A further national government grant to local government is the pre-school support grant from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, which currently amounts to AU\$26,000 and assists with pre-school teachers' salaries.

The Department of Rural Development oversees the national 'Strengthening of Local Governance' programme, which in 2016 provided AU\$111,720 (see Table 48.2b) with the following objectives:

- enhance the responsiveness of each kaupule to community needs
- improve development planning and decision-making at island level
- strengthen the capacity of the kaupule to carry out its functions under the Falekaupule Act.
- create an enabling legal framework for the kaupule to carry out its mandated activities
- promote effective management of urbanisation
- enhance economic and social development in Tuvalu's outer islands.

9.4 Loans

Kaupule are empowered to borrow money.

9.5 Local authority staff

Each local government pays a meeting allowance for councillors and, in principle, the salaries of the local government staff. However, under the Falekaupule Act 1997, five of each island council's key staff members' salaries are paid by national government through the annual Falekaupule Act grant.

10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

10.1 Overview of local government service delivery responsibility

The Falekaupule Act mandates a wide range of functions to the island councils. The island councils at present, however, are only providing those services that their resources allow, while other services are provided and funded by national government. The services provided by island councils vary depending on the needs of their communities. The common services that all island councils offer include land transport, lagoon travelling services, mechanical and joinery maintenance services, provision and maintenance of roads and public facilities such as halls (meeting halls), recreation facilities (playing fields, multi-purpose courts), transport facilities, beach ramps and land title records. Services provided by national government in partnership with

Table 48.2a Income and expenditure for local government 2016/17

Income	2016/17	Expenditure	2016/17
Centre-local transfers		Administration	
Restricted	na	Staff	na
Unrestricted	na	Other administration	na
Locally raised revenue		Services	
Property taxes	na	Roads	na
Licences and fees	na	Water	na
Other income	na	Other	na
TOTAL INCOME	na	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	148,972



Table 48.2b Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure 2013-17

	2013 actual	2014 actual	2015 actual	2016 estimated	2017 budgeted
Total government expenditure	na	41,493,959	60,625,858	60,078,583	70,871,765
Total local government expenditure	na	na	98,472	111,720	148,972
Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure	na	na	0.16	0.19	0.21

Source: Government of Tuvalu Budget 2017^{48.9}

the island councils include health, education, agriculture and fisheries. The services provided by island councils are charged at a minimum rate agreed by the community and the island council during the March falekaupule assembly every year. Rates and user fees are applied to all users, although certain individuals are exempted from paying head tax, as decided by the island council. Local government and the private sector work together in development activities, usually on a cost-sharing basis.

10.2 ICT use in service delivery

No information is available.

10.3 The role of local government in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Government of Tuvalu has a national strategy for sustainable development, known as Te Kakeega III 2016-2020, or 'TKIII', TKIII links all of Tuvalu's development strategies and activities to the UN SDGs. Each of the eight falekaupule has an island strategic

plan, which has been developed with due regard for TKIII, thus linking local government planning to the SDGs. A key focus is projects which will help people cope with climate change. The Ministry of Home Affairs is also working on improving internet communications with Tuvalu's outer islands, another project which links to the SDGs.

REFERENCES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

- 48.1a Tuvalu national government portal www.tuvalu.tv
- 48.1b Women in national parliaments. Inter-Parliamentary Union www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm
- 48.2 Constitution of Tuvalu www.tuvalu.islands.com/const_tuvalu.htm
- 48.2b Tuvalu Falekaupule Act 1997 <http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/pacific/TV/tuvalu-falekaupule-act-2008>
- 48.3a Population Census 2012 preliminary results <http://prdrse4all.spc.int/production/node/4/content/tuvalu->

- 2012-population-housing-census-preliminary-analytical-report
- 48.4 UNDP Women's participation and leadership in governments at the local level – Asia & the Pacific 2013
- 48.5 No reference for this section
- 48.6 No reference for this section
- 48.7 No reference for this section
- 48.8 No reference for this section
- 48.9 Based on figures in Table 2a and MTFF report for total government expenditure in 2016
- 48.10 No reference for this section
- 48.11a UN statistics surface area <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2006/Table03.pdf>
- 48.11b Commonwealth Local Government knowledge hub www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/knowledge-hub
- 48.11 UNDP HDR Tuvalu country profile <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/TUV>

Annex 48a Summary of service provision in different spheres of government in Tuvalu

Services	Delivering authority		Remarks
	National government	Kaupule	
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION			
Police	■		
Fire protection	■		
Civil protection	■		
Criminal justice	■		
Civil status register	■	■	
Statistical office	■		
Electoral register	■		
EDUCATION			
Pre-school (kindergarten and nursery)		■	
Primary	■	■	
Secondary	■	■	
Vocational and technical	■		
Higher education	■		
Adult education	■	■	
SOCIAL WELFARE			
Family welfare services			
Welfare homes			
Social security			
PUBLIC HEALTH			
Primary care	■	■	
Hospitals			
Health protection	■	■	
HOUSING and TOWN PLANNING			
Housing	■		
Town planning	■		
Regional planning	■		
TRANSPORT			
Roads		■	
Transport		■	
Urban roads	na		
Urban rail	na		
Ports	■		
Airports	■		
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION			
Water and sanitation	■	■	
Refuse collection and disposal	■	■	
Cemeteries and crematoria	■	■	
Slaughterhouses	■		
Environmental protection	■		
Consumer protection	■		
CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS			
Theatres and concerts	■		
Museums and libraries	■		
Parks and open spaces		■	
Sports and leisure facilities		■	
Religious facilities			
UTILITIES			
Gas services	■		
District heating			
Water supply	■	■	
Electricity	■		
ECONOMIC			
Agriculture, forests and fisheries	■	■	
Local economic development/promotion	■	■	
Trade and industry	■		
Tourism	■	■	

■ sole responsibility service ■ joint responsibility service ■ discretionary service