NEW CALEDONIA

INTRODUCTION
The Lapita, skilled navigators, first settled in New Caledonia around 1600 B.C. British explorers arrived in 1774. In 1853, France annexed New Caledonia. During World War II, New Caledonia became an important base for Allied troops. In 1953, French citizenship was granted to all inhabitants.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
President Emmanuel MACRON; represented by High Commissioner Patrice FAURE
Head of Government
President of the Government Louis MAPOU
Government Type
parliamentary democracy (Territorial Congress); an overseas collectivity of France
Capital
Noumea
Legislature
unicameral Territorial Congress or Congre du Territoire (54 seats)

GEOGRAPHY
Area
Total: 18,575 sq km
Land: 18,275 sq km
Water: 300 sq km
Climate
tropical; modified by southeast trade winds; hot, humid
Natural Resources
nickel, chrome, iron, cobalt, manganese, silver, gold, lead, copper

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
upper-middle-income French Pacific territorial economy; large tourism presence that was hit hard by COVID-19; nickel and other metals mining operations; continuing French subsidies; large exporter of nickel to China
GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $11.11 billion (2017 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $31,100 (2015 est.)
Industries – nickel mining and smelting
Agricultural products - coconuts, vegetables, maize, fruit, beef, pork, potatoes, bananas, eggs, yams
Exports $2.21 billion (2014 est.)
Iron alloys, nickel cobalt, carbonates, essential oils (2019)
partners: China 59%, South Korea 14%, Japan 11% (2019)
Imports $2.72 billion (2015 est.)
refined petroleum, aircraft, coal, cars, packaged medicines (2019)
partners: France 43%, Australia 12%, Singapore 12%, China 6% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
297,160 (2022 est.)
Population Growth
1.19% (2022 est.)
Ethnicity
Kanak 39.1%,
European 27.1%,
Wallisian, Futunian 8.2% Tahitian 2.1%, Indonesian 1.4%, Ni-Vanuatu 1%, Vietnamese 0.9%, other 17.7%, unspecified 2.5% (2014 est.)
Language
French (official), 33 Melanesian-Polynesian dialects
Religion
Christian 85.2%, Muslim 2.8%, other 1.6%, unaffiliated 10.4% (2020 est.)
Urbanization
urban population: 72.3% of total population (2022)
rate of urbanization: 1.72% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)