



Provisional programme

Sustainable economic growth in small island states: challenges and opportunities

Thursday 22 – Friday 23 November 2012 | WP1203

The challenge of economic growth for small island economies is magnified by their unique geographic situation and their exposure to climate-based risk. This conference will examine how local and international policymakers, investors, academics, civil society and communities can make better use of the tools available to mitigate those risks and work together more cooperatively, learning best practice from one another in order to support commerce and economic development. What are the conditions under which improvements can be made? How can small island states “future-proof” their markets, workforces and natural resources in an increasingly volatile world?

In association with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
(Speakers invited and themes proposed * denotes confirmed)

Thursday 22 November

1300-1430 Participants arrive and buffet lunch available

1500 **Welcome and introduction**

***Kathryn Hingston**
Programme Director, Wilton Park, Steyning

1530-1645 **1. Volatility and shocks: approaches to and mitigation**

Small island states have little adaptive capacity and often suffer sharper and more prolonged downturns than other states. Being able to mitigate external shocks and events is crucial to the future prosperity of island states. Three types of shocks are most easily defined; economic, political and environmental.

Global economic shocks might result in difficulty accessing external capital and acute damage to the tourism trade coupled with the inability to reallocate populations to other industries. Political shocks include the limited institutional capacity and cost of governance for most small islands, whilst environmental shocks and the threat of climate change threaten many small islands' very existence.

This raises questions such as ; how can these shocks be best mitigated? How can deeper integration into the global economy be achieved? How can capital and labour flow more freely? How can small islands adapt to and mitigate climate change? What impact will climate change have on small island economies?

1645-1730 Photograph followed by tea/coffee

1730-1900

2. The challenge of growth

Small island states face a multitude of challenges to achieving growth and economic stability. Small islands suffer from limited domestic markets and resources, monocultures, high energy costs and a dependence on imports. How can small islands best negate these disadvantages and where does future growth lie? How can independent policy making, social capital and niche markets be most effectively utilised? How can a dependence on fishing and tourism be reduced?

The development of appropriate professional skills may be critical for the development of the service sector, in which the disadvantages of geographical size and isolation are reduced. What role can higher education institutions play in advancing growth? Graduates from small islands are four times more likely to emigrate than their counterparts in least-developed states-how can this be avoided? What impact does this have on innovation and growth?

1900

Reception followed by dinner

3. Dinner Topic: collaboration and cooperation

The shared geographical characteristics and common agenda of small island states mean that the collaboration and dissemination of knowledge are central to their combined future prosperity. The CARICOM Single Market and Economy and the University of the West Indies serve as examples of the mutual benefit of collaboration. How can this process be taken forward? What are the prospects of a monetary union between small islands? How can small islands work together in facing common threats and challenges?

In cases where small islands are already a member of international and/or regional institutions, what can be done to address the specific structural disadvantages they face? For example, Singapore's experience with ASEAN; and Madagascar and Mauritius within SADC. In the larger organisations such as the WTO and World Bank, small island representation is often described as inadequate – how can this be improved?

In regions such as the Pacific, preferential trade agreements between small island states are under-utilised due to both supply constraints and problems in implementing various provisions. What technical assistance can be provided in order to overcome these issues and create a better understanding of rules and consultations with preference granting countries?

Friday 23 November 2012

0800-0845

Buffet breakfast and check out.

0915

Participants depart

This is a preview programme and as such may be subject to change.

This conference is open to those with expertise to share or an interest in the theme; our aim is to have a broad spectrum of nationalities and institutions represented. The full cost of participation

Enquiries about participation: Sandry Koo, Programme Manager
Wilton Park, Wiston House, Steyning, West Sussex. BN44 3DZ
Telephone: +44 (0)1903 817765 Fax: +44 (0)1903 815244 Email: sandry.koo@wiltonpark.org.uk

Enquiries about the programme to: Kathryn Hingston, Programme Director
Wilton Park, Wiston House, Steyning, West Sussex. BN44 3DZ
Telephone: +44 (0)1903 817772 Fax: +44 (0)1903 879231 Email: kathryn.hingston@wiltonpark.org.uk