



January - March 2024

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

Navigating the Tides of Security: Our Collective Commitment



In the vast expanse of the Blue Pacific, our region stands at a critical intersection of global challenges and collaborative solutions. Transnational organised crime has emerged as a formidable adversary, threading its complex networks through the interconnected waters and islands that define our home. The accelerating pace of globalisation has not just brought opportunities, but also exposed vulnerabilities that threaten our collective well-being, challenging the very foundations of our public safety, health, and economic stability.

Our Declaration of Partnership signed in 2018 represents more than a strategic alignment—it is a powerful testament to the resilience and unity of Pacific nations. By bringing together the Oceania Customs Organisation, Pacific Islands Chiefs of

Police, Pacific Immigration Development Community, and recently the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, we are forging an unprecedented collaborative shield against criminal networks that seek to exploit our region's unique geographic and economic landscape.

This partnership is not merely an administrative arrangement, but a profound commitment to proactive defense. We recognise that the threats we face are dynamic, sophisticated, and constantly evolving. Our unified approach allows us to pool our expertise, resources, and intelligence, creating a comprehensive strategy that transcends traditional organisational boundaries.

The strength of our response lies in our collective determination. We are building a robust, interconnected defense mechanism that can adapt, respond, and ultimately prevent the insidious spread of transnational organised crime. This is our promise to our communities, our nations, and our shared Pacific future.

Vinaka vakalevu.

Nancy T Oraka
OCO Head of Secretariat.

Inside this Issue

Activity Highlights

2

OCO News

3

Upcoming Trainings

4

Gallery

5

OUR MEMBERS



January - March Activity High-

Celebrating World Customs Day



The Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) commemorated International Customs Day (ICD) at its Headquarters in Suva, celebrating the crucial role of Customs officials in global trade management. Acting CEO Malakai Naiyaga praised Customs officers for their dedication in facilitating legitimate trade while protecting Fiji from illegal activities.

He emphasised the rapidly evolving landscape of border security and the need for continuous professional development. The World Customs Organization's 2024 theme, "Customs Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose," highlights the importance of partnerships. Naiyaga stressed that collaboration between customs administrations and businesses is essential for effective operations and information sharing. Australian Border Force Counsellor Uriah Turner supported the theme, noting the deployment of ten ABF officers across seven Pacific countries to strengthen international relationships. During the event, twenty-five FRCS officers and stakeholders received Certificates of Merit from the World Customs Organization, recognising their achievements and commitment to the year's theme. The ceremony underscored the critical role of customs services in maintaining global trade security and the importance of building strong, purposeful partnerships across different sectors and regions.

Master Training on HS & Valuation

We had 20 Customs officers from our member countries attend the Master Training Program Workshop on Harmonisation Systems and Valuation in Nadi, Fiji. The workshop is a partnership with the World Customs Organisation (WCO) and UNCTAD through the EU EDF11 IMPACT Project and aims to enhance Customs and trade skills.



Singh is new FRCS CEO



Mr. Udit Singh

The Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) Board announced the appointment of Mr. Udit Singh as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of FRCS. Mr. Singh is a vastly experienced business leader having worked as a CEO years. He is a former CEO of Milk Test NZ a subsidiary of Fonterra and has industries including pharmaceutical, primary industry, food and environment. He is a seasoned executive with a distinguished career marked by transformative leadership and a proven track record in governance, strategy, finance, and operations. With expertise in driving company transformation, market development, and profitability, Udit brings to FRCS a focus on achieving operational excellence and fostering revenue growth. His strengths lie in scaling and transforming organizations and cultivating a culture of innovation and leadership development.

Customs Brokers Online Training



The Customs Brokers Online Training got off to a start with the first batch of 22 registered participants on the 16th of November 2023. Registration has also been completed for batch 2 and 3 with training expected to begin soon. The training is designed to be self paced and participants have 3 months to complete. online

OCO Secretariat News

Building Capacity of OCO Members

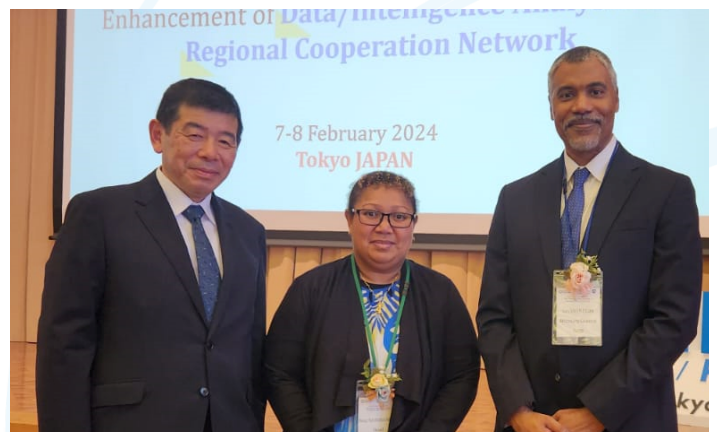


The weeklong OCO Professional Standards Framework (OPSF) workshop was held in Nadi in January aiming to deliver accredited Customs training programs to our members, paving the way for academic qualifications. With the support of the European Union (EU) through the United Nations Conference on Trade and

Development (UNCTAD) under the Improving Pacific Islands Customs and Trade (IMPACT) project, OCO has partnered with the Centre for Customs and Excise Studies (CCES) at Charles Sturt University to deliver this training. The OPSF's Train the Trainer (TTT) program offers a robust curriculum for Customs officials.

OCO Head of Secretariat Attends WCO Meeting

The World Customs Organization's Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (RILO A/P) hosted a high-level roundtable from February 6 to 8, 2024. The gathering, held in Japan, convened top customs officials and experts to forge a path toward enhanced data Intelligence and regional collaboration. Head of Secretariat, Nancy T Oraka attended the event on behalf of the 23 nations that are part of the Oceania Customs Organisation. "As the Asia Pacific region grapples with complex customs challenges, including the secure and efficient management of maritime trade, the need for a coordinated approach has never been greater. The roundtable addressed these issues head-on, offering innovative strategies for leveraging data and intelligence in customs operations," Ms. Oraka said. The roundtable featured a series of sessions focused on critical areas such as risk management for maritime containers and cruise ships, with a special emphasis on the unique geographic considerations of the Asia Pacific region. Participants engaged in in-depth discussions on building resilient information-sharing networks to combat smuggling, trafficking, and other cross-border threats.



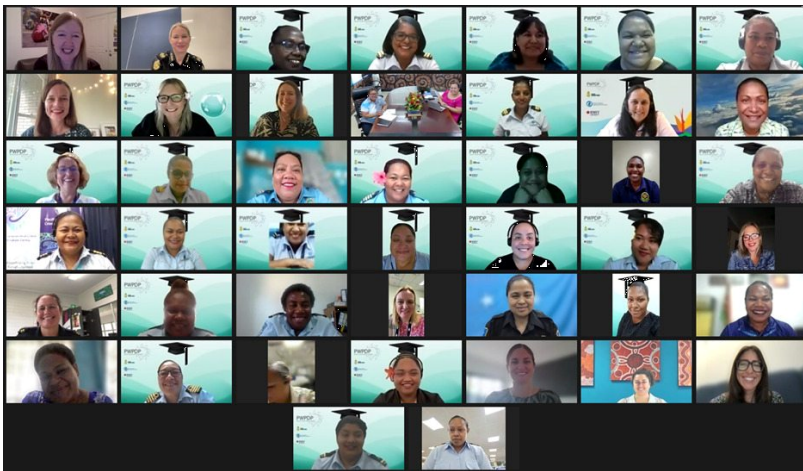
Shayna Sadiq appointed as Accountant for the Secretariat



The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) has appointed Ms. Shayna Sadiq as its new accountant. With over 10 years of financial management experience and a Master's in Professional Accounting, Sadiq brings expertise in budgeting, financial analysis, and regulatory compliance to the role.

OCO Secretariat News

Pacific Women Lead the Way in Customs Innovation



A group of 44 women from across the Pacific have completed advanced strategic leadership training. The graduates, representing 14 Pacific nations, are part of the Pacific Women's Professional Development Program—a pioneering collaboration between the Oceania Customs Organisation, Australian Border Force, and RMIT University. Whippy is already putting her enhanced leadership skills to work, driving improvements in border protection at the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service. Her success highlights how this regional initiative is strengthening customs operations across the Pacific through targeted professional development for women leaders.

Pacific Women Reshape Regional Customs Leadership

Women are increasingly taking center stage in customs administration across the Pacific, marking a significant shift in a traditionally male-dominated field. The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) has been instrumental in driving this transformation through targeted professional development initiatives.

A standout example is the Pacific Women's Professional Development Program, a collaborative effort between OCO, Australian Border Force, and RMIT University. The program has already empowered dozens of women from 14 Pacific nations with advanced leadership skills and technical expertise in customs operations. These women are now at the forefront of modernising border protection, trade facilitation, and revenue collection across the region. challenges.



Obituary

Farewell Watson, a True Servant of the Pacific



We farewellled Watisoni Raucava who was a valuable of the Pacific Customs family. Watson as he was known, rose from Assistant Customs Officer in 1989 to become the first Fijian to earn a Masters in International Customs Law and Administration, before serving as National Manager Border Control until 2015. Throughout his tenure at Fiji Revenue and Customs Service, he built a lasting legacy by developing organisational capacity and championing professional development opportunities, including securing national recognition for Customs studies and scholarships for officers. Watson continued his dedication to customs work as a regional consultant across the Pacific islands and as an educator at both Fiji National University and the Centre for Customs and Excise Studies.

OCO Secretariat News

Pacific Customs Modernisation Makes Major Stride with IMPACT Analysis



A comprehensive review of customs systems across 15 Pacific-African, Caribbean and Pacific (PACP) countries has reached a significant milestone under the IMPACT Project. The initiative has completed detailed gap analyses examining each nation's alignment with key international trade frameworks, including the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA), the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC), and the interim Economic Partnership Agreement (iEPA). The analysis, which combined both legal and technical assessments, provides a clear picture of where Pacific customs administrations stand in relation to global standards. Project leaders have presented these findings to heads of customs across the region, setting the stage for targeted improvements.

The project is now entering a critical validation phase, where findings will be carefully reviewed with each country to ensure accuracy and relevance. This collaborative approach will lead to the development of customised action plans that reflect each nation's unique circumstances and priorities.

FRCS hosts RoO Training

Fiji Revenue and Customs Service is holding its Rules of Origin (RoO) Training in Nadi, Fiji. This workshop is facilitated by one of FRCS' own- Mr Noa Buredua who was part of our Train the Trainer RoO Workshop that was held in Tonga last October.

Participants of the Tonga workshop, which was funded by the European Union through the EDF11 IMPACT Project and the **PACER Plus** Implementation Unit are required to hold national RoO training in their countries.



Spotlight

Maria drives Cook Islands Customs



"EMBRACE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES, CONTINUOUSLY EDUCATE YOURSELF, STAY ADAPTABLE AND INNOVATIVE, AND SEEK WISDOM FROM OTHERS TO GROW AND SUCCEED."

Maria Ioane-Matua, shares her journey- from a young Customs Officer to becoming the first female Chief of Customs for the Cook Islands Customs Service. Starting her career in Customs straight out of college at 18, Maria has dedicated 20 years to the service. . Since 2016, she has held supervisory and leadership roles, including managing an all-women team, spearheading significant changes within the organisation, and contributing to the ASYCUDA World Project as a Tariff and Customs Procedure Specialist. In this Q&A, Maria shares the challenges facing women in leadership roles, strategies for promoting diversity and inclusion, and advice for aspiring young women leaders. Read more: <https://www.ocossec.org/press-release/>

UPCOMINGEVENTS

April
2024

CERT IV Topic –Revenue Stream: Taraiiff/ Enforcement Stream: Enforcement and Compliance	01 - 15 Apr
Webinar Series on Brand Protection & Enforcement of Counterfeit Goods	03,10,17,24 Apr
UNODC Vessel Boarding, Search and Seizure Training (VBSS)	08 - 19 Apr
CERT III Topic—Revenue Stream: Traiff/ Enforcement Stream: Enforcement and Compliance	08 - 29 Apr
Corporate Governance & Succession Planning Workshop	22 - 24 Apr
Operation on Trade Risk & Enforcement—Phase2	22 - 26 Apr
CERT IV Topic - Revenue Stream: Valuation/ Enforcement Stream: Traiff	22 Apr - 13 May

May
2024

CERT IV Topic - Revenue Stream: Valuation/ Enforcement Stream: Traiff - Cont'd	01 - 13 May
CERT III Topic - Revenue Stream: Valuation/ Enforcement: Traiff	06 - 27 May
Data Management & Analytics (Digital Forensics Training)	Mid May
CERT IV Topic - Revenue Stream: Electives/ Enforcement Stream: Valuation	20 May - 10 Jun

June
2024

CERT IV Topic - Revenue Stream: Electives/ Enforcement Stream: Valuation - Cont'd	01 - 10 Jun
Regional Workshop on Trade Risk & Enforcement	04 - 06 Jun
PCA, Risk Management / Intelligence Workshop	12 - 14 Jun
CERT III Topic - Revenue Stream: Electives/ Enforcement Stream: Valuation	03 Jun - 01 Jul
CERT IV Topic - Revenue Stream: Electives/ Enforcement Stream: Electives	03 Jun - 15 Jul
Pacific Regional & National Security Conference, Fiji	24 - 26 Jun
PIDC Annual Conference 2024, Solomon Islands	24 - 28 Jun

GALLERY



Oceania Customs
Organization



Private Mail Bag,
84 Harris Rd,
Suva,
Fiji Islands

Phone: (679) 331 3110
E-mail: info@ocosec.org

www.ocosec.org