

Introduction

- The Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus (PACER Plus, the Agreement) is a trade and development agreement focused on improving economic prosperity and resilience in the Pacific region. It is intended PACER Plus will achieve this by stimulating increased trade, trade investment, workforce capability and capacity and job creation. Signed in June by 11 Pacific countries, New Zealand and Australia, the Agreement comprises three parts: technical chapters, the *Development and Economic Cooperation Work Programme* and the *Broad Trade and Investment-Related Assistance* ('Aid for Trade') commitment.
- In May 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) established two working groups to help frame and inform the development of the monitoring and evaluation framework (M & E framework) for the PACER Plus Agreement: the academic and international development agencies/non-government agencies (IDAs/NGOs) working groups. Membership and participation is voluntary.

- Academic working group: Comprises 9 members from 5 universities, representing the business/economics, development, Pacific, politics and legal disciplines (4 Professors, 3 Associate Professors and 2 Doctors) 3 members are of Pacific ethnicity.

A wider network of academics provides input. It comprises 14 representatives from 6 universities, representing similar disciplines as the working group as well as geography, environment and tourism (8 Professors, 3 Associate Professors and 3 Doctors). 3 members are of Pacific ethnicity.

- IDAs/NGOs working group: Comprises 4 representatives from 3 IDAs/NGOs with a strong presence and track record in the Pacific region.

A wider network provides input. It comprises 4 representatives from 4 similar organisations.

Progress to date

- A first round of discussions with the working groups was facilitated by MFAT in May/June 2018. This was to obtain the groups' views and perspectives on what 'trade liberalisation' and 'aid for trade' mean and 'look like' in a Pacific context. The groups' views on what an 'aid for trade' theory of change needs to consider, and meaningful measures and indicators for Pacific peoples were also obtained. This information has helped inform MFAT's discussions with PACER Plus signatories.
- In October 2018, Oxford Policy Management Limited – Australia (OPML) was contracted by MFAT to design the M & E framework for PACER Plus. Key deliverables are:
 - An *Intervention Logic* (theory of change) that outlines how PACER Plus's different components collectively contribute to the intended outcomes and

impacts over time (20+ year timeframe). The theory of change will be grounded in a political economy analysis to ensure it is context specific.

- A high-level *Indicator Table* that outlines indicators to track change and progress towards outcomes identified in the *Intervention Logic* diagram (outputs, outcomes and impacts). The *Indicator Table* will identify the means of tracking change (measure; baselines and targets; data sources; and methodologies) for each indicator.
- An implementation strategy that outlines steps to implement a PACER Plus M & E framework (including short description of task, sequencing, responsible organisation and expected duration).
- A technical handbook that provides practical support for technical operation of a PACER Plus M & E Framework (including structure and data treatment; coverage and data availability; system architecture; indicator selection; data gaps and treatment; aggregation; normalisation).

The final delivery date is 1 March 2019.

Next steps

- In November and December, OPML will conduct face-to-face workshops with the working groups and other key stakeholder groups to obtain their input into the M & E design. Virtual consultation will also be conducted with key parties in December 2018 and January 2019.

Contact details

- If you are interested in being involved in the PACER Plus M & E framework design process or wish to receive updates on key developments, please contact:

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