



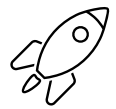
Fiji's Experience and Insights on Digital Trade Negotiations

Key Topics Covered

1. Fiji's Experience in IPEF Digital Trade Negotiations
2. Lessons Learned and Best Practices
3. Fiji's Role in the JSI on E-Commerce
4. Implementation of the Fiji E-Commerce Strategy

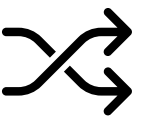
1. Fiji's Experience in IPEF Digital Trade Negotiations

Launch



- May 2022 by the United States.
- **Fiji**: First and only Pacific Island nation invited to join.

Flexibility



- Partners not required to join all four pillars.
- Fiji joined all four pillars, similar to 12 other countries.
- India did not participate in negotiations of Pillar 1 (Trade).



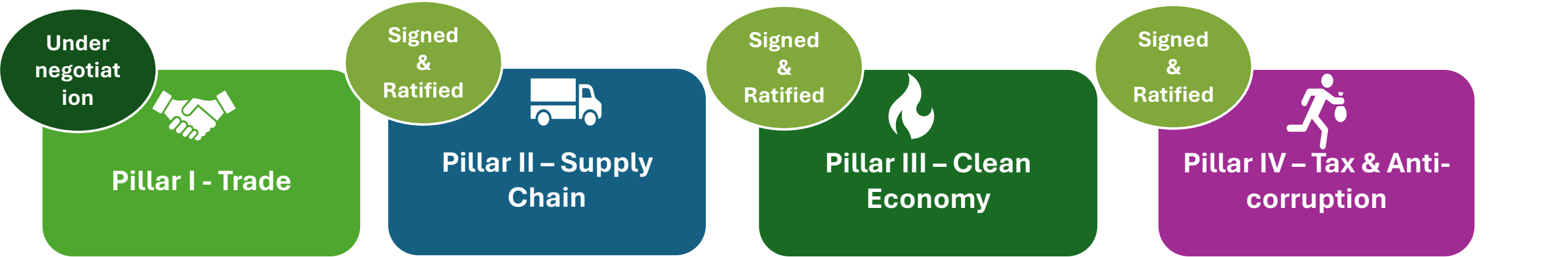
Significance

- Represents **40% of global GDP**.
- Accounts for **28% of global goods and services trade**.
- Encompasses **60% of the world's population**.

Goals



- Advance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness.
- Address 21st century challenges.



- Not a free trade agreement; no market access
- **Chapters:** labour; environment; digital economy; agriculture; transparency and good regulatory practices; competition policy; trade facilitation; inclusivity; and technical and economic cooperation

- Resilient, efficient, transparent, diversified, secure, and inclusive, supply chains.
- Information exchange, sharing of best practices, business matchmaking, collective response to disruptions, and supporting labour rights.

- Agreement to boost the clean energy transition and climate action.
- Energy security and transition, advancing low-greenhouse gas solutions, sustainable land, water and ocean solutions, development and deployment of innovative technologies, policies to help ensure a just transition towards a clean economy

- Boost efforts to prevent and combat international corruption and financial crimes. It will also improve tax administration, building on key international standards.
- United Nations Convention against Corruption and the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention

Challenges Faced in IPEF Negotiations

Significant Disparity: Fiji's delegation of 10 vs. 70 from other countries.

Demanding Schedule: Monthly negotiations since December 2022 to November 2023, both in-person and virtual.

Time Zone Challenges: Late nights and early mornings due to time differences.

Frequent Travel: Added complexity and strain on resources.

Commitment and Adaptability: Ensuring effective representation and contribution despite obstacles.

Timeline of Negotiations



IPEF negotiations on Digital Trade Chapter

- **Digital Economy.** Advancing inclusive digital trade by: building an environment of trust and confidence in the digital economy; enhancing access to online information and use of the Internet; facilitating digital trade; addressing discriminatory practices; and advancing resilient and secure digital infrastructure and platforms. We will work to promote and support, inter alia: (1) trusted and secure cross-border data flows; (2) inclusive, sustainable growth of the digital economy; and (3) the responsible development and use of emerging technologies. We acknowledge the rapidly evolving nature of digital technology and the need for flexibilities to achieve public policy objectives, including protecting the rights and interests of our diverse communities. We will share best practices on regulatory approaches and policy issues in this dynamic area of the economy and cooperate on a range of issues, including business promotion, standards, and MSMEs and start-ups.

- U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)
- The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)
- E-Commerce Joint Statement Initiative at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Preparing for the IPEF Negotiations on Digital Trade



Stakeholder

Consultations:

Initiated inclusive consultations after negotiation text release.



Gained diverse perspectives to shape our negotiation stance.



Signed NDAs with external stakeholders to maintain confidentiality.



Team

Composition:

Assembled a multidisciplinary team with expertise in digital government, trade, legal, regulatory, and technical fields.



Legal and Regulatory Mapping: Conducted a thorough assessment of Fiji's legal framework.



Learning from Existing FTAs, plurilateral and multilateral agreements/arrangements

2. Key Lessons Learned and Best Practices



1. Deep Understanding of National Context



2. Flexibility and Adaptability



3. Strategic Alliances and Cooperation



4. Converting Positions into Textual Proposals



5. Balancing National Priorities with International Expectations



6. Comprehensive Preparation and Ongoing Commitment

3. Fiji's Interest in the Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on E-Commerce at the WTO

Background

- At the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2017, WTO members issued a joint statement to initiate discussions on trade-related aspects of e-commerce.
- Since March 2018, these discussions have been open to any WTO member interested in attending or participating.

Negotiation Progress:





- In 2020, a consolidated negotiating text formed the basis for ongoing negotiations among 86 WTO members.
- As a plurilateral negotiation, the JSI has proceeded informally alongside the WTO's multilateral work programme.
- The co-convenors announced on 26 July 2024 that the text was stabilized.

Next Steps:

- Participants must decide on the legal architecture of the agreement, including its relationship to existing WTO Agreements.
- Most participants favor integrating the agreement into the WTO framework, possibly adding it to Annex 4, which covers plurilateral agreements.
- This integration would require unanimous support from all WTO Members, but some, including India and South Africa, have opposed this.



Fiji's Position:

- Fiji is closely monitoring the JSI discussions at the WTO.
 - Due to resource and expert constraints, Fiji has not actively participated in these negotiations.
 - Preliminary analysis raised concerns, leading Fiji to observe from the sidelines.
 - Fiji is particularly interested in whether the outcomes will reflect the interests of small island developing states like ours.
- 
- 
- 
- 

4. Implementing of the Fiji E-Commerce Strategy

Development Process

- Engaged government, industry, civil society, development partners
- Ensured strategy reflects collective vision

Key Milestones

September 2023: Focused group consultations with UNCTAD

- Gathered insights, identified challenges and opportunities

October 2023: National workshop

- Fostered collaboration, collected stakeholder input

March 2024: National validation workshop

- Reviewed and validated draft strategy

Support and Endorsement

Round Table Discussion

- Engaged development partners for collaboration and support

Cabinet Submission

- Strategy officially endorsed in May 2024.

Implementation Framework

National E-Commerce Subcommittee

- Platform for dialogue and collaboration
- Includes over 50 key private sector and government entities

Inaugural Meeting

- Endorsed Subcommittee's Terms of Reference
- Discussed next steps

**Thank You for Your
Attention**