

## Vanuatu implements the ASYCUDA Sanitary and Phytosanitary Module

The Government of Vanuatu (GoV) has made improving trade facilitation a key objective in order to surmount its challenging conditions, such as small size and geographical distance from the main world markets. Vanuatu has consistently ranked among the top Pacific countries in the World Bank Group's "Ease of Doing Business,", and GoV looks to move higher up in the ranking by improving its "Trading Across Borders" indicators with the establishment of Vanuatu's ASYCUDA-based Electronic Single Window System (ESWS).

Vanuatu is an agriculture-based economy with the sector contributing 15% of overall GDP and population 80% of the depending subsistence farming. The remoteness Vanuatu, like other Pacific island countries and territories, has led to formation of unique natural landscapes and ecosystems and development of endemic species that allowed the country to offer niche products derived from cocoa, copra, sandalwood, beef and kava, among others. Any disturbance, such as introduction of invasive alien species and habitat loss due to climate change, poses a threat to the sustainability of Vanuatu's ecosystem and economy.

Biosecurity Vanuatu is a department under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity (MALFFB) and plays the key role in managing risks to protect Vanuatu's health, environment, economy and industries from exotic pests and pathogens entering, establishing and spreading in the country. Working closely with the Department of Customs and Inland Revenue (DCIR) and other border agencies, Biosecurity has been critical in trade facilitation and export promotion. In 2018, Biosecurity processed sanitary or phytosanitary certification for up to 89% of total crops and products exports. For imports, Biosecurity controls commodities that require permits after Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) and Disease Risk Analysis (DRA) to protect the country.

Biosecurity benefits from the ESWS project funded by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and Australia's Governance for Growth (GfG) programme to establish a robust Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS)/Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) architecture, noting that SPS and TBT play an important role in determining the speed of sea and air freight clearance.

The 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 marked an important milestone as Vanuatu officially launched and rolled out the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (ASYSPS) module developed by UNCTAD, the ESWS Project Team and Biosecurity that would streamline and automate the application, processing, payment and issuance of SPS import permits and export certificates.

Prior to exporting live animals or animal products, the Exporter (or their Agent) should apply for a Live Animal Health Certificate (for live animals – Picture 21) or Veterinary Health Certificate (for animal products) through the ESWS and attach all relevant supporting documents, usually an Import Permit from the country of destination. Prior to importing live animals or animal products, the Importer (or their Agent) should apply for a Live Animal Import Permit (for live animals) or Sanitary Import Permit (for animal products – Picture 22) and attach the required documents.

After the application is submitted electronically, the relevant Biosecurity officer would receive an email alert to verify the application. The officer can either i) return the application if there is a query or request for additional information; ii) modify the application; iii) reject the application or iv) accept the application.

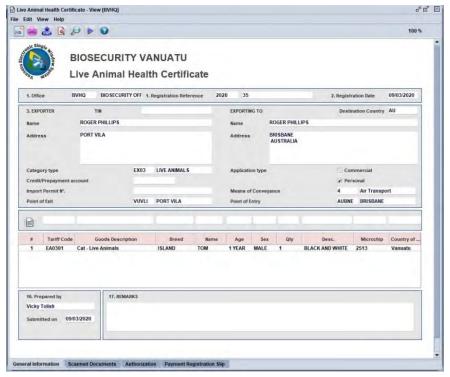
After accepting the application, it is then elevated to the relevant higher authority (Plant Expert, Plant Inspectors, Senior Veterinary Officer, or Veterinary Officers). Where inspections are required and conducted, the results are recorded in the system against the application.

Once the application is approved and finalized, the payment is also collected and recorded in the ESWS. Like the ASYCUDAWorld payment modalities, the system accepts payments per application, prepayment or deferred payment. Paid applications can be printed or downloaded. The printouts of Export Certificates conform to the format required by Vanuatu's major trading

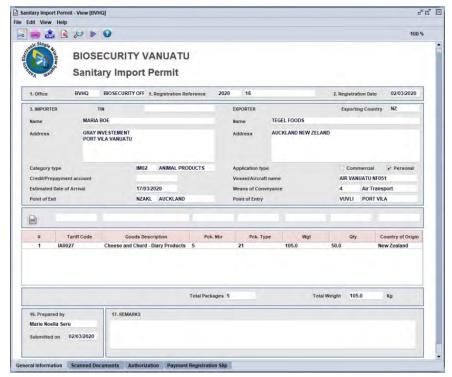


partners, such as Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia.

In a month, 400 applications were processed and over 22'000 USD were collected.



Picture 21. Live Animal Health Certificate



Picture 22. Sanitary Import Permit



Picture 23. Sanitary Import Permit Printout (Pages 1 & 2)