



PACER Plus

Committee on Trade in Goods,
Rules of Origin & Customs Procedures

Fourth Meeting of the Committee on Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin and Customs Procedures (CTG.04)

Nalagi Hotel, Nadi, Fiji
Friday, 1 December 2023, 9:00-12:00PM (Fiji Local Time)

CHAIR: Mr Tooua Bateriki, Deputy Comptroller, Kiribati Customs Administration and Enforcement

OUTCOMES SUMMARY

1. The fourth meeting of the Committee on Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin and Customs Procedures was held at the Nalagi Hotel in Nadi, Fiji on 1 December 2023 (Fiji Standard Time) and was attended by the following Parties: Australia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Observer State, Nauru, was not in attendance. The delegation list is provided in Annex 1.

Opening formalities and procedures

2. The Chair called the meeting to order, welcomed Committee Members and Observers. The meeting was opened with a prayer by Mr Xavier Pasese Tanielu from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Samoa.
3. 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 2, 3 and 4 of the PACER Plus

4. 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.
5. The Parties provided further update to the activities as follows:
6. Cook Islands

- Held two 2 Customs Declarant & Broker Course which actually covered 5 modules: Tariff, Legislation, Valuation, Rules of Origin and ASYCUDA. The training was held for Rarotonga as well as Aitutaki declarants and brokers over a 1-week period.
 - Near to completing ASYCUDA changeover with new modules, which includes capturing information at the border (airport). UNCTAD will be ending its support to Cook Islands this month.
7. Kiribati
- ASYCUDA World has been successfully deployed covering 95% of imports and exports.
 - Requested additional support for the roll out of the ASYCUDA Project to the airport and Kiritimati Island.
8. Niue
- Due to competing priorities and capacity constraints, they haven't been able to hold the national training on RoO but aspire to complete this activity by the current fiscal year.
 - Acknowledged support from PPIU in engaging a regional legal expert to draft Customs Regulations that will accompany the new Customs Bill to be enacted in 2024.
9. Samoa
- Attended the first Trade in Goods workshop held in Suva, Fiji in July 2023 which highlighted the importance of quality project proposals.
 - Currently conducting internal consultations in preparation of activity proposal development.
 - There is a need to build capacity within national contact point ministries on development of activity proposal development.
 - Samoa looks forward to the next capacity building training for the Trade Information Portal.
10. Solomon Islands
- Currently working with Customs office to undertake national consultations on Rules of Origin.
 - The support for rewriting and drafting of Customs legislation, Policy and Procedure development and training is required for third quarter (January-March 2024) of the current fiscal year.
11. Tonga
- National training on Rules of Origin was held in Tonga, which was facilitated by Mr George Pakoa, RoO expert from Vanuatu.
 - Currently finalising requests under the ASYCUDA project to extend the work of the expert over December 2023.
12. Tuvalu
- In February 2023, PPIU provided support for amendments to their Customs legislation which is now an Act and is aligned to the Revised Kyoto Convention and the PACER Plus.

- Since the Rules of Origin workshop held in country in 2022, they have not been able to conduct another this financial year due to capacity constraints.
- No customs staff was present at the Trade in Goods workshop held in Suva in July 2023 and the Refresher RoO Training held in Tonga in October 2023. Tuvalu requested that for Customs related trainings, PPIU should specifically request and only allow nominations from Customs officers for future TiG Customs related trainings. They may include nominations from the National Focal Point if necessary. Tuvalu reminded PPIU that at the end of the day, Customs staff will be the only ones responsible for implementation of those trainings or activities. Tuvalu also raised their concern that invitations for Customs nominations were either not forwarded to them or forwarded very late when nominations have closed.
- With the ASYCUDA roll out, Tuvalu requested if PPIU could assist them with their pending issues with UNCTAD.

13. Vanuatu

- Initially planned to conduct the RoO Training in October 2023 but Cyclone interrupted the plans for Santo Customs officials and exporters.
- Vanuatu will be conducting a national customs training in Port Vila the week beginning 4 December 2023.
- Currently developing procedures for single window — most have been implemented for PACER Plus.
- On Concession schedules, Customs will be working on a plan in 2024 to update the schedule for duty rates for all goods in Basket A to begin trade liberalisation.
- Most activities on the concessions schedule to be carried out in January 2024.

14. New Zealand invited Parties to reach out to them should they need help with implementation of HS2022 transposition or rules of origin.

Action Items/Resolutions:

15. The Committee on Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin and Customs Procedures:
1. Noted the update on activity implementation under the current FY2023-2024 Annual Plan.
 2. Provided updates on ongoing and remaining national activities under the current FY23-24 Annual Plan, during the meeting.
 3. Agreed to declassify the meeting paper for public release.

Agenda Item 2: Status of (HS2022) Harmonised System

16. The Chair opened the floor for Parties to provide an update on their HS2022 Transposition progress. The updates from Parties are provided below:
17. Australia advised that HS2022 came into effect for them on 1 January 2022.
18. Cook Islands
- Have not completed transposition due to office shifting and staff turnover.

- Completed national splits and are working with an adviser from NZ Customs Service (NZCS), Colin Brown to complete the work.
- Completing checks through the chapters — tariff issues and commitments need to be discussed by Policy decision makers before moving forward.

19. Kiribati

- Technical support and advice currently being received from Bill Raikuna (regional expert), Darren Molineux (DFAT) and Christine Mullinder (NZCS) for HS transposition.
- Kiribati has completed the transposition from HS2017 to HS2022 in terms of HS level and are now working on tariff integration to ASYCUDA.

20. New Zealand

- Completed HS2022 the date it came into effect (January 2022).

21. Niue

- Implemented HS2022 in August 2022 and was integrated into the ASYCUDA World system in November 2022.
- Tariff transposition from HS2017 to HS2022 completed.
- Requests support from Darren (DFAT) on transposing the tariff commitments to HS 2022 with the different baskets and phase out period.

22. Samoa

- As indicated earlier in the year, Samoa has submitted the request to implement HS2022 to Cabinet and are still waiting Cabinet approval.

23. Solomon Islands

- Solomon Islands had already implemented the HS2022 in June 2023.

24. Tonga

- Completed transposition of HS2022 and are currently preparing their Cabinet submission to be tabled on 5 December 2023 with a target of implementation on 1 Jan 2024
- In the meantime, national awareness programmes and trainings are being undertaken for customs officers.
- ASYCUDA set to complete in 2024.

25. Tuvalu

- Have completed work on their HS2022 but awaiting Cabinet approval for implementation. They are hoping to implement the HS2022 on 1 January 2024.
- No work has been done to HS2022 Transposition Schedule and requested any assistance PPIU could offer for this work.

26. Vanuatu

- Implemented HS 2022 in January 2022.
- Copies of the HS2022 schedules can be accessed via their Customs website and the single window portal.

27. The PPIU representative reiterated the Unit's focus is to support countries to implement their obligations under the Agreement first and foremost and emphasised the importance of upholding the integrity of the Agreement by updating their tariff schedules as committed to when countries signed on the Agreement.

Agenda Item 3: New Transposed PSRs (as per Workshop outcomes)

28. The representative of the PPIU presented the updated meeting paper reflecting the new transposed Product Specific Rules of Origin which transpired from the PSR Workshop held over the last four days. The new PSRs are required under Article 29 of Chapter 3 (Rules of Origin and Verification Procedures).
29. The PPIU acknowledged the technical support of the Facilitators of the Workshop - Mr Bill Raikuna, Mr Darren Molineux and Ms Christine Mullinder - which has helped to produce the updated Annex 3-B which has been circulated to all Committee contact points for their consideration and approval.
30. No further comments were raised by the Committee after the Chair opened the floor for comments and the Committee endorsed the new Product Specific Rules of Origin and Annex 3-B presented in the meeting paper by consensus.

Action Items/Resolutions:

31. The Committee on Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin and Customs Procedures:
1. Endorsed the new Product Specific Rules of Origin.
 2. Agreed to declassify the meeting paper for public release.

Agenda Item 4: Any Other Matters

32. The representative of the PPIU went through the timeline for the Annual Plan (FY24-25) development process. The representative advised that consultations have been undertaken with contact points in country to develop activity proposals. The next Committee meeting would be held in February 2024 to consider and endorse the activities for the new financial year. The representative further advised that there may be activities from the current financial year that will roll over to the next financial year in consultation with countries.
33. Solomon Islands registered their interest in having a refresher training for activity proposal development given its importance to the Annual Plan.
34. The Committee recognised the importance of ensuring Parties are fulfilling their obligations under the Agreement and thus decided to set a date for all Parties to submit their schedule of commitments.

Action Items/Resolutions:

35. The Committee on Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin and Customs Procedures:

1. Agreed to the following dates to submit their updated Schedule of Tariff Commitments:
Developing Countries — 29 March 2024 (Samoan Standard Time)
Least Developed Countries — 30 June 2024 (Samoan Standard Time)

Agenda Item 5: Any Other Matters & Close of Meeting

36. The Chair provided some time for the Committee to complete the post-meeting evaluation survey.
37. Mr George Pakoa, Manager, Customs Revenue Unit (CRU), Vanuatu Department of Customs and Inland Revenue Unit, closed the meeting with a prayer.

Annex 1: CTG.04 Delegation List

Country	Contacts	Role/Title	Email address
Australia	Caroline Kempeneer	Assistant Director (A/g), Pacific Regional Trade Integration and Private Sector Growth Section, DFAT	caroline.kempeneer@dfat.gov.au
	Darren Molineux	Assistant Director, FTA Trade Facilitation Section, DFAT	darren.molineux@dfat.gov.au
Cook Islands	Elizabeth Tetauru	Senior Customs Officer, Trade and Revenue, Revenue Management Division	elizabeth.tetauru@cookislands.gov.ck
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Niue	Morgan Mougavalu	Customs Division, Department of Finance and Planning	Morgan.Mougavalu@mail.gov.nu
	Aytron Tatui	Economic Planning, Development & Trade Division - Ministry of Finance	Aytron.Tatui@mail.gov.nu
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