

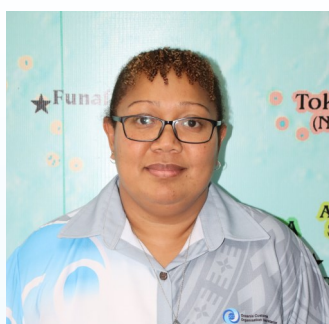


Jul ~ Sept 2023

OCEANIA CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION NEWSLETTER

Vision: The OCO to be recognised as a dynamic Regional Customs Secretariat that collaborates with regional and global partners to develop and deliver high quality and sustainable outputs to Member administrations.

FOREWORD



Pacific Greetings!

I am delighted to be sharing with you our first Quarterly Newsletter for FY2024 for the period July - September 2023. This publication details the OCO's key activities and

programs for this period with the latest news from our Members and planned activities lined up for the coming months. This past quarter has been nothing short of eventful ushering us into the new financial year 2024 with the much anticipated Annual Conference held in the beautiful island of Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia. The 25th OCO Annual Conference proved fruitful and allowed our members, regional partner organizations and stakeholders an opportunity to come together after a 3-year gap to discuss new and emerging issues faced by our membership relating to customs administration, border security and enforcement. Following on from the conference was a regional workshop conducted in Apia, Samoa on strengthening the use of the Harmonized System (HS) in member customs administrations which was supported under the UNCTAD EDF11/IMPACT Project funding. Various meetings were meetings

were also conducted during this period regarding work plan activities scheduled for the coming months relating to the EDF11/IMPACT Project and the Guam Modernization Project currently underway and running concurrent to each other. We are equally grateful to the relationships built over time with our regional partners resulting in strengthened information sharing and collaborative efforts on varying pieces of work. More notably, if schedules permit we will be introducing a new Partner to the Declaration of Partnership, that is Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) with which the OCO Secretariat alongside Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP) and Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC) are party to. This agreement acknowledges the value of cooperation and partnership of regional organizations to support and complement national efforts to combat these threats and risks in the Blue Pacific.

There are exciting times ahead and we look forward to working with you in keeping our borders safe and secure for a prosperous Blue Pacific. Please reach out, connect with us and let us know how we can better serve you as your Regional Customs Secretariat.

Vinaka vakalevu and Thank you.

Ms. Nancy Oraka
Head of Secretariat

Inside this Issue

Conference Highlights

2

Activity Highlights

3

OCO News

4

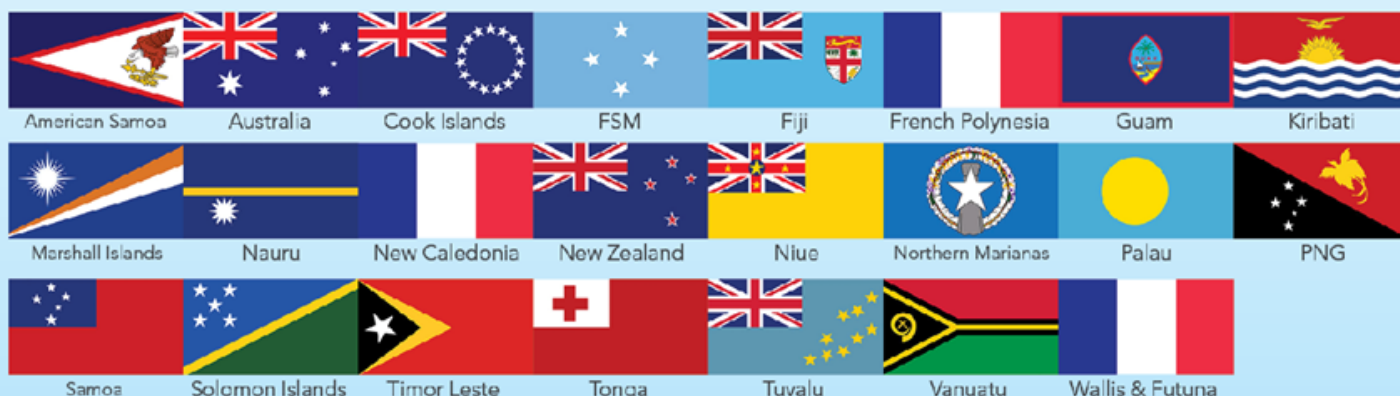
Upcoming Trainings

5

Gallery

6

OUR MEMBERS



25th OCO Annual Conference



The 25th OCO Annual conference with the theme ***"Fostering an inclusive Customs that promotes knowledge-sharing and integrity for a stronger Pacific"*** was held in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia from the 18th to 20th of July 2023. The conference was attended by 14 Heads of Customs Administration of the Governments or their respective nominees as well as partner agency representatives. The Conference thanked Mr. Randy Sue for his contribution as Chairperson of the OCO Conference and Steering Committee in the past term, and welcomed Mr. Xavier Mitchell of Cook Islands as the new Chair and Cook Islands as the venue for the 2024 Annual Conference.



Federated States of Micronesia Vice President, Aren B Palik opened the 25th OCO Annual Conference on the 18th of July 2023. In his opening address, he urged Customs administrations to think outside the box and include people and communities in their efforts to protect the vast Pacific borders. WCO Secretary General also addressed the conference through a recorded video message in which he urged Customs Administrations to nurture their future generations and place the tech savvy young customs officers at the heart of their modernisation plans. [Read More](#)

Jul - Sept Activity Highlights

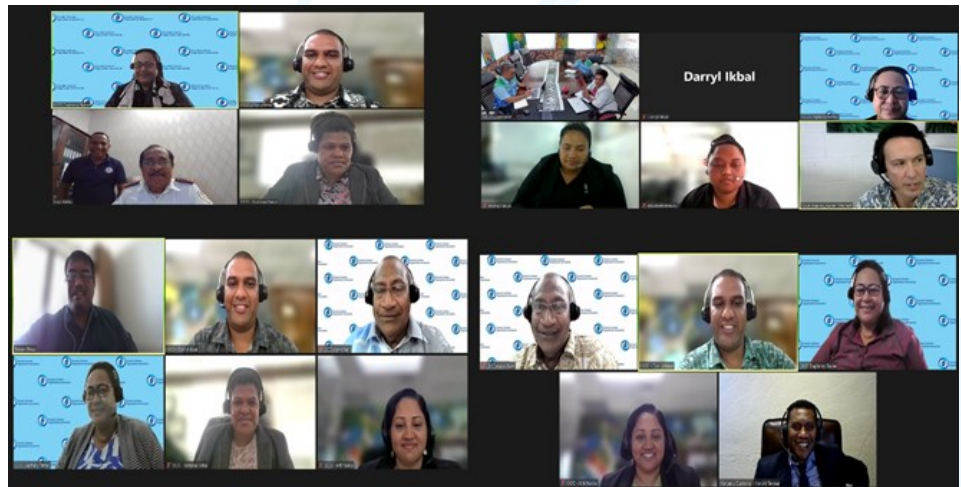
Workshop on Strengthening Harmonized Systems (HS) in the Pacific

The Oceania Customs Organization (OCO) and the PACER Plus Implementation Unit successfully conducted a Regional Workshop on the Harmonized System (HS) Nomenclature in Apia, Samoa. Held within the framework of the European Union (EU) funded Improving Pacific Islands Customs and Trade (IMPACT) project implemented in partnership with United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and OCO, the five-day event enhanced the capacity of Pacific countries in successfully implementing the Harmonized System Nomenclature 2022, the world's global standard for classifying goods in international trade. The workshop, which took place in Apia, Samoa, brought together Customs experts and representatives from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Cook Islands, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, to evaluate and refine their capacity on HS and PACHS. Several notable outcomes emerged from the event, shaping the future of customs procedures across the Pacific. [Read More](#)



Impact Project Update

The project during the month of August initiated meetings with the Heads of Customs Administrations across the 15 PACP member countries to provide an update on the project activities. The virtual meetings provided an overview of the project workplan, activities and timeframe. A total of 10 countries (Nauru, Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Niue, Timor-Leste, FSM, Vanuatu, Kiribati and Palau) had been briefed during the month of August. During the month of September, the team held meetings with Fiji, PNG, RMI and Tuvalu.



During the month of September, the IMPACT project team facilitated a brief meeting with SPC EQAP team to discuss the prospect and requirements for accreditation of OCO training curriculum.

SPC was represented by Mr. Apenisa Tamani and Ms. Ikatonga Hingano and follow up discussions will continue to ascertain the probability of regional accreditation and recognition.

The Guam Project



The Guam Modernisation project continues with focus on introduction of the Harmonised System (HS). The HS Expert together with the Legal Expert were in Guam in July to conduct consultations with the Guam Customs and Quarantine Authority (GCQA). The team also identified stakeholders and conducted awareness training. The draft GCQA Customs Bill is now with the Legal Counsel to the Governor to be progressed through their internal system.

Ozone Depleting Substance (ODS) workshop

The UNEP conducted an Ozone Depleting Substance (ODS) workshop in Samoa from the 7th to 9th September 2023. The workshop introduced the draft SOG developed by UNEP and OCO for members to review and provide comments. The SOG will be further reviewed after receiving comments from members by December 2023.

Consultation is ongoing with the WCO working group for the Master Trainer Program to be conducted in Nadi, Fiji in late January and early February 2024.

SINCB Twinning Workshop

The SINCB Twinning Workshop was held from the 18th to the 21st of September 2023 in Suva Fiji. This cross-border, cross-agency twinning and training activity provided an excellent basis which identified regional initiatives, potential partners and tools to further the exchange of information and intelligence of trafficking of dangerous substances through ocean states. 13 participants from Customs Administrations attended the workshop together with 5 TCU participants from PTCCC, FJ TCU and FSM Police. SINCB partners from Container Control Program in Thailand, RILO in Korea, PTCCC in Samoa and OCO also attended the workshop and contributed with the agency approach towards the fight against NPS, Opioids and fentanyl's. The workshop was delivered by way of lectures, exercises, hands on training with drug test samples, group discussions and online pre/post tests.



OCO Secretariat News

Arti Naidu appointed as EDF11 Project Training Coordinator



The OCO Secretariat recently appointed Ms. Arti Naidu as the training coordinator for the EDF 11 project. Born and raised in Fiji, Arti holds a Master's Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy and Post Graduate qualifications in Governance and Public Policy. Being a governance and stakeholder engagement consultant, she has worked in various industries from Banking sector, Tourism, Public Sector to Development Agencies in UN. Ms. Naidu comes with over 18 years of experience of which 13 years has been spent focusing on designing and facilitation of numerous workshops and training programs nationally and regionally working through different levels of the community.

Arti will be based in Suva within the Operations division.

UPCOMINGEVENTS

October
2023

Indo Pacific Counter Proliferation Initiative- UNSCR
1540 Workshop

Mid-October

Refresher Rules of Origin

16-20 Oct

ISWG 1st Qtr Meeting

25-Oct

CCES CERT IV new intake - Risk Management

30 Oct - 20
Nov

November
2023

HS Contact Points Meeting

08-Nov

Emergency Relief Good Clearance Process

06 - 10 Nov

CCES CERT III new intake

13-Nov

CERT III Topic- Revenue Stream: Legislation

13 Nov - 4
Dec

Trade Facilitation Expert In Country Mission - VANU-
ATU

16 - 30 Nov

Budget Session of the FOC

24-Nov

CERTIV Topic- Revenue Stream: Legislation / En-
forcement Stream: Legislation

27 Nov - 18
Dec

Customs Expert In Country Mission - FIJI

27 Nov - 20
Dec

December
2023

Trade Facilitation Expert In Country Mission - SOLO-
MON ISLANDS

01 - 15 Dec

Drug Identification Training

11-15 Dec

GALLERY



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