

1. BACKGROUND

The Pacific Islands Forum Geneva Office ([PIF Geneva](#)) comprises two sections: Trade Negotiations and Aid-for-Trade (Aft). The Trade Negotiations section provides policy and technical advice on multilateral trade issues to Forum Island Countries (FICs) which are members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and coordinates their participation in multilateral negotiations. The Aft Section promotes the establishment of regional initiatives in the priority areas of the [Pacific Aft Strategy](#) and assists FICs, individually and collectively, to make better use of Aft opportunities.

Some non-trade work commenced in 2019 and is limited to support advocacy on selected regional priorities such as climate change, oceans, and COVID-19.

In addition, PIF Geneva hosts Pacific Trade Invest (PTI) Europe. PTI Europe focuses on the development and promotion of Pacific Island exports across international markets in Europe and the United Kingdom.

2. REPRESENTATION

Ambassador Mere Falemaka represented the Pacific as ACP Focal Point on Fisheries Subsidies and provided an update on Fisheries Subsidies at the ACP Group Experts Meeting on 16 September, the ACP Group Ambassadors Coordination Meeting on 21 September as well as the ACP Ambassadors Retreat on 3 October. She also represented the Pacific Islands Forum as a panellist to the Trade, Investment and Small States [Conference](#) held in London, UK on 20-21 October. Ambassador Falemaka was also a panellist at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to present the Pacific perspectives at the Single-year [Expert Meeting](#) on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) on 24 October. The PIFS Geneva Office also co-organised an Event with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) during the WTO Trade and Environment Week on 17-21 October, which focused on [Trade and climate change adaptation](#). Dr Giacomelli promoted the [Pacific E-commerce Initiative](#) at the 13 September PACER Plus Cross-Border E-Commerce Regional [Workshop](#); the 28 October United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) eTrade Readiness [workshop](#); and through an [article](#) in the *Parcel and Postal Technology International* magazine.

3. WTO NEGOTIATIONS

During this period, no negotiations were held in key areas such as Fisheries Subsidies and Agriculture. Discussions focussed on how the MC12 outcomes and mandates would be implemented with the most pressing mandate being the decision to extend the TRIPS Waiver to diagnostics and therapeutics to be made by 17 December.

On [Fisheries Subsidies](#), an informal meeting of the Negotiating Group on Rules (NGR) on 26 September farewelled the Chair (Colombia) and search started for a new NGR Chair to facilitate the second wave of negotiations. An informal retreat was organised by the WTO Secretariat on 10 October to allow Members to brainstorm on the way forward for negotiations in the second wave, in terms of the substance (i.e. scope of issues to be addressed and the starting point for negotiations) and process (i.e. possible work programme for the second wave of negotiations). Members re-emphasised the importance of appointing a Chair to facilitate negotiations on the outstanding issues mandated in paragraph 4 of the MC12 Ministerial Decision on the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.

On [Agriculture](#), there were no meetings of the Committee on Agriculture – Special Session (COA-SS) as a Chair was yet to be appointed. An informal retreat was organised by the WTO on 24 October to allow Members to brainstorm on the way forward for Agriculture negotiations. The retreat also posed the question of how the WTO could respond to the contemporary challenges facing the global agriculture trade and food markets, such as climate change, current food insecurity issue, energy crisis, rapid population growth etc. The need for a Chair to facilitate negotiations was also raised at the retreat.

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On the TRIPS waiver, the TRIPS Council met on four different occasions during this period, in formal and informal configurations, to discuss the extension of the waiver to therapeutics and diagnostics. Divergent views remained on how to go forward with discussions on scope and other technical elements, while other Members continued to advise that domestic consultations were ongoing. The TRIPS Council continued to discuss in solution-seeking mode in order to find a common understanding on this issue given the fast-approaching deadline of 17 December for a decision to be made.

On WTO Reform, the General Council Chair (Switzerland) informed at the General Council Meeting of 6-7 October that he would hold informal discussions in early November to brainstorm way forward on this issue and that the discussions would be open to and inclusive of all Members.

Technical Support. During this period, the PIFS Geneva Office prepared four Pacific Group statements and position papers for the: Fisheries Subsidies Informal Retreat on 4 October; General Council Meeting on 6-7 October; Committee on Trade and Environment Meeting on 21 October and Agriculture Informal Retreat on 24 October. The PIFS Geneva Office assisted by the Pacific Group consultancy team also held a technical briefing for Pacific Trade and Fisheries Officials on 20 September to go through the provisions of the FSA. In addition, the Office organised a Pacific Ambassadors Meeting on 31 October to provide an update on WTO issues and preparation for High-Level Fisheries Subsidies Event envisaged for November 2022; Human Rights issues such as the Nuclear Legacy Resolution, Climate Change-related aspects of Human rights and the West Papua issue; the WIPO IGC-related issues; and relevant issues in the discussions held at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris.

4. AID-FOR-TRADE

4.1 Projects

4.1.1 Implemented

This period saw the recruitment of Mr [Andrea Ibba](#) as the Pacific E-commerce Coordinator. Progress under [Pacific E-commerce Initiative](#) included

- [launching](#) and [publication](#) of the Samoa E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap
- agreement to support the development of the PNG E-commerce Strategy and commencement of the related procurement process
- preparations for the first Pacific E-commerce Committee meeting on 2 December
- conclusion of the Secretariat's accession to the [eTrade for All](#) global partnership

Under the [Pacific Trade Facilitation Initiative](#), the draft Pacific Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy was released to members and partners, and preparations commenced for the 6 December validation workshop.

PIF Geneva continued to manage the consultancy team supporting the [Pacific Group](#) on World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations. September was initially focused on detailed planning for the next stage of the project, which had formally ended on 31 July. Planning included the addition and induction of a Trade and Environment Analyst and a Coordinator to strengthen the link between PIFS Geneva and the project team. These tasks were successfully accomplished. A virtual briefing session for Pacific Ambassadors was also organised and delivered in September. Trade and Environment Week was a significant focus in October, as were WTO Retreats which were organised on Fisheries Subsidies and Agriculture. Various implementation matters from MC12 (including the TRIPS Agreement Decision, WTO Reform, and the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce) were covered at the General Council. In early October, team members were awarded contracts covering the period from 1 August to 31 December 2022.

4.1.2 Completed/Secured

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The Australian Mission in Geneva agreed to provide USD 60,000 towards the upgrade of the Pacific E-commerce Statistics dataset, with work to start in 2023.

4.1.3 Ongoing

Work on a project proposal to support implementation of the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement (FSA) started.

4.2. Apply! Demand-driven Aid-for-Trade facilities accepting applications

(1) [Standards Trade and Development Facility](#) (2) [Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation](#) (3) [Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility](#)

5. PTI EUROPE

[Grand Pavois](#) in France is a direct to consumer show which PTI Europe coordinated attendance at for 5 Pacific Islands products. Our participation was part of a bigger French Polynesian presence/ Pavilion. Whilst sales were not as high as PTI Europe had hoped, all participants were satisfied with the return on investment with some unexpected B2B businesses resulting.

PTI Europe's biggest sales activity of this year took place in October with 9 Pacific Islands businesses flying into Paris to participate as part of the Pacific Islands stand at [SIAL](#) trade show. SIAL is one of the larger food trade shows in Europe and PTI has been attending it consistently now for some years which has assisted with buyer recognition towards our products and perception of our commitment to this market. All businesses were set up as individual co-exhibitors on the PTI Europe stand to maximize their contact with buyers and potential for commercial outcomes. Participating businesses were from Fiji (3), PNG (2), French Polynesia (3), and Solomon Islands (1). The stand design incorporated a Pacific cooking station which had sweet potato fries from PNG being cooked and offered to attendees - this created additional theatre and drove foot traffic to the stand. One of our products - Galip nuts from PNG – received an innovation award at the show which afforded them some interest by certain buyers it would be normally difficult to access (such as Wholefoods). Commercial discussions that were carried out at SIAL are showing indications of materializing into strong sales.