



Oceania Customs  
Organisation Secretariat

# CONFERENCE INFORMATION PACKAGE

## 26<sup>th</sup> OCO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

EDGEWATER RESORT & SPA  
RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS

29 - 31 July, 2024



*Kia Orana !*

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### CONFERENCE INFORMATION PACKAGE

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The Cook Islands Customs Service (Customs) within the Revenue Management Division, under Ministry of Finance Economic Management is pleased to host the 26<sup>th</sup> OCO Annual Conference for 2024. This logistics note is jointly prepared by the Cook Islands Customs Service and the OCO Secretariat to ensure a fulfilling and productive gathering for all OCO delegates and participants attending the conference.

#### 1. Conference Venue

The Conference will be held from 29 - 31 July 2024 at the Edgewater Resort and Spa. Kindly note morning and afternoon tea and lunch will be provided for the duration of the Conference.

##### **Physical Address**

The Edgewater Resort & Spa  
1 Puaikura Drive, Ruaau, Arorangi,  
Rarotonga, Cook Islands  
Tel: (682) 25 435  
<https://www.edgewater.co.ck/>

#### 2. Accommodation

The Secretariat has organized 40 block booked rooms at the main Conference venue, namely the Edgewater Resort and Spa. Accommodation has been arranged for participants at the rate of NZD\$304.00 (Garden Superior room type). The OCO and Cook Islands Customs will assist late registrations with their accommodation but can't make any guarantees. Given that this is a peak period for the Cook Islands, all self-funded delegates to the Conference are encouraged to book your room(s) as soon as possible to avoid any disappointment.

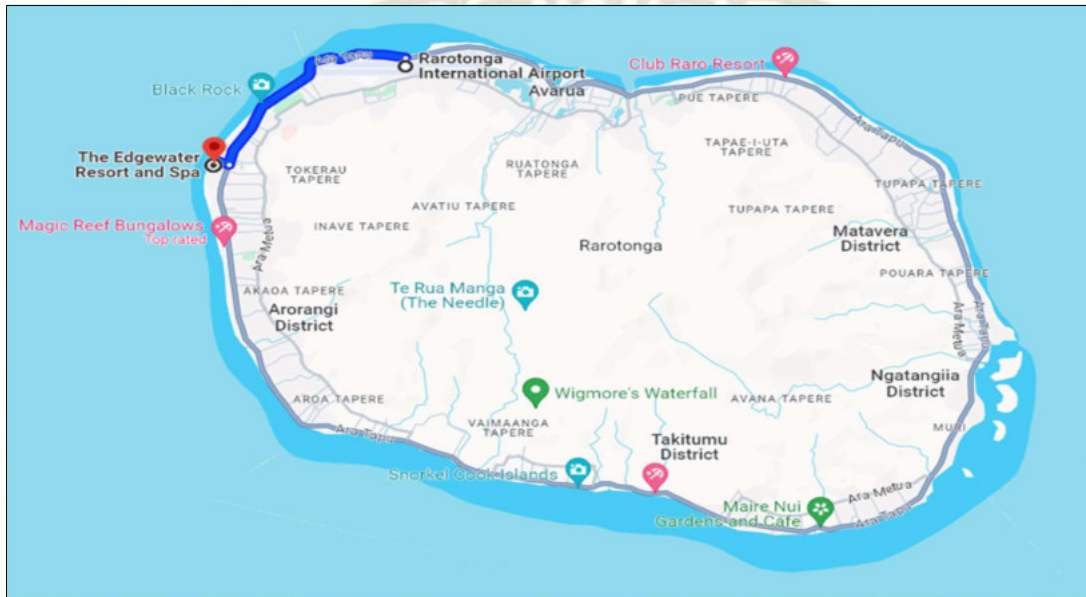
You may contact **Ms. Minirose Varu** at email: [res3@edgewater.co.ck](mailto:res3@edgewater.co.ck) to book directly with the Edgewater Resort and Spa. *Note OCO funded participants will have their accommodation pre-booked for the duration of the Annual Conference.*

Should a participant want to make pre-payment, please contact the hotel via email as provided.

## Physical Address & Maps

- Edgewater Resort and Spa  
1 Puaikura Drive, Ruaau, Arorangi,  
Rarotonga, Cook Islands  
Phone: +682 25 435  
Main contact: **Ms. Minirose Varu**  
Email: [res3@edgewater.co.ck](mailto:res3@edgewater.co.ck)

## MAP:



## **3. Travel Logistics, Hotel Transfers and Points of Contact**

Conference Planning Committee consist of Cook Islands Customs and OCO Secretariat staff and will be present at the Rarotonga International Airport to welcome participants on arrival and to assist with arrival formalities, luggage pick-up and airport transfers to the hotel. **Note a 'Special Lane' will be assigned for all Conference participants to assist in clearing Immigration and Customs at the Rarotonga International Airport. Look for the sign "OCO Conference."**

Transfers from the airport to the Edgewater Resort (and return), and to dinner venues back to Edgewater will be organized by Cook Islands Customs.

For those that have not provided travel itineraries, please provide your travelling details to the points of contact for OCO and Cook Islands Customs below:

### **Oceania Customs Organisation:**

Email: Ms. Stephanie Waqanivalagi at [stephaniew@ocosec.org](mailto:stephaniew@ocosec.org)  
Telephone: (+679) 7777410

### **Cook Islands Customs Service:**

Email: Mrs. Maria Matua-loane at [maria.matua@cookislands.gov.ck](mailto:maria.matua@cookislands.gov.ck)  
Telephone: + (682) 29510 ext. 7010 / Mobile: + (682) 55368

#### 4. Dress Code

As hosts, the Conference Planning Committee have agreed that for the official opening ceremony on the first day, conference participants are required to wear their full national Customs uniform or formal business attire. The dress code (button and polo shirts) will be provided by Cook Islands Customs and OCO for the remaining two days;

- **Day 2** (Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> July) – the Cook Islands Customs issued button and polo shirt.
- **Day 3** (Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> July) - the OCO Secretariat issued button down shirt.

#### 5. Immigration and Visa Requirements

Kindly be advised that all international passport holders must have a passport valid for a period of at least 6 months beyond their departure date from the Cook Islands. All New Zealand and Australian passport holders are allowed 90 days of stay in the Cook Islands, and all other international passport holders are allowed 31 days of stay, with an extension of up to another 31 days at no fee. You must have evidence of a valid outbound ticket or return ticket to your port of origin. On arrival in Rarotonga, you will need to show your air ticket confirmation (printed or digital) to an immigration officer. Note you must have proof of accommodation during your stay in the Cook Islands. On arrival in Rarotonga, you will need to show your accommodation booking confirmation (printed or digital) to an immigration officer.

If you have any questions, contact the Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration on [immigration2@cookislands.gov.ck](mailto:immigration2@cookislands.gov.ck)

Please visit <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/visas/visa/business-visitors-visa> for more information. It is important to note that you may require a New Zealand entry visa when transiting Auckland. Please check to ensure you have the relevant visa(s) prior to travelling.

#### 6. Telecommunications

Vodafone Cook Islands is the current mobile provider for telecommunications services in the country. 4G+ mobile data is available on Rarotonga. There are WiFi hotspots at prime locations spread across all islands.

You can get a preloaded Vodafone Cook Islands Travel SIM card. These are available at the Vodafone store at the Rarotonga International Airport just as you exit the arrival hall, open every international flight – day or night. Travel SIM cards are preloaded with mobile data, calling minutes, and TXTs to anywhere in the world. Click <https://help.vodafone.co.ck/article/146-visitor-simcard> to check out their traveler plans available. Check with your current mobile provider to see if your device

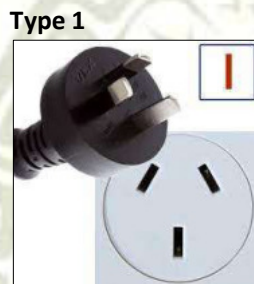
is network locked (as it may need to be unlocked before your visit. Vodafone's Travel SIM cards are also available as an eSIM.

Wi-Fi will be available at the Edgewater Resort and Spa where the participants are accommodated.

## 7. Electricity

In the Cook Islands, they use the same type of plug/outlet, as you would find in New Zealand and Australia, the type I plug with slanted prongs. Cook Islands has Type 1 power plugs with 240v AC 50Hz, so if your appliances don't fit the electrical outlets and/or require a different voltage or frequency, then you're going to need a travel adapter and maybe even a converter.

It is advisable that you purchase a universal power adapter.



## 8. Currency and Banking

The Cook Islands unit of currency is the New Zealand dollar (NZD), supplemented by local coins. The unique local coins and notes are not legal tender outside of the Cook Islands but are keenly sought by collectors worldwide.

Bank of the South Pacific (BSP), Bank of the Cook Islands (BCI) and Australia & New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ) are located in downtown Avarua. Open Monday-Friday from 9 am-3 pm

Foreign currency exchange is available on the island of Rarotonga only, via the Bank of the Cook Islands and Western Union/No.1 Currency Exchange, located in the Avarua town area. Foreign currency exchange options offered are:

- Bank of the Cook Islands: USD, AUD, FJD, CAD, GBP, XPF

Western Union/No.1 Currency Exchange: USD, AUD, GBP, FRF, EUR, CAD, FJD

## 9. International Time

Cook Islands' time is GMT-10 hours. UTC -10:00 hours. Do your calculation before arrival, as booking accommodation to start a day too late is a common mistake.

## 10. Official Language

The official languages of the Cook Islands are Cook Islands Maori and English, English is widely spoken on the island of Rarotonga. While Cook Islands Maori is predominantly used in the outer islands (Pa Enea) of the Cook Islands.

## 11. Climate

The Cook Islands enjoy a pleasantly warm and sunny climate all year round!

**June to August** - Cooler months – it can get cold at times, so bring something warm

**November to March** - Warmer seasons with occasional tropical showers

**April to November** - Drier months with an average temperature of 26°C

**December to March** - Warmer, humid and damper season with temperatures between 22°C (min) and 31°C (max)

## 12. Culture

The Cook Islands is a modern Pacific nation whose people are a cosmopolitan blend of their ancient Polynesian heritage, with a European twist. There are so many ways to immerse yourself in our culture and slip into the laidback life the locals have created. Cook Islanders are happy, friendly and vibrant people who love engaging with travelers and sharing their lifestyle with their visitors. From lazing on the beach, and shopping at the markets, to enjoying local dishes and a cocktail as the sun sets at a local beach bar, the locals are right there with you, sharing in the magic and joy of island life

## 13. Conference Program

Time	Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
	<b>Agenda</b>
9:00am – 4:00pm	'Meet and Greet' Picnic hosted by Cook Islands Customs Service
	<b>Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2024</b>
9:00am – 2:00pm	Church Service followed Lunch
	<b>Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024</b>
8:30am – 5:30pm	1 <sup>st</sup> day of OCO Conference
7:00pm- 10:00pm	Official Opening Dinner hosted by OCO Secretariat ( <i>Oceania Night</i> ) at the Highland Paradise.

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

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<b>8:30am</b>	–	
<b>5.30pm</b>		2 <sup>nd</sup> day of OCO Conference
<b>7:00pm-</b>		
<b>10:00pm</b>		Dinner hosted by Australia & New Zealand at Te Vara Nui’s

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024**

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<b>8:30am</b>	–	
<b>3:00pm</b>		3 <sup>rd</sup> day of OCO Conference
<b>6:30pm-</b>		Closing Dinner hosted by Cook Islands Customs at the
<b>10pm</b>		Tamarind House

**Note:** Invitation cards to be issued upon registration shall provide details of the social functions/events.

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