Data Collection

China does not publish official data on its aid program at a country level. It also does not provide a regular annual aid budget; agreements on funding have traditionally been ad hoc. Finding accurate information is therefore more challenging than for other donors. The data collection process for this project was multifaceted. But it involved four main phases.

1. Searching official government documents of Pacific island countries
   - Including budget documents, treasury statements, parliamentary or congressional acts, committee reports
   - These sources were used for finding data on project costs and type of funding

2. Searching Chinese government websites and official statements
   - Including Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, and Embassy and Economic and Commercial Counsellor websites
   - Including announcements of project agreements, groundbreaking ceremonies, and handover ceremonies
   - These sources were used for finding data on project timeframes, Chinese contractors, and type of funding

3. Searching secondary sources for references to specific projects
   - Including media reports (Chinese and in Pacific island countries), announcements on Chinese contractor websites/annual reports, YouTube entries, official Facebook pages, and photos of projects
   - These sources were used for confirming specific details of projects, particularly project start and completion dates, the name of the Chinese contractor, and project components

4. Interviews, site visits, direct requests
   - Including interviews with key government officials in Fiji (2009; 2014), Cook Islands (2013) and Papua New Guinea (2009) and visits to project sites
   - Including direct email requests to Chinese representatives, project managers, government officials in specific departments, other key stakeholders throughout the Pacific islands region
   - These were used to verify specific details of projects

Information was crosschecked across multiple sources. Information from official Chinese and Pacific island government sources and project documents was privileged over media reports, as the latter can be unreliable (e.g. projects announced more than once; confusion in type of aid; inadvertent errors in project costs). When there was a slight discrepancy in project cost, the RMB figure was used, as the difference is likely due to currency conversion.
Reference Documents

In addition to confidential interviews, site visits, and direct email requests, the following references were used in the data collection process.

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