

**PACER Plus Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and
Technical Barriers to Trade (SPS.TBT.01)**

10 June 2021

(Held virtually via Zoom)

Summary of Discussions

The inaugural meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade took place virtually on 10 June 2021 and was attended by the following Parties: Australia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands (Chair), Tonga. Signatories Nauru, Tuvalu and Vanuatu attended the meeting as observers.

The meeting was chaired by H.E. Joseph Ma'ahanua, High Commissioner-designate of Solomon Islands to Fiji.

1. Opening Prayer and Overview

1. The Chair welcomed the Committee members to the inaugural meeting of the Committee.
2. The meeting was opened with a prayer from Ms Kairangi Samuela from the Cook Islands.
3. The Committee adopted the agenda and noted the production of a summary of outcomes by the PPIU together with a short report from the Committee to be submitted to the Joint Committee.

2. Formal standing up of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade and adoption of the Terms of Reference

2.1 Terms of Reference

4. Australia presented the paper on the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade – Attachment A'.
5. New Zealand and Tonga requested that some wording changes be made to the paper to match exact text provided in Attachment A and the Joint Committee Rules and Procedures. These were agreed to by the Committee and Australia will edit and circulate to the Chair and the IU.
6. Samoa sought clarification regarding Solomon Island's two-year chair position, as the ToR states that the chair will rotate on an annual basis. Australia informed the Committee that the proposed chairmanship rotation schedule is to commence next year in 2022. However, there was a need for a volunteer interim Chair until that time, to which Solomon Islands responded. To reflect this situation, Tonga suggested removing the word 'annual' from the ToR description. Australia offered another suggestion of using the phrase 'annual from 2022' instead. This was adopted.
7. With these amendments, all recommendations were agreed by the Committee.

Action Items:

- 1. The Committee agreed to adopt the Terms of Reference with the revisions made by members of the Committee, and to recommend the Joint Committee approve the Terms of Reference.**
- 2. The Committee agreed that the annual rotational schedule of the Chair will commence in 2022.**

2.2 Observers

8. Australia presented paper SPS.TBT.01/D.2 and proposed full-time Observers for the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade, to the Committee.
9. New Zealand proposed three new observer organisations; OIE, IPPC, CODEX.
10. New Zealand proposed wording changes to the paper to maintain consistency with all other Joint Committee documents. These changes were agreed, and Australia will update wording accordingly and circulate to Chair and IU.
11. Samoa requested an extra column next to proposed observers in Annex A explaining the reasoning for each organisation's inclusion on the list, which was agreed. Australia will include this wording and circulate to the Chair and the Secretariat (IU).
12. Samoa also requested that Chapman Tripp (a private consulting company that has worked on PACER+) be included as a proposed observer. New Zealand noted that this would be discussed in the next Joint Committee meeting and could be reviewed at the next SPS and TBT Committee meeting. Solomon Islands indicated that it would have comments regarding this suggestion at the next meeting.
13. With these amendments, all recommendations were agreed by the Committee.

Action Items:

- 3. The Committee agreed on wording changes affecting the following sections: Purpose (a), Background paragraph 5, Recommendation 3 and Annex A column two. Australia will update wording accordingly and circulate to Chair and IU.**
- 4. The Committee agreed that the text, of a New Zealand proposed additional Background paragraph 7, and a Recommendation 7, will be circulated with members and agreed out of session through email.**
- 5. The Committee agreed to add an extra column next to proposed observers in Annex A, to explain the reasoning for each organizations' inclusion on the list. Australia will include this wording and circulate to the Chair and the Secretariat (IU).**
- 6. The Committee understands that discussion on non-state actors such as Chapman Tripp as proposed observers will take place at the next Joint Committee and then could be reviewed at the next Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade meeting.**

- 7. The Committee agreed to note the non-exclusive list of recommended observers in Annex A.**
- 8. The Committee agreed to submit the list of proposed observers to the Joint Committee.**
- 9. The Committee agreed to recommend that the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat be invited as a full-time observer to the Committee.**
- 10. The Committee recommended the Joint Committee task the Implementation Unit to bring the Guidelines for Observer Status to the attention of the organisations listed in Annex A.**
- 11. The Committee agreed to note the Committee may consider recommending others, including those listed in Annex A, to be invited on an ad-hoc basis.**
- 12. The Committee agreed to all recommendations with these amendments.**

3. Rapid Needs Assessment Update by Institute for International Trade (IIT)

14. The Institute for International Trade (IIT) presented SPS.TBT.01/D.3, Rapid Needs Assessment: Preliminary Findings for the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade – Attachment A.
15. It was noted that as well as a detailed final report to be delivered to the Joint Committee, IIT is compiling an aide memoire that aims to assist PACER Plus parties understand the process of the RNA, how it has progressed, and identify emerging priorities. This includes “quick wins” activities, with suggested outputs, outcomes and notes on implementation. The aide memoire will focus on the six priority work areas of PACER Plus, two of which are Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade.
16. Niue informed the Committee that the most important outcome regarding SPS Measures it would like to see is progress on trade, and increased access to export. Niue highlighted the repeated assessment and evaluation processes it has experienced, and would like to see the RNA lead to tangible outcomes which can be reviewed at the next meeting.
17. IIT thanked and acknowledged the comments from Niue, affirming its optimism for streamlining processes as part of the outcome of the RNA.

Action Items:

- 13. The Committee agreed to note the preliminary findings and indicative needs related to the work of this Committee identified in Attachment A.**
- 14. The Committee noted the importance of these issues to the effective implementation of PACER Plus**
- 15. The Committee agreed to report to the Joint Committee, this Committee’s in-principle support for tackling these preliminary findings, noting the importance of prioritization in the final work program.**

4. Meeting Closure

18. The Chair suggested the next meeting of the Committee be held towards the end of the year. This meeting would take place after the June Joint Committee meeting, and before the following Joint Committee meeting and will allow the Committee to respond to proposals by the JC before it meets again.
19. The PPIU will prepare the Outcome Summary of the meeting and circulate.
20. Niue offered the closing prayer and the Chair concluded the meeting.