



## Customs Software to Boost Cross-Border Trade in Palau

European Union Funding for UNCTAD ASYCUDAWorld Customs Management System Roll-Out

**Ngerulmud, Palau. 25 August 2022**

The Government of Palau has started work under the EU funded IMPACT project that will deliver a new customs management system to help the country increase the pace of customs clearance and boost its ability to engage in international trade. Palau will use ASYCUDAWorld, a customs management system developed by UNCTAD's Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) Programme, to deliver the latest, cutting edge, customs technology.

Processing customs paperwork manually is time-consuming and inefficient. It also requires traders to travel to import and export clearing points to physically present their documents, costing them time and money.

A mobilization seminar was held 23-24 August to raise awareness among key stakeholders regarding the need for simplified and streamlined customs procedures, the potential benefits of fully automated customs clearance processes, and the specific supporting role of the UNCTAD ASYCUDAWorld system.

**Surangel Whipps Jr., President of Palau**, when opening the event said, "I want to thank the UN, the EU, and UNCTAD for their support in making sure that this ASYCUDA system is implemented in Palau. It's really about partnership and without strong partners like you, we wouldn't have been able to move this project forward to build a more prosperous and safer Palau". He added, "I hope this will make it easy for traders to submit their reports. Hopefully this will help the business community, reduce the lines at the customs office and improve our customer service to the people that we serve".

ASYCUDA is UNCTAD's largest technical assistance programme and currently has software running in over 100 countries, including 41 small island developing states (SIDS). ASYCUDAWorld will enable Palau to optimize customs procedures and boost government revenue by ensuring that all goods are declared and the correct duties collected online. When rolled out, the system will make cross-border trade easier, faster and cheaper for businesses in Palau, and for those wishing to do business with them. ASYCUDAWorld will also help Palau customs to gather reliable and timely trade and fiscal statistics to better support the government with economic planning and evidence-based decision-making.

**Dr. Erja Askola, Chargé d 'Affaires of the EU Delegation for the Pacific**, said, "The European Union aims to jointly address the challenges that Pacific States and companies face to benefit from accessing regional and international markets. Reducing the time Palau moves goods in and out is one of the many interventions we support in the Pacific to promote regional economic integration. We also welcome more countries of the region to join the European Union-Pacific States Economic Partnership Agreement".



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**Palau Minister of Finance, Kaleb Udui Jr.**, added, “The Ministry is pleased to join over 100 nations in implementing ASYCUDA in line with international standards. This will expand trading opportunities and boost the capacity of the Republic, and will create a more transparent, less costly and more equitable trading environment for importers and exporters of Palau”.

“Customs plays a crucial role in supporting the economic competitiveness of a country. One that ensures that revenues are collected while the community and the environment are protected”, highlighted the **UN Resident Coordinator for Micronesia, Jaap Van Heerden**.

The IMPACT project will support the modernization of customs administration and facilitate trade for Palau regionally and internationally. It will contribute to sustainable and inclusive prosperity in the region, which is an area of focus of the EU strategy for cooperation in the Pacific. The funding for the IMPACT project comes under the EU’s ‘Pacific Regional Integration Support’ (PRISE) Programme, which aims to increase trade between Pacific States’ as well as between themselves and the EU-27 Member States.

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