



Pacific Aid-for-Trade Strategy (PAfTS) 2020-2025

TRADE PRIORITIES



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

PAfTS 2020-2025

i. Objectives

- i. Enables the funnelling of Aid-for-Trade (AfT) resources to those trade reforms which are considered to best support regionalism.
- ii. Supports mobilisation of AfT resources, especially from donors who are willing to align their support to initiatives which have been identified and prioritised by the region, and which have received high-level ownership and endorsement.
- iii. Focuses our efforts as a region and improve our ability to “compete” with developing countries in other parts of the world for the limited resources which are available.



PAfTS 2020-2025 Trade Priorities

i. Electronic Commerce:

- i. Recent years have seen Forum Members reducing the digital divide through completion of submarine internet cables, expanded coverage of mobile broadband networks, deepening mobile/smart phone penetration; and establishment of new digital products and services which are necessary to undertake electronic transactions as either buyers or sellers from websites, to e-commerce platforms, e-banking, etc. These recent technological advances are already transforming the trade landscape for Forum Members.

ii. Deepening Forum markets entailing trade facilitation and quality infrastructure:

- i. To further deepen Forum markets within and beyond its membership this strategy prioritises the mobilisation of resources to assist members advance: (1) trade facilitation reforms and capacity building to implement trade facilitation aspects of existing trade agreements; (2) strengthening of Pacific Quality Infrastructure Systems



PAfTS 2020-2025 Trade Priorities

i. The Services Sector:

- i. Trade in traditional and new services presents Forum Members with unique opportunities to overcome structural connectivity barriers such as: small and dispersed national markets; small land mass; limited natural resources; as well as isolation from global and regional markets. The production is also less resource-intensive than trade in goods. As such regional initiatives on services are well aligned with the Blue Pacific narrative.

ii. Connectivity:

- i. To realise the Blue Pacific vision, the concept of connectivity needs to be expanded beyond infrastructure to capture elements of people and institutional connectivity. The former relates to the need to enhance business-to-business engagement and labour mobility. Labour mobility is particularly important as it creates employment opportunities for Pacific workers and enables Members to bring-back skills and resources which are essential for social and economic development.



2020-2021 FORUM TRADE MINISTERS MEETING

RECOMMENDATIONS



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM



REFLECTION ON REGIONAL AND GLOBAL TRADE ISSUES AND COVID-19 IMPLICATIONS ON PACIFIC TRADE (2021)

Forum Trade Ministers:

- (i) **acknowledged** development of the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*, and **agree** that subsequent to its completion, regional trade-related initiatives be reviewed in alignment with this overarching strategy; and
- (ii) **encouraged** establishment of a *Regional Trade Observatory* and the development of a *Regional Industrialisation Framework*
- (iii) **endorsed** the formulation of a *Regional Private Sector Strategy* in consultation with Members, CROP Agencies and other technical agencies



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PACIFIC AID FOR TRADE STRATEGY (PAFTS 2020 – 2025) (2021)

Forum Trade Ministers:

- (i) **approved** the draft Pacific Regional E-Commerce Strategy and Roadmap;
- (i) **endorsed** the Concept Note for the Development of a *Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy*;
- (i) **endorsed** the Terms of Reference for the PAfTS Technical Working Group (TWG) and **directed** the TWG to meet inter-sessionally to advance discussions on all other trade related issues and consider the implementation progress of the PAfTS and other trade related issues, as required; and
- (i) **reaffirmed** the importance of utilizing existing mechanisms in the first instance and where new initiatives are considered and implemented under the ambit of the Pacific Aid for Trade Strategy, that priority will be given to initiatives where collective action will add value to national efforts.



REGIONAL KAVA DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (2021)

Forum Trade Ministers are invited to:

- (i) **endorse** the Concept Note for a Regional Kava Development Strategy and **support** the development of a Regional Kava Development Strategy as an integral part of the Pacific Aid for Trade Strategy and resourcing should include leveraging support from existing partner programs;

Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) (2020)

Forum Trade Ministers:

- i. **welcomed** the progress made to date on PICTA modernisation;
- ii. **reiterated** the importance of PICTA in facilitating intra-regional trade;
- iii. **urged** remaining Forum Island Countries to progress ratification of PICTA and announce readiness to trade; and
- iv. **welcomed** the next steps towards PICTA modernisation and effective implementation.





COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS OF THE PACIFIC LABOUR MOBILITY ARRANGEMENTS (2021)

Forum Trade Ministers:

- i. **endorsed** the Terms of Reference (TOR) and composition of the Labour Mobility Reference Group (LMRG) to support the Secretariat work on Labour Mobility;
- ii. **directed** the Secretariat to consult with members on the ongoing assessment of regional arrangements and present the finalised assessment for Ministerial consideration; and
- iii. **noted** interest a biennial Labour Mobility Symposium and Regional Labour Mobility Strategy, which will be considered by Ministers following completion of the ongoing assessment of regional arrangements.



COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS OF THE PACIFIC LABOUR MOBILITY ARRANGEMENTS (2021)

Continued...

- iv. endorsed** a more inclusive and transparent regional dialogue on labour mobility by recalling the mandate from 2020 Forum Trade Ministers Meeting to include labour mobility as a standing item of the FTMM.

Trade and Environment (2020)

Forum Trade Ministers:

- i. **agreed** for support to be provided by relevant regional organisations, and the review of relevant trade policies, including market access regulations to enable the integration of the Kigali Amendment obligations as part of regional and national trade policies;
- ii. **directed** the Secretariat and relevant partners to support the assessment of national and/or regional legislation/standards which must be updated and harmonised with modern international safety standards and other Quality Infrastructure components.



Trade and Health (2020)

Forum Trade Ministers agreed to:

- i. **commit** to a whole of government approach to tackling NCDs at the national level, in line with the Forum Leaders' commitment in 2018;
- ii. **undertake** impact assessments of trade liberation towards NCDs prior to commencing and establishing new trade agreements;
- iii. **note** the theme of the 51st Pacific Islands Forum and **recommend** that trade and health linkages be considered in the context of the regional approach to strengthen Regional Quality Infrastructure systems;





TRADE AND HEALTH (2021)

Forum Trade Ministers:

- (i) **supported** the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver, to enable developing countries to produce and supply affordable and equitable vaccines, noting that this also provides greater opportunities for further development of related aspects of traditional knowledge, complementary alternative medicines, scientific research, and patents;
- (ii) **supported** text-based discussions on proposals to enable developing countries to produce and supply safe, effective, and affordable COVID-19 vaccines, including proposals for a temporary waiver of certain intellectual property protections under the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement;



Regional Trade Development

PRIORITY FOCUS 2022



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM



Regional Trade Development

Areas of Focus 2022:

- I. Labour Mobility Comprehensive Assessment
- II. Convening of the Pacific Aid-for-Trade Strategy Technical Working Group
 - Regional Electronic Commerce Strategy and Roadmap
 - Pacific Quality Infrastructure Project
 - Development of a Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy
- III. Regional Kava Development Strategy
- IV. PICTA – Comprehensive Review of Regional Trade Agreements and Modernisation of PICTA
- V. WTO Fisheries Subsidies Negotiations
- VI. Economic Partnership Agreement
- VII. Strengthening Pacific Intra-regional and International Trade (SPIRIT)



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