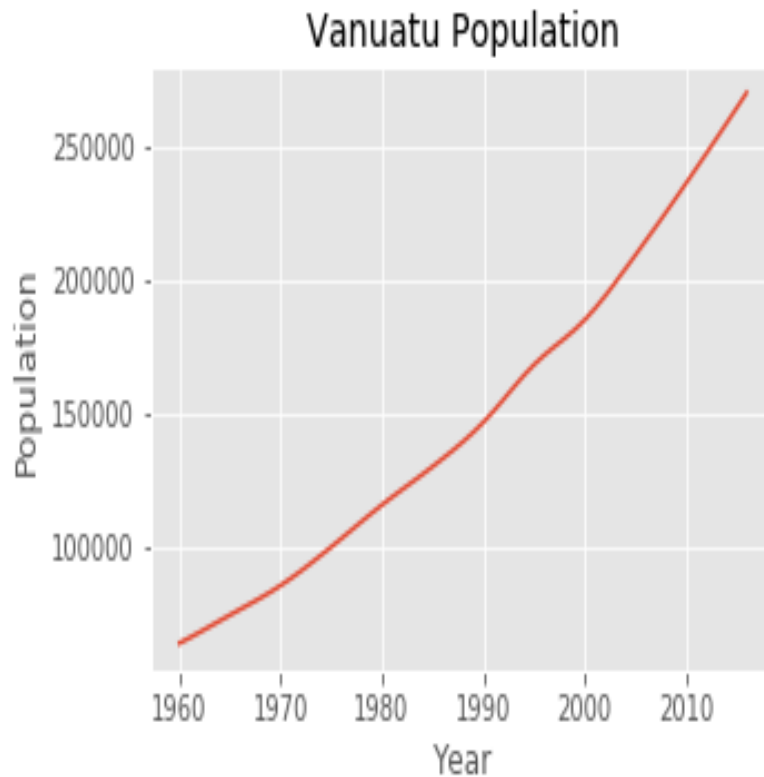


Vanuatu



Vanuatu (English: /ˈvænʊˈtuː/ (listen) VAH-noo-AH-too or /vænˈwʊtuː/ van-WAH-too; Bislama, French IPA: [vanuatu]), officially the Republic of Vanuatu (French: République de Vanuatu, Bislama: Ripablik blong Vanuatu), is a Pacific island nation located in the South Pacific Ocean. The archipelago, which is of volcanic origin, is 1,750 kilometres (1,090 mi) east of northern Australia, 540 kilometres (340 mi) northeast of New Caledonia, east of New Guinea, southeast of the Solomon Islands, and west of Fiji. Vanuatu was first inhabited by Melanesian people. The first Europeans to visit the islands were a Spanish expedition led by Portuguese navigator Fernandes de Queirós, who arrived on the largest island in 1606. Since the Portuguese and Spanish monarchies had been unified under the king of Spain in 1580 (following the vacancy of the Portuguese throne, which lasted for sixty years, until 1640, when the Portuguese monarchy was restored), Queirós claimed the archipelago for Spain, as part of the colonial Spanish East Indies, and named it La Austrialia del Espíritu Santo.