

Pacific Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy

Survey of Pacific Islands Forum Members

Consolidated Results



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

December 2021

Survey Period:	September 2021- November 2021
Number of Respondents:	20
Countries:	9
	Cook Islands
	Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)
	Fiji
	New Zealand
	Papua New Guinea
	Samoa
	Tonga
	Tuvalu
	Vanuatu
Respondents' Organizations:	
Ministry or department responsible for trade or economy	8
Customs administration	4
Ministry or department responsible for biosecurity (including agriculture, fisheries)	2
Other government ministry or department	3
Private sector	3

Question

2 Has your country published a national policy, strategy or implementation plan on trade facilitation? If so, please provide the website address where it can be accessed.

Yes	45%
No	55%

3 Which of the following statements best describes your country's situation in regard to establishment of a National Trade Facilitation Committee?

<i>We have not yet formally established a National Trade Facilitation Committee</i>	15%
<i>We have formally established a National Trade Facilitation Committee but it is not fully operational</i>	30%
<i>We have formally established a National Trade Facilitation Committee and it is fully operational</i>	55%

4 What are the trade facilitation objectives of your country (select all that apply)?

<i>To increase export volume and /or diversity</i>	85%
<i>To comply with trade facilitation provisions of regional/international agreements (e.g., WTO TFA, PACER Plus, EU EPA)</i>	75%
<i>To reduce costs of imported goods to national consumers/producers</i>	75%
<i>To increase trade/investment with Pacific regional partners (deepen regional integration)</i>	80%
<i>To support development of e-commerce business sector</i>	75%
<i>To support development of small and medium business sector</i>	85%
<i>To support development of other specific sector (please indicate sector(s))*</i>	45%
<i>Other objective(s) (please specify)</i>	0%

*** Other Specific Sectors Indicated**

Services sector

Production and manufacturing sectors including agriculture, processing, etc.

Agriculture and Services

The sector that the TFA will assist the most is the agriculture sector and the manufacturing sector

Movement of Natural Persons is a major plank. Air services provision.

Manufacturers and Exporters

Agriculture and Fisheries Sector

Domestic manufacturing and processing sector

Agriculture
 Fisheries
 Tourism
 Domestic Manufacturing/Processing

Agriculture, Fisheries, Tourism
 Development of Trade in Services - specific to Labour Mobility, Movement of Natural persons etc.

Fisheries
 Agriculture
 Business Department
 Tourism etc

Productive Sector

5 Over the next 5 years, what are the trade facilitation implementation priorities in your country?

	Low Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority	Don't Know/ No Opinion
<i>Planning/preparation (e.g., conduct time release study, develop national strategy/workplan, general capacity building, etc.)</i>	5%	35%	55%	5%
<i>Transparency of information (e.g., website publication)</i>	5%	30%	60%	5%
<i>Stakeholder engagement (e.g., private sector consultation, opportunity to comment on proposed rules)</i>	5%	15%	75%	5%
<i>Legal rulings and decisions (e.g. Customs advance rulings, appeal procedures)</i>	5%	25%	55%	15%
<i>Border agency control procedures (e.g., risk management, customs audit, coordination/cooperation of border authorities)</i>	5%	10%	80%	5%
<i>Clearance processes (e.g., simplified customs declaration/release procedures, authorized operator program)</i>	5%	10%	75%	10%
<i>Fees and Formalties (e.g., reduction/simplification of fees and/or documents and data requirements for import or export)</i>	0%	20%	65%	15%

<i>Electronic information exchange (e.g., ASYCUDA World; electronic payment; electronic application and issuance of SPS certificates; ePhyto system)</i>	5%	5%	85%	5%
<i>Electronic Single Window</i>	10%	25%	50%	15%
<i>Physical infrastructure for trade facilitation (e.g., port equipment, warehousing facilities)</i>	5%	10%	75%	10%
<i>Other (please specify)</i>				

6 In regard to those same types of trade facilitation activities, where do you think your country stands in terms of implementation progress?

	Not Implemented	Planning Stage	Partially Implemented	Fully Implemented	Don't Know
<i>Planning/preparation (e.g., conduct time release study, develop national strategy/workplan, general capacity building, etc.)</i>	10%	25%	45%	10%	10%
<i>Transparency of information (e.g., website publication)</i>	10%	25%	30%	25%	10%
<i>Stakeholder engagement (e.g., private sector consultation, opportunity to comment on proposed rules)</i>	10%	10%	45%	25%	10%
<i>Legal rulings and decisions (e.g. Customs advance rulings, appeal procedures)</i>	15%	5%	25%	30%	25%
<i>Border agency control procedures (e.g., risk management, customs audit, coordination/cooperation of border authorities)</i>	5%	15%	45%	20%	15%
<i>Clearance processes (e.g., simplified customs declaration/release procedures, authorized operator program)</i>	10%	10%	35%	20%	25%
<i>Fees and Formalities (e.g., reduction/simplification of fees and/or documents and data requirements for import or export)</i>	10%	25%	25%	15%	25%
<i>Electronic information exchange (e.g., ASYCUDA World; electronic payment; electronic application and issuance of SPS certificates; ePhyto system)</i>	10%	15%	55%	10%	10%

<i>Electronic Single Window</i>	50%	10%	10%	5%	25%
<i>Physical infrastructure for trade facilitation (e.g., port equipment, warehousing facilities)</i>	25%	15%	20%	20%	20%
<i>Other (please specify)</i>					

7 What barriers to implementation of your trade facilitation priorities have you encountered (select all that apply)?

<i>No or insufficient technical assistance and capacity building (TACB) support for implementation</i>	25%
<i>Limited time/number of government officials to oversee/carry out implementation</i>	15%
<i>Limited national budget to finance the reforms</i>	10%
<i>Limited know-how</i>	5%
<i>Lack of coordination among government institutions</i>	5%
<i>Private sector lacks capacity</i>	15%
<i>Overriding/competing national priorities (e.g., COVID 19 response)</i>	15%
<i>Other (please specify)*</i>	

*** Other Barriers Specified**

The form does not allow me to select all Trade Facilitation barriers that apply to FSM

None - problem is that although we have counterparts with developed countries like NZ and Au they are not respected and yet they are carrying out the national functions of both countries. If they are not respected then let NZ and AU do 100% unload inspection on every container and we also do the same. The officials are competent and do carry out their role but should ask that NZ and AU counterparts also provide certification of compliance.

All the above applies

8 Has TACB support for your country's implementation of trade facilitation measures been provided or planned?

<i>Yes</i>	55%
<i>No</i>	20%
<i>Don't Know</i>	25%

9 If yes, please indicate the donor organization and general type of support provided or planned to be provided.

Don't know

NA

World Bank Group, IMO, IPPC, Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation

NA

There is not been any donor identified yet, but government is providing funding through the budget process to implement some of the articles.

Variety of donors but because they do it inhouse to to speak with experts there is little transfer of capacity and once this is withdrawn there is a gradual decline in competence. It is not helped that officials tend to move on fairly regularly.

*Post-clearance audit (PCA) training offered by WCO and OCO;
ADB assistance to procure border machinery;
ADB support to develop TRS
World Bank assistance to develop Samoa's TFA implementation plan.*

New Zealand and Australia assist with the implementation of Pacer Plus

n/a

Not sure

AusAID

Don't know

World Bank provided TA for setting up the trade facilitation committee

- 1. Australian Govt, New Zealand Govt, UNCTAD - Capacity building, technical expertise, Customs Automated System e.g. ASYCUDA Project; Tonga Trade Portal*
- 2. World Customs Organization - Mercator Program - Capacity building, technical expertise e.g. Time Release Study; Risk Management; Post Clearance Audit*
- 3. Oceanic Customs Organization - capacity building*
- 4. Australian Govt - E-commerce readiness assessment; Cross border paperless trade*

1. World Bank - Technical Assistance

2. IMF - Technical Assistance

3. World Customs Organization - Technical Assistance & Capacity building

4. Oceania Customs organization - Technical Assistance & Capacity building

5. PACER Plus Implementation Unit - Technical Assistance & Capacity building

6. Australian Government - Technical Assistance, Capacity building, technological support (PACER Plus ASYCUDA Project)

7. New Zealand Government - Technical Assistance, Capacity building, technological support (PACER Plus ASYCUDA Project)

8. UNCTAD - Technical Assistance, Capacity building, technological support (ASYCUDA World system development and implementation)

1. World Bank - Technical Assistance

2. IMF - Technical Assistance

3. World Customs Organization - Technical Assistance & Capacity building

4. Oceania Customs organization - Technical Assistance & Capacity building

5. PACER Plus Implementation Unit - Technical Assistance & Capacity building

6. Australian Government - Technical Assistance, Capacity building, technological support (PACER Plus ASYCUDA Project)

7. New Zealand Government - Technical Assistance, Capacity building, technological support (PACER Plus ASYCUDA Project)

8. UNCTAD - Technical Assistance, Capacity building, technological support (ASYCUDA World system development and implementation)

n/a

n/a

EIF - improve the capacity of private sectors in providing facilities , develop the capacity of DoT's staffs

UNESCAP - assists the EIF Project and DoT in implementing of activities.

10 In your view, which of your trade facilitation priorities most require technical assistance and capacity building support, and what type of support is required?

Review and updating trade/investment legislations, services sector, SPS/TBT sector, Investment/Labour mobility and public service capacity building

Stakeholder engagement, Transparency of information, Fees and Formalities, Clearance processes, Electronic information exchange, Electronic Single Window

National Single Window System, Risk Management, Trade Portal, Test procedures.

Not required

Technical assistance is mostly needed in articles 1-3 and 5 and 7, 8 and 10

NONE - Compliance needs to be ingrained and a training system implemented by the officials we do not need experts as they are in and out and we need to maintain the standards and systems. Also implementation requires compliance with the Governments policies and often we cannot understand what policy direction is being followed by the experts as they are not aware of the National Guidance documents.

- Release and clearance of goods - prioritize training and capacity building of Customs officials in the whole process;

- Need assistance to review outdated SOPs.

- TACB for setup of Customs Appeal Authority

To improve the Clearance Process. To simplify the documentation process. To use electronic procedures where practical.

To make trade across borders faster, and cheaper (reduce associated cost burdens) and more predictable, whilst ensuring its safety and security.

Not sure

SPS

Simplification of processes at the border. Need to conduct a study to review the processes.

Physical infrastructure for trade facilitation (e.g., port equipment, warehousing facilities)

Clearance processes (e.g., simplified customs declaration/release procedures, authorized operator program)

1. Clearance processes (e.g., simplified customs declaration/release procedures, authorized operator program) - Technical Assistance & Capacity building

2. Electronic information exchange (e.g., ASYCUDA World; electronic payment; electronic application and issuance of SPS certificates; ePhyto system) - Technical Assistance & Capacity building

3. Electronic Single Window - Technical Assistance & Capacity building

Development of Infrastructure, electronic single window establishment, sharing of information

Planning/preparation

n/a

1. Private sector - Improve the quality of local products in terms of training and practical

2. Department of Trade's staffs - Build their capacity in terms of solving trade issues

Time Release Study and Risk Management

11 In general, how important do you think regional initiatives of the following kinds would be to support your country's implementation of trade facilitation reforms?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important	Don't know/No Opinion
<i>Establishment of regional fora or programs for regional consultations, experience sharing, or training (e.g., regional committees, peer-to-peer training programs, etc.)</i>	5%	15%	75%	5%
<i>Development of model or harmonized laws, regulations, operating procedures, technical guides, and/or standardized forms</i>	5%	25%	65%	5%
<i>Implementation of one or more trade facilitation measures at a regional level in lieu of, or in addition to, national implementation (e.g., regional trade enquiry point)</i>	20%	15%	55%	10%

12 The following are specific examples of model or harmonized laws, regulations, operating procedures, technical guides and standardized forms that might be developed through a regional initiative. How important would these specific model or harmonized instruments be to support implementation of your country's trade facilitation reform efforts?

	Not useful or needed	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Don't Know
<i>Customs code provisions or regulations</i>	5%	25%	40%	30%
<i>Legislation to enable electronic information exchange/electronic payments</i>	0%	20%	70%	10%
<i>Legal instrument for mutual recognition of authorized operators</i>	5%	15%	60%	20%
<i>Regulations on import/export of goods subject to SPS or technical regulations</i>	0%	15%	75%	10%
<i>SOPs for customs implementation of the trade facilitation measures (e.g., binding rulings, authorized operators, administrative appeals, customs penalties, pre-arrival processing, risk management and customs audit)</i>	10%	20%	55%	15%

<i>SOP for import control of goods subject to sanitary/phytosanitary or technical measures (e.g., import manual for sampling, detention, and examination/testing and coordination of border authorities)</i>	5%	15%	70%	10%
<i>SOP for administration of a national enquiry point</i>	5%	25%	60%	10%
<i>Guidance on organizational structure, functions, staffing etc. of national administrative units required to administer trade facilitation related functions (e.g., a Customs advance rulings unit, a national enquiry point(s), an administrative appeals body, etc.)</i>	5%	20%	60%	15%
<i>Guidance on the establishment and maintenance of a national trade information website</i>	5%	20%	70%	5%
<i>Methodology for the determination of GATT-consistent national customs processing fees and charges</i>	5%	20%	65%	10%

13 The forms of regional initiatives mentioned in the previous question might be voluntary (e.g., model instruments that individual countries free to use as they wish) or legally binding arrangements (e.g., each country commits to amend their national laws / requirements to align to the harmonized instrument). If regional initiatives of these types are agreed, do you think they should be voluntary or legally binding arrangements?

<i>Should be voluntary</i>	10%
<i>Should be legally binding</i>	10%
<i>It depends on the measure</i>	65%
<i>Don't know</i>	15%

14 The following are examples of implementation of trade facilitation measures at a regional level. Would any of these regional implementations be important to your country?

	Not useful or needed	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Don't Know
<i>A regional trade information website (e.g., a regional website that publishes trade information of all Pacific Island countries)</i>	0%	30%	65%	5%

<i>A regional trade enquiry point (e.g., a regional trade enquiry point that provides information on import, export, and transit requirements of all Pacific Island countries)</i>	15%	20%	60%	5%
<i>A regional advance rulings unit (e.g., regional unit responsible for issuance, on request, of tariff classification and origin rulings that would be legally binding on all Pacific Island countries)</i>	15%	25%	45%	15%
<i>A regional risk management system to identify, communicate, and evaluate results of control on common regional threats</i>	5%	25%	65%	5%
<i>An electronic system for exchange of risk information among Pacific Island countries</i>	5%	10%	80%	5%
<i>Designation of laboratories in the Pacific region authorized to test goods imported to any Pacific country for purposes of compliance with national sanitary/phytosanitary requirements or technical regulations</i>	5%	0%	90%	5%
<i>A regional agreement on mutual recognition of authorized economic operators (that is, a regional agreement whereby an authorized operator approved in any Pacific Island country receives AEO benefits in all Pacific Island countries)</i>	5%	15%	65%	15%
<i>A regional agreement on mutual recognition of Customs advance rulings (that is, a regional agreement whereby an advance ruling issued by any Pacific Island customs administration is binding on all Pacific Island customs administrations)</i>	5%	35%	45%	15%

15 Are there any regional initiatives, apart from those mentioned in the previous questions, that would be important or useful to support your country's trade facilitation reform objectives and activities?

I would need to seek advice from other government officials to seek their thoughts on this question

NA

climate resilient trade infrastructure, including resilience from other unforeseen external shocks such as COVID-19 pandemic

No

I think most have been captured but through consultations, we might identify some issues not mentioned.

At present all fresh produce needs to be investigated by Samoa's national authority and issued with a certificate to confirm origin and biosecurity safety. We would like this to apply to all members of any regional trade agreement so tomatoes from Tonga needs to be certified as origin Tonga and free from pests and diseases. Same for AU and NZ. If that happens then we remove impediments to trade and improve trading for all countries on a level playing field as the country of export is best placed to ensure that the product is compliant with safety and bio-security requirements. All the above is gilding as this then provides a double protection. At present the onus is on Samoa to list pests and diseases of interest and they should just adopt the Australian Standards list and that be applied across the region. Where that is in a country efforts to eradicate them is encouraged to remove them as an impediment to export. It is hard for us to apply initiatives when the product(s) coming in particularly in mixed container loads are not quantified in terms of origin, safety and bio-security. In fact outbreaks of concern to tropical islands have broken out in temperate zones but have not been of biological concerns in the countries of origin and have not been advised through to us. This needs to change and these lists should be part of a precautionary approach by our metropolitan partners.

N/A

The agreement on intellectual property facilitation

To implement more cooperation with the private sector (importers and exporters).

No

Not sure

Not at the moment

Don't know of any

Regional harmonization of tariff classifications e.g. PACHS

A regional agreement and framework on e-payment solutions.

Already covered in the above questions.

n/a

no

None, all in the list above

The need to scale down from a sub regional perspective before considering regional level

16 We would appreciate any additional comments or suggestions you may have concerning the development of a regional trade facilitation strategy.

No duplication of efforts/work or similar strategies to that of Pacer Plus some of the questions asked like a website we have the trade portals are already operating.

Not this time

Consideration of the Pacific region specific challenges such as distance from major markets, high cost of transportation and the associated challenges, climate resilient infrastructure etc

no further comments

No additional comment at this time, but might provide them in the future.

See above

We request the Secretariat to expand the concept further including consideration of the WTO TFA; and identify specific aspects of trade facilitation with the potential for collective action to reduce time and costs of trading across borders.

There are sufficient subject matters on the table for now.

No more comments

No. Looking forward to learn and understand more about trade facilitations,

Not sure

Personally, for the success of any trade facilitation agreement building capacity of every stakeholder is very important. It is important for every responsible agency to be well versed with trade facilitation matters.

Need clarity on the regional measures proposed and how they will effectively implement our national TFA obligations

No additional comments.

None.

Its important to stock take existing platforms so as not duplicate but to complement. Existing national Trade Portals how these can be used perhaps expand to reflect other regional initiatives.

n/a

n/a

Hopefully this strategy will be implement soon.

Appreciate if we can trial out some sub regional projects under the MSG first before we move to broader PIFs level.