



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Activity Title:	Development of Tonga's National Branding Strategy and Framework
Estimated Duration:	6 months
Estimated Budget:	AUD 73,000
Location:	Remote, with travel to Tonga
Estimated Start Date:	October 2026
Reporting to:	Trade in Goods Adviser

I. BACKGROUND

PACER Plus is a regional trade and development agreement that supports Pacific Island Parties to strengthen their capacity to trade, improve access to regional and international markets, and realise greater economic and development benefits from trade. Through its Development and Economic Cooperation programme, PACER Plus supports Parties to address trade constraints and strengthen private sector participation in export markets.

In Tonga, the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer, Trade, Innovation and Labour (MCCTIL) is the lead agency for trade and private sector development and is responsible for supporting the competitiveness of Tongan businesses and products. Agriculture remains an important source of livelihoods and export earnings, but exporters continue to face challenges relating to product quality and consistency, compliance with market requirements, traceability, certification and product differentiation.

MCCTIL therefore proposes, with support from PACER Plus, to develop a National Branding Strategy and Framework to establish a credible and recognizable national identity for qualifying Tongan products. The Framework will go beyond a promotional brand by establishing the certification requirements, verification mechanisms, governance arrangements and systems needed to underpin a trusted national mark. Initially focused on priority agricultural and food exports, the Framework will support Tongan producers and exporters to strengthen buyer confidence, differentiate their products and improve their positioning in export markets. This Terms of Reference is to secure an appropriate consultancy to deliver this project.

II. OBJECTIVE & SCOPE

The objective of this consultancy is to develop a National Branding Strategy and Framework for Tonga, that establishes a credible and recognizable national identity for qualifying Tongan products and strengthens their positioning in regional and international markets.

To achieve this objective, the Consultant will:

- Assess Market Opportunities and Requirements:** Review priority Tongan products and export markets, buyer expectations and relevant quality and certification requirements, and draw lessons from comparable national branding and certification initiatives.
- Develop the National Branding Strategy:** Define the value proposition, positioning, target products and markets, and develop the national mark, brand identity and messaging.



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- c) **Develop the Certification and Operating Framework:** Establish eligibility and certification requirements, verification and traceability mechanisms, brand-use guidelines, governance arrangements and appropriate legal protection for the national mark.
- d) **Validate and Pilot the Framework:** Test the proposed brand and certification approach with relevant stakeholders, selected producers/exporters and market representatives and refine the Framework based on feedback.
- e) **Implementation Roadmap:** Provide a practical implementation roadmap covering roll-out, promotion, capacity building, administration, monitoring, indicative costs and sustainability of the national branding system.

The Framework should be designed around the following principles:

- **Market relevance and value:** Strengthen the recognition and differentiation of Tongan products and provide tangible value to participating businesses through increased buyer confidence and market opportunities.
- **Credibility and verification:** Ensure the national mark is underpinned by clear eligibility requirements, standards, traceability and transparent verification.
- **Practical participation:** Establish simple, proportionate and affordable processes that enable participation by Tongan businesses, including smallholders and MSMEs.
- **Integrity and trust:** Protect the credibility of the national mark through clear rules for its use, appropriate governance, legal protection and compliance arrangements.
- **Sustainable and scalable:** Establish a system that is practical for Tonga to administer and sustain, while allowing the Framework to expand to other products and sectors over time.

III. DELIVERABLES

The Consultant will deliver the following outputs:

1. **Inception Report and Work Plan:** Confirming the methodology, work plan, stakeholder consultation and market engagement approach, research requirements and key areas of assessment.
2. **Draft National Branding Strategy and Framework:** Providing:
 - assessment of priority products, markets, buyer requirements and lessons from comparable national branding and certification initiatives;
 - proposed value proposition, positioning, target products and markets;
 - proposed national mark, brand identity and messaging;
 - certification, eligibility, traceability and verification requirements;
 - governance, administration, brand-use and legal protection arrangements; and
 - preliminary implementation, promotion and sustainability approach.
3. **Validation and Pilot Report:** Presentation and validation of the draft Strategy and Framework with MCCTIL and key stakeholders, including testing with selected producers/exporters and relevant market stakeholders. The Report will summarise feedback, pilot findings, key decisions and agreed refinements to the Framework.
4. **Final National Branding Strategy and Framework and Implementation Roadmap:** Finalised Strategy and Framework incorporating stakeholder and pilot feedback and providing the national mark and brand system, certification and verification framework, governance and operating arrangements, and brand-use guidelines. The Report will include a practical phased implementation roadmap setting out priority actions, responsibilities, indicative costs, promotion and market engagement, monitoring arrangements and requirements for roll-out.



All outputs shall be provided in Microsoft Office formats or other formats agreed with the PPIU.

IV. TIME AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The assignment shall be completed within six (6) months, according to the indicative timeframes below. Exact commencement and completion dates, as well as the scope of work, may be amended in consultation with the PPIU and the MCCTIL.

Nr.	Deliverables	Indicative Time Frame (delivered by)	Payment Schedule
1.	Inception Report and Work Plan	October 2026	20%
2.	Draft National Branding Strategy and Framework	January 2027	30%
3.	Validation and Pilot Report	February 2027	30%
4.	Final National Branding Strategy and Framework and Implementation Roadmap	March 2027	20%

Note: Travel expenses for the Consultant(s) are included in the Consultancy Fees. Costs for stakeholder consultations must have prior approval from the PPIU and must follow the PPIU Procurement Policy.

V. REPORTING

- The Activity will be supervised by the Trade in Goods Adviser and the Tonga MCCTIL and will hold responsibility for guiding progress and technical advice on delivering the activity.
- The Consultant is required to report to the Trade in Goods Adviser and the Tonga MCCTIL, who will ensure that the deliverables are submitted according to the indicated timeframes and quality standards.
- Regular discussions with the Trade in Goods Adviser and the Tonga MCCTIL will also be carried out during the consultancy period to monitor progress and constraints, support required and proposed solutions.

VI. QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED OF CONSULTANT(S)

Qualifications

A tertiary qualification in marketing, international business, trade, economics, communications, branding, or a related field.

Skills and Experience

- At least 7 years of relevant experience in national branding, market development, export development, certification or related areas.
- Demonstrated experience developing a national branding and certification framework of a similar nature, preferably for a Pacific Island country or other small island context.
- Demonstrated experience developing the supporting certification, eligibility, verification, governance and brand-use systems and guidelines required to operationalise a national mark.



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- Strong understanding of brand strategy, market positioning, quality standards, certification and traceability systems.
- Experience undertaking market research and stakeholder consultations, including engagement with businesses, exporters, buyers and government agencies.
- Knowledge of agricultural exports and international market requirements, preferably within the Pacific.
- Strong analytical, facilitation, stakeholder engagement and report-writing skills.
- Excellent written and spoken English.