



PACER Plus

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary
Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade

Fourth Meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade (SPS.TBT.04)

Wednesday, 21 February 2024, 1:00-3:00PM Samoa Local Time

OUTCOMES SUMMARY

1. The fourth meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade (SPS.TBT) was held virtually and attended by the following Parties: Australia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Nauru attended as an Observer State.
2. The PACER Plus Implementation Unit (PPIU) was represented by Mr Alipate Tavo, Trade and Investment Advisor, Mrs Laisiana Tugaga, Operations and Secretariat Manager, Mr Poutasi Watson, New Zealand Short Term Placement and Ida-Tifitifi Fuimaono, Executive Governance Coordinator.

Opening formalities and procedures

3. The meeting was chaired by Mr. New Testament Aue, Head of Niue Biosecurity Authority. The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed Committee Members and the Observer State. The meeting was opened with a prayer by Ms Nafanua Malele from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Samoa.
4. The meeting agenda was adopted as presented. The meeting further noted that the PPIU would produce the summary of meeting discussions to be circulated to the Committee for adoption.

Agenda Item 1: Status of Implementation of Chapters 5 and 6 of the PACER Plus

5. The representative of the PPIU presented the meeting paper providing an update on the implementation progress of current financial year (FY23-24) activities and expenditure to date.
6. The Parties provided further updates as follows:

7. Samoa

- On SPS, Samoa extended appreciation to the PPIU for funding three staff of the Quarantine division to the fumigation training held in 2023.
- Samoa confirmed that the fumigation equipment has been received.
- The Quarantine Division will be working with the Consultant on the HTFA Study in early March 2024.
- On TBT, Samoa extended its appreciation to the PPIU and British Standards Institution (BSI) for providing the consultant to draft the National Quality Policy for Samoa.
- Samoa further advised that they will be holding the second workshop consultation with national stakeholders scheduled for beginning of March. Other interested Forum Island countries will be invited to join the workshop.

8. Tonga

- With regard to their review of Metrology legislation, Tonga requested for the activity to be rolled over to next financial year.
- With regard to TBT, a Standards Roadmap was being developed with Standards Australia and public consultations on the roadmap began in Tonga the week prior.
- Tonga advised that they will be holding a national Laboratory Week during the second week of March.
- Tonga advised that the calibration equipment has not been received yet.
- Tonga noted the ongoing work and support from PPIU with regard to the HTFA.
- Tonga conveyed appreciation to the PPIU and PHAMA Plus for their support on the ePhyto and fumigation requirements.

9. Kiribati

- Kiribati acknowledged support from the PPIU for enabling their participation at the ePhyto workshop and the in-country workshop with national consultants recruited for this purpose.
- Kiribati had requested if fumigation chamber request could be fast-tracked. It was confirmed that the fumigation chamber was covered by SPC.

10. Tuvalu

- Tuvalu acknowledged support from PPIU for the ePhyto Information Technology equipment received (laptops and printers).
- Will be undertaking trials in Fiji with the support of the consultant, Peter Neimanis.
- Kiribati is having connectivity issues and have requested if the PPIU can assist with utilising Starlink.
- The Xray machine has been commissioned at the airport terminal, which was funded by SPC
- Tuvalu noted that they did not submit any activities to PPIU for current year and will try and fill the gaps for next year.

11. Niue

- Niue has undertaken two ePhyto training programs with PPIU STA, Peter Neimanis and have already commenced the exchange of commercial ePhyto certificates with New Zealand and Samoa which has been a smooth process thus far.

- Niue acknowledged the IT equipment provided by PPIU to support the use of the ePhyto system.
- Niue's Director of Agriculture has approved the ePhyto Implementation Plan for the Biosecurity Division and will continue to work closely with Peter Neimanis on updating the system.
- Niue was assured by the PQI project team that basic calibration equipment would be provided and is on its way to Niue.
- Niue concluded by supporting the recommendations in the paper.

12. Solomon Islands

- Solomon Islands noted that they are waiting for construction work to complete on the vapour heat treatment facility, and then the installation will be undertaken by Japan, after which the treatment of the four fruit flies species will commence.
- Solomon Islands noted that two ePhyto trainings have been undertaken thus far. They have started production on non-commercial to Australia and New Zealand this month.
- Solomon Islands has received support from PPIU in developing the new draft of Biosecurity bill which will transition the Biosecurity agency to a State-Owned Enterprise. PACER Plus has engaged a consultant to assist drafting the bill. Solomon Islands is requesting to extend the contract for the consultant due to slow responses from the relevant stakeholders on the draft bill.
- Solomon Islands further acknowledged the ePhyto IT equipment which has been received.
- They are currently preparing a ToR for an entomologist to assist with operating the vapour heat treatment facility.
- Four activities remain to be implemented for the current financial year including a nutritional analysis for Ngali Nut and Chocolate protein, food sampling training targeting processors, health inspectors and exporters, and an attachment program for lab technicians to be hosted by the accredited regional laboratory.

13. Cook Islands

- Cook Islands acknowledged the support of the Australian government and the PPIU for supporting participation from the Cook Islands to the Pacific Export Pathway workshop which was held in Samoa in 2023.
- Cook Islands submitted a proposal for ePhyto work for the next financial year.
- Cook Islands advised that fruit flies have become a real threat to their exports.

14. Australia

- Australia acknowledged the achievements to date in implementing the current year's activities.
- Australia further noted the collaboration between the PPIU and DAFF with regard to the Pacific Export Operational Pathway training/workshop which was run by the Pacific Biosecurity Partnership Program.

15. Vanuatu

- Vanuatu advised that they still have a few activities to roll out for this financial year and submitted their proposals for FY24-25 activities.
- Vanuatu advised that the harvest bins have been received.

- Completed the fumigation training for biosecurity which Solomon Islands and Samoa were a part of and hosted in Vanuatu.
- Vanuatu have had initial discussions with Peter Neimanis on the ePhyto equipment with further consultations to resume with Peter.
- Vanuatu acknowledged the support provided by New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) on the export pathways.
- Vanuatu advised that they are in dire need for a treatment facility which they may submit as a proposal in future.

16. New Zealand:

- Acknowledged the comprehensive report on activities.
- On the ePhyto, New Zealand was pleased to see application of the system to support trade, supporting all Members and other countries beyond PACER Plus borders.

Action Items/Resolutions:

17. The Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade agreed to:

1. Note the update on activity implementation under the current FY2023-2024 Annual Plan.
2. Provide updates on ongoing and remaining national activities under the current FY23-24 Annual Plan, during the meeting.
3. Recommend that this meeting paper be declassified for public release.

Agenda Item 2: Activity Proposals for FY24-25

18. The representative of the PPIU presented the paper with proposals to be included under Components 3 and 4 of the Annual Plan for FY2024-2025.
19. Samoa requested if there could be an extension to submit proposals. The meeting agreed to allow Parties who had not submitted their activity proposals for the FY24-25, to submit to the PPIU by 1 March 2024 Samoa Local Time.
20. Kiribati noted that its proposal for midterm review on the trade policy framework has been removed from the approved list and directed to other funding sources. They would like to request for PHAMA Plus to take this activity up. It was noted that during the consultations with implementing partners, it was identified that the PIFS were working on Trade Policy Framework reviews for FICs, and Kiribati needed to request the support from PIFS given they stand ready to assist in this area and to avoid duplication of efforts.
21. Niue acknowledged the list of proposals submitted particularly highlighting the activity on SPS legislation given the need to develop biosecurity regulation to accompany the Biosecurity Act. Niue sought clarification from the PPIU on why Niue's activities were not reflected in the Annex to the meeting paper. PPIU advised that the biosecurity awareness and legislation updates are already covered under the regional activities.

22. Australia conveyed their support towards the activities presented considering them to be important and will help facilitate intra- and inter-regional trade. In relation to the SPS infrastructure, Australia encouraged collaboration with DAFF for technical expertise.
23. The Solomon Islands advised that they submitted their activity proposals on 9 February 2024, and it was confirmed that their national activities submitted would be covered under the regional activities put forward for consideration and approval by the Committee. The PPIU confirmed that updates on the approval of activity proposals by the Committee and the budget will be presented to the Budget Committee.

Action Items/Resolutions:

24. The Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade agreed to:

1. Approve the activity proposals presented under Components 3 and 4 for implementation under the financial year 2024-2025 Annual Plan.
2. Approve the proposed timeline provided in Annex 1 for implementation of activities under FY24-25 period, in consultation with the PPIU.
3. Submit the approved activity proposals to the Budget Committee and Joint Committee under the draft FY24-25 Annual Plan.
4. Declassify this meeting paper for public release once the Joint Committee approves the FY2024-2025 Annual Plan.

Agenda Item 3: PACER Plus General Review

25. The representative of the PPIU presented the update on the General Review of the PACER Plus conveying apologies by the Review Consultants who were unable to join the committee meetings. The PPIU noted that the General Review is looking at the overall implementation of Parties of the Agreement and the role of the PPIU in supporting Parties to implement utilising the Development and Economic Cooperation Work Programme (DEC Work Programme). The General Review consultants have been conducting national consultations in PACER Plus Parties with three countries remaining to visit. The draft report is due at the end of March which will be submitted to the Joint Committee for consideration.
26. Australia noted PACER Plus and the PPIU was playing an important role in delivering SPS-related technical assistance and capacity building to Pacific Island PACER Plus members (for example the sea container hygiene, ePhyto capacity building awareness programs) and would like to encourage PPIU to continue collaboration with other programs in the region to avoid duplication. Australia further encouraged the continued collaboration with DAFF in providing technical expertise and would like to see PPIU strengthen capacity of Members for biosecurity measures in order to be able to reach regional markets.

27. Niue acknowledged the report and noted that the points highlighted in the interim report aligned with their thoughts as well. They look forward to the final report and outcomes in May and how this will play into the decision on whether the DEC Work Programme will be replenished and continued beyond 2025.

Action Items/Resolutions:

28. The Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade agreed to:

1. Note the progress of the General Review of the Agreement
2. Provide feedback following the presentation of the General Review Team's preliminary report on the PACER Plus General Review.

Agenda Item 4: Any Other Matters

29. There were no other matters raised by the Committee.

30. The Chair allowed some time for Heads of Delegation to complete the post-meeting evaluation survey provided by the PPIU.

Close of Meeting

31. The meeting was closed with a prayer by the representative of Tonga.

Annex 1: SPS.TBT.04 Delegation List

Country	Contacts	Role/Title	Email address
Australia	Susan Hardcastle (SPS)	Assistant Director, Trade and International Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)	Susan.Hardcastle@aff.gov.au
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	Caroline Kempeneer	A/g Assistant Director, Office of the Pacific, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)	caroline.kempeneer@dfat.gov.au
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Kiribati	Kinaai Kairo	Director Ministry of Environment, Land and Agriculture Development (MELAD)	
	Teaaro Otiuea	MELAD	
	Tekataake Oromita	MELAD	
	Tereere Tioti	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development (competent authority)	
	Joanna Rabaua	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development	
	Taarai Abere	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development	
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	Maria Kaoma	Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, Industry and Cooperation	
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	Mrs Patricia Soqoilo	Food Safety Unit, Ministry of Health and Medical Services	PSoqoilo@moh.gov.sb
Vanuatu	Ms Ruth Amos	Chief Executive Officer, Bureau of Standards	ramos@vbs.gov.vu
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