



DUTY TRAVEL REPORT

Revenue Mobilization Talanoa for PACER Plus Signatories

Staff Member	Mohammed Ajaz	
Destination:	Apia, Samoa	
Source of funding:	Travel Contingency	
Travel Dates:	Departure Date:	24 February 2025
	Arrival Date:	29 February 2025
Purpose of Travel:	To attend Talanoa, which is a joint capacity building activity by PPIU, PFTAC, PITAA and OCO. The CEA is one of the facilitators for the program.	
Activity description:	<p>The Talanoa aimed to enhance the capacity of Pacific Island countries in revenue mobilization, focusing on VAT/GST optimization, trade liberalization impacts, and Customs cooperation mechanisms. The sessions were structured to provide both theoretical and practical knowledge on enhancing revenue collection through effective policy and administrative measures.</p> <p>The 4-day event progressed as follows:</p> <p>Day 1: Setting the Scene and Country Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening formalities and welcome remarks from PPIU, PFTAC, PITAA, and OCO. • PPIU provided the recap of the first regional workshop on Revenue Mobilization. • The OCO CEA lead discussion on the role of Customs in Free Trade Agreements. • Participants delivered Country presentations on revenue gaps and measures to enhance revenue. <p>Day 2: Customs Cooperation and Enforcement Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEA presented on the state of Customs operations, cooperative arrangements, and enforcement strategies reflecting the risk management to curb revenue leakages. • New Zealand Customs representative lead discussions on data management and excise policies. • Country presentations on support needed for revenue mobilization. <p>Day 3: Domestic Revenue Mobilization (DRM) and VAT Optimization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions on DRM, VAT introduction, and policy gaps. • Country exercises on VAT implementation and tax expenditures. • Discussions on administrative gaps in tax systems. 	

	<p>Day 4: Tactical and Strategic Revenue Enhancement Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPIU lead discussions on country-specific plans for tactical and strategic revenue improvement. • Talanoa session led by PFTAC on maintaining momentum for reforms.
Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants gained insights into VAT design, good practices, and the role of tax expenditures. • Customs-Tax cooperation strategies were discussed to improve revenue collection through coordinated border management and data sharing. • Exchange of case studies on Customs Valuation enforcement strategies. • Each country outlined a plan for revenue mobilization with timelines.
Recommendations/follow up activities:	<p>The Talanoa provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange, policy discussions, and regional cooperation on revenue mobilization. The Talanoa reinforced collaboration between Customs and Tax Authorities which will be instrumental in improving revenue performance across the region.</p> <p>Assessing through discussions with the participants, I would like to formally suggest that OCO focus on the following issues to leverage revenue performance for the members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-building workshops on Customs Valuation and Risk Management to assist with profiling/targeting and preventing revenue leakage. • Enhancing Customs-Tax collaboration by establishing formal agreements for information exchange between Customs and Tax authorities. We can do this with assistance of PITAA and PFTAC. • Encourage periodic regional dialogues to assess progress and share updates. This could be again led by PPIU.
Acknowledgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OCO extends sincere gratitude to PPIU to include OCO, PFTAC and our members to convene in Apia to share experiences on revenue mobilisation. The session has reinforced the partnership approach towards developing members capability for maximum revenue collections.
Meeting documents where available (to put on server with hyperlink):	<p>The documents for training can be found here.</p>

Photos:

