

Pacific Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy

Survey of Pacific Islands Forum Members

Consolidated Results



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

October 2022

Survey Period: February 2022- July 2022

Number of Respondents: 19

Countries: 7

FSM
Fiji
Papua New Guinea
Vanuatu
Solomon Islands
Tonga
New Caledonia

Respondents' Organizations:

Ministry or department
responsible for trade or economy 6

Customs administration 2

Ministry or department
responsible for biosecurity 3

Other government ministry or
department 5

Private sector 3

How Important are the following Regional Actions?	Don't Know		Not Important		Somewhat Important		Very Important	
	(no.)	(%)	(no.)	(%)	(no.)	(%)	(no.)	(%)
1 A regional Model Customs Auditor Manual	2	11%	0	0%	5	26%	12	63%
2 A regional customs valuation database as a risk assessment tool	0	0%	1	5%	5	26%	13	68%
3 A regional procedure for customs-to-customs exchange of customs valuation information	0	0%	2	11%	4	21%	13	68%
4 A regional mechanism to provide, upon request, expert assistance for post-clearance audits	2	11%	0	0%	5	26%	12	63%
5 A system for regional electronic exchange of risk information	1	5%	0	0%	6	32%	12	63%
6 A regional risk management framework	0	0%	0	0%	4	21%	15	79%
7 Model legal provisions for customs clearance simplifications in trade agreements; model regulation, SOPs, practical guides; regional training programs	1	5%	0	0%	2	11%	16	84%
8 Legal instrument on regional mutual recognition of authorized operators	2	11%	1	6%	5	28%	10	56%
9 Legal provisions, SOP and technical guidelines for establishment and administration of an advance customs rulings program	1	6%	0	0%	8	44%	9	50%
10 Legal instrument on regional mutual recognition of advance rulings	1	5%	0	0%	9	47%	9	47%
11 Model legal provisions for control procedures for imported goods subject to sanitary/phytosanitary or technical measures; Joint Border Agency procedures manual; regional training programs	1	5%	0	0%	3	16%	15	79%
12 A regional database to notify and share test result information	2	11%	0	0%	4	21%	13	68%
13 Designate accredited laboratories in Pacific region authorized to carry out confirmatory tests for goods imported to any PIC	2	11%	0	0%	4	21%	13	68%
14 Model legislation to enable electronic transactions and payments	0	0%	0	0%	6	32%	13	68%

15	A regional committee to promote/guide harmonized development of national electronic systems to ensure regional interconnectivity	1	5%	0	0%	7	37%	11	58%
16	Harmonized technical standards to enable regional exchange of data related to cross-border movement of goods	0	0%	0	0%	4	21%	15	79%
17	Model legislation, procedures and/or guidance on regulatory impact assessment (RIA) for trade facilitation	1	5%	0	0%	3	16%	15	79%
18	A mechanism for: (i) regional exchange of information on standards and best practices for import, export or transit procedures that are proposed or under review in international organizations (ii) representation of PIC's views at such organizations	1	5%	0	0%	6	32%	12	63%
19	A regional or subregional enquiry point that answers trade-related questions on behalf of all participating Pacific countries	1	5%	0	0%	9	47%	9	47%
20	A regional or subregional website that publishes trade-related information of all participating Pacific countries	0	0%	0	0%	7	37%	12	63%
21	Legal provisions, SOP and technical guidelines for establishment and administration of (i) national trade information website (ii) national enquiry point	0	0%	0	0%	5	26%	14	74%

Proposed Regional Action - Comments

1 A regional Model Customs Auditor Manual

- FSM is a member of Oceanic Customs Off (OCO) and in addition, FSM Customs is under the purview of a separate department (FSM Department of Finance & Administrative).
- A well thought out Customs Auditor Manual would assist taking the Regional Trade Facilitation forward.
- Regional level of audits to be conducted
- The region need to have such model as we have the MSGTA3 and other regional arrangement that needed such Manual.
- I believe most OCO countries have such manuals already.
- It provides common objectives to countries regionally.
- Its important to guide audit process.
- It has to be based on a Management System Standard which specifies the requirements that need to be conformed to.
- Not too familiar with the Documents
- There is doubt of the importance to all play on the same rules and understanding
- This is important in order to have a regional harmonized System because if not then different systems could be technical barriers to movements of goods and services.
- This would allow for consistency and transparency in processes regarding auditing.
- We currently have an outdated SOP in place, this manual could really assist our PCA team in conducting audit work.

2 A regional customs valuation database as a risk assessment tool

- I believe this is part of the OCO regional training packet for the Customs Offices in the region
- It may be used as a reference document.
- Valuation known all across the region
- Countries need to implement this nationally first before taking it to a regional level.
- Good for analysis
- To record risk levels and frauds.
- The purpose of a Management System is to reduce risks and provide efficient services. The first step is to identify the risks and determine how they can be minimized or removed and to identify high risk points in the system. So, yes, it is very important.
- Must link Biosecurity as they deal with import and export also
- This is important for consistency
- This is very important to check and verify value of imported goods.
- This would be good to benchmark customs valuation to and identify conformity procedures undertaken.

3 A regional procedure for customs-to-customs exchange of customs valuation information

- Again, I believe this is OCO's aspirations. It would be advisable to work with OCO
- This may depend on country to country requirements.
- to maintain compliances regionally
- Countries need to implement this nationally first before taking it to a regional level.
- Good for benchmarking

- it is important to share information on valuations issues to actually target false invoicing.
- Very frustrating when there are different rules applied in different countries.
- Must link with Biosecurity also
- Consistency
- This is important when trying to verify information from regional countries.
- Perhaps a MOU for cooperation in sharing customs valuation information.

4 A regional mechanism to provide, upon request, expert assistance for post-clearance audits

- Given the limited capacity in FSM, this would be a great success for the government service providers as well as the private sector
- But time consuming and costly.
- post clearance audit assistance for compliances
- Expertise assistance in areas of Customs is always useful.
- for technical and support.
- It would be helpful, if issues arose.
- Link with Biosecurity
- Improve & fasten facilitating of clearance
- Important to measure and improve compliances.
- This post clearance audit should not only be limited to Customs but also biosecurity and other related port-specific agencies.
- Especially when it comes to new products, clarification assistance is really needed.

5 A system for regional electronic exchange of risk information

- It would be a great idea, but I am not sure given the development levels as well as different institutional and structural setups in the Pacific.
- More enhanced electronic method and cost effective, for boarder security.
- regional information exchange on the same platform
- would be of assistance to share information
- Nothing is more frustrating than a lack of knowledge. An awareness of risk information beforehand prevents embarrassment and anger.
- Share the tools with Biosecurity
- Maintain update risk information
- Important for risk management in order to identify, and control risks.
- Allow for access to risk information both customs and biosecurity related will be beneficial.
- High level of sanitary and phytosanitary regulation at border control. A regional system will help to assess the risks

6 A regional risk management framework

- To assist maintain safe Borders.
- regional risk is commonly mitigated
- Avoid duplication by pooling of resources together
- To support the operations risk management assessment.

- Make sure the regional risk management framework is aligned with ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management-Guidelines and ISO 31004:2013 Risk management "Guidance for the implementation of ISO 31000 when creating this framework.
- Link to Biosecurity
- Play on same page in managing risk
- A regional risk management framework is very important to help any organization with implementing, monitoring, reviewing and continually improving risk management processes throughout any organization.
- This is very important especially in resolving risk issues that we commonly face as a region.
- High priority in implementation at national level. Shortage of HR

7 Model legal provisions for customs clearance simplifications in trade agreements; model regulation, SOPs, practical guides; regional training programs

- FSM is not a party to any of the trade agreement in the region and it may not be advisable to impose something that may not be in the interest of the private sector, government, and above all the compact of free association with USA.
- Will bring about the required efficiency.
- regional legal compliances
- Regional templates will be really useful to assist administrations in their efforts to facilitate trade and to harmonize the procedures in the region to facilitate trade.
- For good governance and users protection.
- its important to facilitate trade
- A system of management must have SOP's to ensure that all personnel across the region are doing the same thing. This will definitely require training.
- Link to Biosecurity
- Consistency
- A regional and harmonized model legal provisions are very important for advancing the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit.
- This will be very helpful to both Government and NSAs. The tools mentioned should be developed with the specific end-user in mind to ensure it is implementable.
- Technical assistance is required for model legal provision and regional training programs

8 Legal instrument on regional mutual recognition of authorized operators

- I am not sure I fully understand this question
- Govt. to Govt. understanding of the initiatives.
- regional operators recognition is welcomed
- Not many businesses operate in multiple countries at the moment.
- they need this recognition to improve their compliance and create good partnership.
- Most important.
- Prefer national operators
- Consistency
- It is very important to have list of authorized operators in the system or Customs Clearance Offices.

- This would be beneficial and allow for the expedited movement of goods imported/exported across the region.
- One of our priorities is trying to implement AEO, this assistance will for sure take us a step closer in implementing AEO.
- Trade facilitation activities will facilitate the private sector commitment

9 Legal provisions, SOP and technical guidelines for establishment and administration of an advance customs rulings program

- I am not sure I understand the intention of this question
- To maintain a streamlined processes and systems.
- This will definitely be useful since not many countries have such advance Customs ruling in place. However, from my experience, traders hardly request for advance rulings.
- important
- SOP and technical guidelines must be detailed in Regulations with penalties. That is the only way that we can ensure that managements systems requirements are complied with.
- But run sovereign SATE
- Consistency
- A standard operating procedure (SOP) is very important for Organizations to achieve efficiency, uniform performance, quality control, and regulatory compliance.
- National Customs Agencies would still need to confirm if this is something that they wish to pursue and if they have the necessary capacity to implement.
- We do have provisions in our law to allow advanced rulings, however we lack SOP and guidelines on doing advanced rulings.
- Asycuda - Sydonia World fully implemented ; Reform of NC's custom tariff implemented

10 Legal instrument on regional mutual recognition of advance rulings

- What will be the benefits of the LDCs and SIDS in the Pacific?
- An instrument to be guided by.
- regional legal recognition is important
- Only if demand is therefore from the trading community.
- important
- Very important to reduce disputes.
- Not well versed
- Consistency
- Legal instrument on regional mutual recognition is important for making uniformed rulings and decisions.
- National Customs Agencies would still need to confirm if this is something that they wish to pursue and if they have the necessary capacity to implement.

11 Model legal provisions for control procedures for imported goods subject to sanitary/phytosanitary or technical measures; Joint Border Agency procedures manual; regional training programs

- It would be great, but again I am not sure what will be the response of the Customs Office
- Hopefully the Regional countries are in agreement with this.
- regional phytosanitary compliances is important with manuals and training for having similar understanding and processes
- Harmonizing SPS measures would be beneficial for all countries.
- To avoid risks
- important
- Yes.
- Led by Biosecurity
- Consistency
- Important for any decisions made on SPS/TBT are regionally uniformed and harmonized.
- This is very useful and seen as a way to strengthen border control coordination and cooperation.
- We're working on closer collaboration with other border agencies. This assistance will expand our knowledge in viewing and sharing information from different perspectives.
- Technical assistance regional training programs will help. Shortage of HR at national level

12 A regional database to notify and share test result information

- common information basis
- Will leave this to the Testing experts to comment on this.
- Will be Helpful to other countries
- to share information.
- Yes, very important.
- Sharing for consistency
- A regional database is important so that Importers can always check that goods are met approved Standards
- Useful if can cover for both Customs and Biosecurity.
- Regional procedures will help. Shortage of HR at national level

13 Designate accredited laboratories in Pacific region authorized to carry out confirmatory tests for goods imported to any PIC

- It will be a great idea, however given the geographical location of FSM from the rest of the South Pacific, shipping may be an issue (cost & time).
- standardized lab tests are important for guiding compliances
- Will leave this to the Testing experts to comment on this.
- This is the Best option as this will avoid unnecessarily costs to some of the countries in the regions.
- important
- To satisfy the TFA Article 5 (3) Test procedures paragraph (3.2) it must be done.
- Share resources with limited budget countries

- Important because many goods entering developing countries are sub-standards products or never met approved Standards. In addition, most of these PICs did not have the necessary accredited laboratories.
- This would be good for Tonga as we do not have any accredited laboratory for testing good imported but it should also be cost-efficient to utilize.
- We're looking forward to this as we don't have the necessary resources to carry out testing of nutrition content levels.
- Several laboratories (public & private) in NC which could be accredited at the regional level

14 Model legislation to enable electronic transactions and payments

- For us in the government, this is something we would like to see however majority of our private sector still prefer the old school primarily because of cyber-security.
- For streamlined and cost effective systems and procedures.
- ease of doing business
- Most countries should have this, but any model will be welcome to ensure conformity.
- Consumer protection
- Its important to tackle valuation issues on e-commerce.
- Please include this in a model legislation.
- Fasten and minimize risk
- Very important to have database on payments made
- It will be good to understand what model legislation will be used and to confirm what is already being used by PICs so as not to duplicate but be complementary.
- National development of electronic transactions and payments effective

15 A regional committee to promote/guide harmonized development of national electronic systems to ensure regional interconnectivity

- For Regional safety and knowledge sharing to enhance the electronic systems.
- ease of communications with all regional trading nations
- I would start with national customs and single window systems first before going regionally.
- important
- Yes. I would agree with this. To harmonize development of national electronic systems, there must communication and collaboration within the region.
- Share resources / skills
- Important that we have a regional and harmonized system
- This is important but at the same time to identify if there are already existing regional committees that can be utilized for this purpose.
- No single window implemented at national level yet

16 Harmonized technical standards to enable regional exchange of data related to cross-border movement of goods

- Nil
- pre-alerts for goods movements for meeting compliances

- Should be useful for policy and trade negotiations. OCO and SPS are doing something on a regional trade database. Best not to duplicate?
- important
- Yes. There will definitely be financial implications, but the return on investment would outweigh this.
- Helps minimize risk of drugs, etc.
- Harmonized technical standards are important because if not then technical standards could barriers to trade.
- Technical standards will vary according to the PIC and should be developed in a way that is not too onerous on PICs and the level of development of each PICs be considered.
- High level standards requirements regarding sanitary & phytosanitary border control measures

17 *Model legislation, procedures and/or guidance on regulatory impact assessment (RIA) for trade facilitation*

- regional compliances of all traded goods
- Would be useful to see the impact of adopting trade facilitation measures in the countries.
- important
- This is something that has never been done in Vanuatu, so authorities create Regulations that are hardly enforced since the impact has never been assessed.
- Most of my selection above from 1 to 17 is on "very Important" this is because I believe going regional would speed up the process of implementation. On the legislation side, most of these are identified as "C" in the Vanuatu notification submitted to the WTO.
- Consistency
- Model legislation is important for trade facilitation because there are some trade agreements which trading economies are obliged to meet
- Important as a m & e assessment.
- an RIA would really assist us as we are currently having issues with too many exemptions in place, and RIA should be able to assist us in knowing what is benefiting the govt and what is not.

18 *A mechanism for: (i) regional exchange of information on standards and best practices for import, export or transit procedures that are proposed or under review in international organizations (ii) representation of PIC's views at such organizations*

- regional views for trade (imports and exports) is important at international levels for coordination
- Again sharing of standards between the PIC's will be useful.
- important
- This needs to be done.
- Consistency
- Important that we have harmonized systems in order to comply with Trading Agreements

- Important for PICs that are not as developed as others to gain insights to the effective implementation and what good practices can be applied at a regional level.

19 A regional or subregional enquiry point that answers trade-related questions on behalf of all participating Pacific countries

- Regional information center
- It would be useful to ensure traders get a timely and standard response, but it would be a challenge until all countries can conform to the standards or are able to publish their trade requirements online.
- important to consider
- Yes, definitely.
- Depend on the capacity of each country
- Important but important that enquiries are answered by specific PICs
- That will be useful but the enquiry point should be well-versed will all participating Pacific countries trade policy and practices.
- Quite difficult regarding heterogeneous PICS regulatory framework

20 A regional or subregional website that publishes trade-related information of all participating Pacific countries

- For the information and guidance of participating Pacific countries.
- Equivalence of measures disseminated for regional trade
- The Trade Portals currently being rolled out under PACER Plus should be useful.
- information will be available for trade related matters,
- This is absolutely important.
- Linking of the Trade Portal & National single window websites.
- Share resources / skills, etc.
- Important so that anyone requesting information on certain trade-related information then they can check the website
- Dedicated website will assist in reducing times on researching for information.
- Benchmark & availability of information for the National Export Facilitation Office

21 Legal provisions, SOP and technical guidelines for establishment and administration of (i) national trade information website (ii) national enquiry point

- Once again this is an education platform.
- Ease of communications and contacts
- To ensure trade portals are well maintained, useful and relevant.
- No further comments.
- There must be legal provisions, SOP and technical guidelines for establishment and administration of a national trade information website and national enquiry point so that it has weight.
- special funding for national enquiry point should be a priority, as with the experience of the National TFSC secretariat, there is already so much in the plate as the agency responsible might have its human resource capacity constraint and might have its own mandate to cover up.
- Improve performance and consistency

- Important that SOP and technical guidelines are harmonized
- Agree with SOP and technical guides for administration of national trade information website and national enquiry point to ensure information is updated on a regular basis and that enquiry points answer any queries directed to them.
- (i) NTIW : urgent need to mutualize various national agencies websites (ii) yes, especially regarding investment promotion